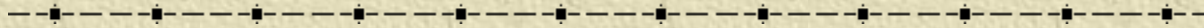


“Indigenizing” the Church’s Ministries

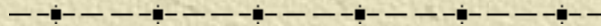
Based on material in George Hunter’s “To Spread the Power”



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Education as hindrance

- ✦ All education alienates those who have it from those who don't.
- ✦ We must exegete our community as well as we exegete the text.
- ✦ “The theological academy assumes its customs, jargon, taste, aesthetics, and style are superior to those of the members of Shiloh church...” (p 153)



Church forms its own culture

- ✦ Longtime members may not see the need to adapt the church's ministries to the culture of the unchurched
- ✦ North America has 170 million secularized undisciplined persons
 - ◆ 12% black
 - ◆ 6% Hispanic

Culture

✦ Anthropological definition of culture: “The integrated system of learned ideas, behavior patterns, and products characteristic of a society.”

✦ Culture

- ✦ Helps reduce decision making
- ✦ Increases life’s predictability
- ✦ Helps cope with basic human needs

✦ “A people’s culture is the incarnate medium of God’s revelation to them.” (p 153)

Church and culture

- ✦ “When we too closely identify the gospel treasure with the earthen vessels in which we received it, its communication ... is frustrated. Our task is to ‘*rewrap*’ the gospel in the clothing of their culture...” (p 158)
- ✦ Indigenous church principles should be used in all parts of the world.
- ✦ The lesson taught by the Jerusalem council must be relearned every few years.

Levels of cultural difference

- ✦ E 1 – Evangelizing in my own language and culture, though still dealing with “stained-glass barrier”
- ✦ E 2 – Evangelizing in a different language and culture, but similar cultural “family” (i.e. “Western” cultures)
- ✦ E 3 – Evangelizing in a different language, culture and cultural family (i.e. western to eastern)



E1 evangelism levels

- ✦ E 1-A – Those with whom we share many natural links (family, close friends)
- ✦ E 1-B – Those who are much like us, but with whom we have not developed a close relationship (acquaintances, occasional colleagues)
- ✦ E 1-C – Those of a different subculture (educational, economic, aesthetic differences)
- ✦ E 1-D – Those who live in our communities, but keep close ties to their former culture (Mexican-Americans, Korean-Americans, etc.)

E 0 – Nominal Christians

- ✦ No “stained-glass” barrier, familiar with church culture
- ✦ Just because they attend church now does not mean they always will
- ✦ John Wesley advocated involving nominal Christians in classes when they are searching
- ✦ 90% of evangelistic efforts are focused here

How do we indigenize?

- ✦ Actively acquire *sensitivity* to cultural issues
- ✦ Work towards *identifying* yourself with them
- ✦ Use their *language*
- ✦ Structure the *style* of church (clothing, architecture, music, etc.) to fit their subculture
- ✦ Ask for appropriate *responses*
- ✦ Employ an indigenous style of *leadership*
- ✦ Recruit *indigenous leaders*
- ✦ Encourage indigenous *theologizing*

Test yourself...

- ✦ What has changed since the church started taking culture seriously?
- ✦ Does the target population feel comfortable?
- ✦ Do we identify with each other and our surroundings?
- ✦ Does the target group feel ownership?
- ✦ Is the meaning of the gospel getting through?
- ✦ Are outreach and invitation occurring across natural social networks?



“Homogenous units”

- ✦ McGavran: “People like to become Christian without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers” (McGavran, 1980, p 223)
- ✦ Every church should be open to all, but no church can reach everyone
- ✦ Because of interaction of cultures outside the church, it is sometimes impossible to include them in the same congregation

Conglomerate churches



- ✦ Leaders must be culturally aware and intentionally involve each culture
- ✦ Church must provide funds and staff for each diverse ministry

Conglomerate Churches



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- ✦ Conflict is natural and can become part of the energy of the church, but must be managed properly
 - ✦ “Any homogeneous church is penultimate to the church that is to be, and while homogeneous churches seem to be more effective at bringing people like them into faith and church, heterogeneous churches more effectively model the kingdom of God and what the church is intended to be.” (p 176)

This PowerPoint presentation is available along with related materials and other PowerPoint presentations at <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ppt.htm>

