

This book is based on data from a Lilly Endowment study of multiracial churches across America. In Australia it is more appropriate to call such churches *multiethnic* churches. Yancey prefers "multiracial" to "multiethnic" because in American society "racial differences carry more social significance than ethnic differences" (17). In my judgment, the opposite is the case in Australia.

One difficulty in applying this book to the Australian situation is that for all the talk of "multiracial churches" there is an inordinate amount of attention given to white/black considerations (Yancey makes some attempt to go beyond these categories: "... the multiracial churches were more likely to be white and either Latino or Asian than to be white and black" [18]). This seems to be fairly typical of American books on this issue, again arising from Yancey's observation as stated in the first paragraph.

Following Yancey, we can define a multiethnic church "as a church in which no one racial group makes up more than 80 percent of the attendees of at least one of the major worship services" (15). On this basis Yancey concludes "only 8 percent of all American churches are [multiethnic]."

Yancey points out the obvious, namely that first-generation immigrants have a strong need to maintain the culture of domicile and worship in their own language. Therefore, they are unlikely to attend multiethnic or, I might add, dominant culture churches. He also recognizes that while second-generation Asian immigrants prefer English-speaking services they still tend to form churches made up of those from their own ethnic circle.

Following Yancey, we can discriminate between four types of multiethnic churches, while acknowledging that (obviously) these are not mutually exclusive:

1. *Leadership Multiethnic Churches*. Such churches are developed by clergy or lay leadership or both.
2. *Evangelism Multiethnic Churches*. Such churches result from effective evangelistic outreach.
3. *Demographic Multiethnic Churches*. Such churches develop because of demographic changes occurring in the neighbourhood surrounding the church.
4. *Network Multiethnic Churches*. Such churches develop as social networks within the church expand.

Yancey devotes a chapter to "Should We Have Multiracial Churches?" I found this disappointing because it does not wrestle with biblical and theological issues, except at a highly superficial level. Rather, Yancey focuses on practical considerations. This includes challenging the thesis that applying the homogeneous unit principle is the key to church growth. Indeed, he states that "the growing presence of Americans who are comfortable with people of all races suggests that it is monoracial - not multiracial - churches that may struggle to grow" (34-35). Indeed, Yancey's own mailout survey research indicated that over a 12 month period multiethnic churches were more likely to grow than monoethnic churches. He also found that on average multiethnic churches tended to be larger than monoethnic churches and that they were still more

likely to grow faster than monoethnic churches when due allowance was made for the relative youth of multiethnic churches.

Also, Yancey found no evidence to suggest that multiethnic churches experience more conflict than monoethnic churches.

From the seven headings Yancey provides in Chapter 5 I will attempt to tease out the key principles that are provided for building a multiethnic church:

1. Develop a worship style that includes the cultural elements of all targeted ethnic groups.
2. Develop a leadership team that reflects the ethnic diversity of church members.
3. Have an overarching goal which does not focus on developing a multiethnic church but is facilitated by having a multiethnic church.
4. With full intentionality, take deliberate steps to develop a multiethnic atmosphere in the church.
5. Provide training for leaders that will develop key skills namely, sensitivity to different needs, patience, the ability to empower others and to relate to people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
6. Develop multiethnic churches in urban areas where there is already an ethnically diverse population or in transitional areas where Anglos are moving out and ethnic minorities are moving in.
7. Educate church members concerning the cultures of newcomers and help the church to identify and adapt to the key issues involved in helping people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to merge together, e.g. potential language barriers, inter-ethnic couples and multiethnic families, preventing the estrangement of numerical minority groups in the church, appropriately dealing with secular political and social issues.

Yancey devotes a chapter to each of these seven principles. Much of what is said in these chapters is self-evident and for many church leaders the principles as stated above will provide sufficient guidance. I found particularly helpful practical observations in the chapters on worship style and leadership:

*Principle: Develop a worship style that includes the cultural elements of all targeted ethnic groups.*

How can this be done? Yancey has observed three models, which I have named as follows:

- (1) Creation Model: drawing on musical talent in the church community the church uses songs created by church members that do not represent any particular ethnic group.
- (2) Integration Model: each worship service incorporates elements from several different ethnic groups.
- (3) Rotation Model: each worship service successively focuses on a particular ethnic group within the church community.

Yancey recognizes that worship involves more than music and notes that such things as the length of the service and the preaching style vary considerably across cultures. Such factors need to be considered and appropriately handled.

*Principle: Develop a leadership team that reflects the ethnic diversity of church members.*

Much of what is said in this chapter is self-evident and a matter of plain common sense. The chapter ends with a helpful section stating what ethnically diverse leadership is not:

- (1) It does not involve accepting beliefs contrary to the core beliefs of the church.
- (2) It does not involve taking on unqualified leaders.
- (3) It does not involve quotas. For example, if half the congregation are Vietnamese this does not mean half the leaders should be Vietnamese. Indeed, the church may seek leaders from an ethnic group that is not yet well represented in the church community, precisely so as to more effectively reach such people.

The book concludes with some pieces of practical advice, which I summarise as follows:

1. Leaders must intentionally work to prevent the type of assimilation that disregards the culture of people from non-majority groups.
2. Allow for both multiethnic and monoethnic support groups: "The [multiethnic] communication that comes from integrated support groups helps assure the members of this numerical minority that they will have a voice. The [monoethnic] support groups help them handle issues unique to themselves" (155).
3. Continue to listen to members of numerical ethnic minorities. Here Yancey observes that it is common for those churches that have been multiethnic for some time to take numerical minority groups for granted.