



ETHNIC BLENDS **MARK DEYMAZ**

A Window Into Our Inevitable Future

Last November, in partnership with Outreach, Inc., and the National Outreach Convention, the Mosaix Global Network hosted the Multi-ethnic Church Conference in San Diego. More than 400 individuals from 31 states and three foreign countries (Australia, Canada and Sweden) attended this historic, first-of-its-kind event, with another 471 people from 10 countries watching it on the Internet.

Never before have so many like-minded champions of the multiethnic church gathered in one place, at one time, to advance the inevitable growth toward multiethnic and economically diverse churches in this century. It's worth noting, then, some who were there and what they said:

Michael Emerson: "We stand here exposed, contorted and distorted into division, separation, unequal sets of people that, even without us knowing it, testify every single day that race, ethnicity and culture are more important than our faith because they shape how we gather. . . . If churches would just reflect their neighborhoods [which are 10 times as diverse as our neighborhood churches, according to U.S. Census data], we would have an explosion of diversity in our congregations."

"If the kingdom of heaven is not segregated, then why on earth is the church?"

Efrem Smith: "If you are open to being a true kingdom builder in the multiethnic reality [of this society], God will crucify aspects of your agenda: your white church agenda; your black church agenda; your Hispanic church agenda; your megachurch agenda; your small church agenda; your emergent church agenda. God will mess with it and crucify it to get you to His will and purpose!"

Brenda Salter McNeil: "The generation around us is watching not what we say, but what we do. They're looking at how we express the truth that Jesus has abolished the middle wall of hostility that divides us. And that because that is true, we live differently with each other . . . that this multiethnic expression of the church is a reality of God's heart. Where

they see that being lived out, it brings credibility to the message that we preach called the Gospel. Where they see that not being expressed, it causes them to question whether or not Jesus has told the truth."

Eric Bryant: "We talked about spiritual reconciliation every week. If we focus on reaching the people around u in a diverse environment, [we will] become diverse."

Dave Gibbons: "[Vision statements and church constitutions are typically] based upon two commandments: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. And folks, how have we defined neighbor? Someone like us. . . . When push comes to shove we [feel we have] to put up the numbers. But is that your calling? Is it really, at the end of the day, how big your church is? Are you really that disappointed you're not on the list of the 100 fastest-growing churches in America?"

I believe the conference provided a window into the future and to what lies just ahead for the American church. Thankfully, increasing numbers of pastors are not only asking, but stand ready to address the question, *If the kingdom of Heaven is not segregated, then why on earth is the church?*

Mark DeYmaz is the founding pastor of Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas and executive director of the Mosaix Global Network. Mosaix's next national gathering is the Multi-ethnic Church Planting Conference at Exponential 2011, April 26-29 in Orlando, Fla. This "conference within a conference" will feature multiethnic church planters and pastors Scott Williams, Dave Olson, Alejandro Mandes, Derwin Gray and others. For more information: Mosaix.info.

CORRECTION: *In Canada, it is the term multiethnic church (not multicultural church, as stated in last issue's column) that is perceived to imply only color in the pew and a failure to "acknowledge the cultural realities that accompany color."*

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