

ETHNIC BLENDS **MARK DEYMAZ**

Multiethnic Patterns in the Church

Last December, a historic gathering of 12 churches took place in Dallas, as Leadership Network launched its first “learning community” focused on the multiethnic church.

Leadership Network stated on its website that it had tracked the rising interest in multiethnic churches nationwide and continued to see evidence that the movement is “gaining momentum.”

Indeed, the movement *is* gaining momentum, as evidenced by this gathering of 31 pastors and ministry leaders representing six denominations and nondenominational churches. Half were minorities.

Among them was Derwin Gray, the founding and lead pastor of Transformation Church in Fort Mill, S.C., who spent six seasons in the National Football League before planting the church. Transformation began with a group of 178 people and launched Feb. 7, 2010, with more than 700 attendees. In 2011, *Outreach* identified Transformation as the second fastest-growing church in America by percentage. Today it’s approaching 2,000 in attendance—65 percent white and 45 percent minority.

Stories of explosive growth in conjunction with church planting have grown common in recent years. But this story is unique.

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Minority Leadership

First, Gray, an African-American, demonstrates that minority leadership at the senior level is not only possible within the evangelical church, it’s happening. Other examples include Efrem Smith (regional superintendent of the Evangelical Covenant Church’s Pacific Southwest Conference); David Anderson (Bridgeway Community Church, Columbia, Md.); and Miles McPherson (The Rock Church, San Diego), to name a few. More recently, Kyle Ray, also an African-American, became the lead pastor of Kentwood Community Church, a church of nearly 3,000 attendees in Grand Rapids, Mich., and the chosen successor of its founding pastor, Wayne Schmidt, who is white.

These men manifest the rising tide of effective minority leadership within the evangelical church and, more significantly, a growing comfort among whites to follow men of God no matter the color of their skin.

Explosive Growth

Secondly, Transformation was one of the first multiethnic church plants to explode numerically. Other multiethnic churches to date have not grown as quickly as homogeneous churches. Gray’s experience, however, demonstrates rapid growth is not only possible in a multiethnic church, but in time could be the expected result.

Young Leadership

Third, Gray is just 40 years old, suggesting the movement is well-positioned for future development beyond a current generation of leadership. Other “under 40” multiethnic church pastors participating in the Leadership Network learning community included Jason Janz (Providence Bible Church, Denver), Tommy “Urban D” Kyllonen (Crossover Church, Tampa, Fla.), and Kent Priebe (Centre Street Church, Calgary, Alberta, Canada).

Biblical Foundations

Finally, Gray and the other leaders mentioned here understand that the multiethnic church must be established on the Word of God, for the sake of the Gospel and not to be perceived somehow as politically or socially correct. Pastors like Gray are getting this right.

For these and many other reasons, Leadership Network’s assessment of the multiethnic church movement is correct. Welcome to the future. Now come, be a part of it!

Mark DeYmaz is the founding pastor of Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas and executive director of the Mosaic Global Network. Mosaic’s next national gathering is the Multi-ethnic Church Planting Conference at Exponential 2012, April 23-26 in Orlando, Fla. Visit Mosaic.info to learn more or register today!

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