

BOOK REPORT  
BUILDING A MULTIETHNIC CHURCH  
“A GOSPEL VISION OF LOVE, GRACE, AND RECONCILIATION IN A DIVIDED  
WORLD”

Title of Book: “Building a Multiethnic Church-A Gospel Vision of Love, Grace, and Reconciliation in a Divided World.”

Author: Dr. Derwin L. Gray, Founder and Lead Pastor of Transformation Church, who is also the author of *The Good Life: What Jesus Teaches About Finding True Happiness*. Dr. Gray was, before moving to ministry and attaining his Doctor of Divinity Degree, a star NFL player.

Publisher and Publication Date: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Originally published in 2015 as *The High Definition Leader* and again published in 2021 (This book is also promulgated by Leadership Network of which it is a Resource)

First Impressions: I have hesitated to write this Report for fear that my Report would be read and heard as being a negative one. I do not intend that it be a negative Report. However, I must, in honesty, confess to some disappointment in the book. That disappointment probably arises from some false expectations which I imposed on the book before I read it, and even while I was reading it. Those false expectations arose, in part, from my hearing of a podcast interview with Dr. Gray, which I heard some time ago. I found that interview to be both convicting and engaging as Dr. Gray came across as being both a man of passionate convictions and a man who could provide practical, down to earth advice based on his experience in building a hugely successful, multiethnic, multi-generational local church. So I expected to find in this book both strong reasons for having a multi-ethnic congregation, and a lot of step by step, practical advice as to how to achieve such a congregation. I did find in the book great arguments for the need for a multi-ethnic congregation in a local church, but little step by step advice as to how to achieve one. My false expectations also arose, in part, from what I “read into” the book’s title, *Building a Multiethnic Church*. I read words into that title, and for me it read “*How to Build a Multiethnic Church*.” Therefore, as was the case with the expectations derived from the podcast interview with the books author, I approached this book with expectations that it would provide that, which it in fact provides, a passionately stated, very articulately and beautifully stated and very soundly stated theological argument about why God expects our local churches to be made up of people whose races, ethnicities, aged, cultures and economic class standings reflect the demographics of the communities in which they are located. However I also assumed from the book’s title that it would, in addition, provide very down to earth practical suggestions for how to build such a church, or how to convert what the author refers to as an “homogenous” church to one with a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi-economic class congregation. Frankly, I found the book to be lacking in this area of practical, step by step suggestions for building or achieving the type of local church congregation, the necessity for which the author so passionately argues. It seem to your Reviewer that pastors and church leaders are left with a need to contact Dr. Gray,



and then seek a face to face meeting with him and his staff (meetings which he offers to have) if they want some real step by step, practical guidance as to how to achieve the type of local church congregation, the necessity for which Dr. Gray argues.

So, in summary I think that you will find in this book an extensive, very well stated and beautifully written theological argument, biblically based argument on the WHYS a local church should strive to have a congregation which reflects the racial, ethnic, and economic class demographics of the community which such church chooses to serve, and you will find some helpful advice as to HOW TO DO CHURCH if you have a local church which has such a congregation, but you will not find much information on the HOW TO ACHIEVE or BUILD a church with such a congregation. A pastor or church planter or church elder or board member might read this book and be left with a feeling of "Hey, I completely buy into what you are saying, and I am all in with the multi-ethnic congregation concept and would like to move towards having such a congregation, but now what do I do-how do I do it?" I don't think that this book answers that question.

#### Overview of the Books Contents/What is the Author Doing WithWhat the Author is Saying:

The above comments notwithstanding, I am not arguing that Dr. Gray's book is not worth a careful reading. It most certainly is entitled to such a reading by any church planter, pastor or leader, and frankly by any Christian who desires to know more about his or her God. It is, in many respects, a marvelous, beautiful book. Dr. Gray's theological arguments are very well, and eloquently and beautifully stated, and, frankly, while one might quibble a bit with some of his conclusions, his arguments are theologically sound arguments. His book provides ideas and substance for many pastoral messages on many subjects, including the subject of what God desires that His Church look like and what His Church will in fact be upon the culmination of His work for redemption of His creation. So, my skeptical concerns notwithstanding, I recommend this book to church planters, church pastors and church leaders, and to any Christian who desires to engage in study about the character and nature and desires of his or her God.

Now with these preliminary remarks, let me, your Reviewer, try to outline what Dr. Gray is saying in this book. I think this task can be best undertaken in outline form, which is as follows:

1) This book is 220 pages in length. The vast majority of those pages are taken up with theological arguments for Dr. Gray's position that local churches should, to the extent of allowable demographics be churches with congregations which demographically reflect the racial, ethnic, and social and economic class demographics of the community in which the church is physically located or which it desires to serve; although a part of the first 175 pages of the book do tell Dr. Gray's personal story as a Black man, raised by a young, single mother, who attended a largely white university, Brigham Young, and went from there to achieve NFL football stardom, and then from the NFL to a ministerial education and ministry life which led, eventually, to the founding of Transformation Church. The vast majority of the first 175 pages of the book, and of pages 193 to 220 of the book contain an extensive, extremely well stated,



theological argument that the New Testament Gospels and Epistles stand for the proposition (obviously among many other propositions) that God intends and desires that His Church, and its Local Churches are to be made up of multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi social and economic class, peoples of each gender, and that the American churches, and many churches throughout the world are failing to achieve or to seek to achieve God's intentions and desires in these respects in that many, if not in fact the vast majority of these Local Churches are made up of "homogeneous" congregations, congregations in which 80 percent or more of the people are of the same race/ethnicity. This statement is true not just of "white" churches, but also of "black" churches, with black churches being even more resistant to becoming multi-ethnic, multi-cultural than white churches, while Latino and Asian congregations (particularly those of second generation descendants from immigrants) seem to be less resistant to a multi-cultural congregation.

2) Since Dr. Gray's theological arguments are so very extensive, it is difficult to summarize them in this Review. Perhaps the best approach to such a summary would be to attempt to set forth a simplistic outline of such arguments, as follows:

a) As described in Genesis 17 God established with Abraham (then Abram) a covenant that Abraham would be the father of many nations, and that Abraham's descendants would make up nations and kings of nations.

b) Therefore, from the beginning God intended that His human family, Abraham's family would be multi-national, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural family made up of people from the many nations, with all of such diverse peoples being grafted into the family of Abraham.

c) Notwithstanding the failings of Israel, the first people of God's family, the family of Abraham, Jesus, God Himself, was sent by God in order that He, Jesus, through His sinless life, and His substitutionary atoning death on the cross, and His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father, would demonstrate and achieve and further God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant, His promise made with Abraham, which was to give to Abraham a big, beautiful, multiethnic family (a family of the many diverse people of all of the many nations).

d) While physically present on earth Jesus reaffirmed the two great Love Commandments, "You shall love your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...(and)...you shall love our neighbor as yourself..." (Matt. 22:37-40) and He taught about the "identity of your neighbor" by His parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:27-37) thereby emphasizing that our "neighbors" are not necessarily people like us but include all peoples of all kinds, whether or not they are like us, and even if they might be considered to be our enemies, once again affirming God's desires that His people be people of all races and cultures and nations. Upon His physically leaving this earth Jesus gave His apostles his Great Commission to "... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...". (Matt. 28:16-20) Jesus, therefore, taught and commanded his apostles to reach out to, evangelize and bring to Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit, and to bring into God's family people of all nations and tribes. The concept of multi-culturalism of God's people was, therefore, reaffirmed by Jesus.



e) Jesus also directed His apostles that, when they had received power from the Holy Spirit, which they did at Pentecost, they "...will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1 and 2) Multi culturalism and unity and reconciliation among all people has, therefore, been at the very heart of the gospel from the very beginning of the Church.

f) The apostles and the early followers of Jesus (the followers of "the Way") were, therefore, directed by Jesus to go forth and evangelize and to bring into God's family peoples of all nations, tribes and languages, including those who they might have considered to be their enemies or to be people hated by them (e.g. the Samaritans).

g) Contrary to the advice and teachings and commandments of Jesus the apostles and early followers of the Way sought to remain in Jerusalem and to hunker down there. So God brought upon them a persecution, as exemplified by the martyrdom of Stephen, in which Saul/Paul participated. This persecution, together with Saul's participation in same resulted in the scattering of apostles through out parts of the then known world, where they preached the Gospel of Christ to people who obviously would have been people of diverse races, ethnicities, cultures and classes. (Acts 11:19-21)

h) By his conversion event which occurred when Saul/Paul was on the road to Damascus, Jesus called upon Paul to be His disciple and to carry the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. (Acts 9)

i) Paul believed that he was commissioned and commanded by Jesus to go throughout the then known world and to preach the Gospel of Christ and to establish local churches which would have been and were multi-ethnic, multi-cultural churches made up of Jews, Gentiles, and peoples of various races and cultures. They would, therefore, have been multi-ethnic churches. Of particular note would be the early church in Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman Empire, which had a population of Jews, Gauls, Germans, Syrians, Greeks and various barbarians. Its population was divided among, and fractured among a number of various ghettos. So its church would of necessity have been a church with a very diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-racial congregation.

j) Paul, in the vast majority of his epistles emphasized the multi-ethnic nature of each of the local churches established by him, and supported by him and to which he wrote his epistles, including the members of the home group churches in Rome (a city he had not then yet visited) which he admonished, in the strongest possible terms in his Epistle to the Romans, to put aside there many ethnic and cultural and tradition differences, and to achieve reconciliation and unity as a part of the body of Christ, as they were all engrafted into the family of Abraham, the multi-ethnic family of Abraham.

k) The statement of Paul that appears in his Epistle to the Galatians at Galatians 3:26-29 comprises the heart and soul of Paul's theology and of his preaching, and of, in Paul's view, the Gospel of Jesus, such statement of course being: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Such Promise of course being the promise/covenant made by God with Abraham that he, Abraham would be the father of many nations). By this declaration of Galatians 3:26-29 Paul stated, in the strongest possible terms,



that gender differences, cultural differences, ethnic differences, and class differences are wiped out when people become a part of the body of Christ, the Church. Dr. Gray reviews, in separate chapters or sections of a chapter, the majority of Paul's epistles, by way of a wonderful, step by step analysis of each of such epistles, so as to show that each of such epistles contains an argument of Paul for multi-ethnic, multi-generational, both genders congregations for each local church. I leave it to you, the reader, to read Dr. Gray's many page reviews of each of the epistles, as those reviews appear in his book. The upshot of these reviews is that the apostle Paul clearly stood for multi-cultural congregations for the churches to which he wrote.

l) Jesus, by his blood, purchased for God people of "every tribe and language and nation, and made them to be a kingdom of priests to serve God and to reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). At the end of time people of every tribe, language, nation, race and culture will stand together before Jesus, before God.

m) Upon the culmination of God's work for the redemption of His creation, "...a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language..." will stand before the throne of Jesus, and will worship God (Rev. 7:9-11). At the end of time, God's family will clearly be a multi-ethnic one.

n) The great meta-narrative of the Bible, therefore, stands for the proposition that God has intended and directed, and intends and directs (and in fact commands) that His Church be a Church of and for all peoples of all races, ethnicities, languages, tribes, genders and generations, and of all economic and social classes, and that His Church will serve as a beacon for unity and reconciliation among all peoples.

o) Scripture, therefore, clearly demonstrates, conclusively, that God intends and directs that the local churches be, at least to the extent practical, churches with multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi social and economic class (See the Epistle of James), multi-generational, all gender congregations.

p) Homogenous local churches (those with congregations, 80 percent or more are made up of people of one race, whether that be white, black or other) fail to be churches which comport with God's Plan and should seek to become churches which do comport with that Plan.

3) Dr. Gray's church, Transformation Church, has been established in response to, and in order to seek to conform to (and to always seek to follow the admonitions of) the two great Love Commandments reaffirmed by Jesus in Matt. 22:37-40 (see 2d above) and Jesus's Great Commission set forth in Matt. 28:16-20 (see 2d above), and has, as a part of these efforts, adopted a "Vision Statement" as follows: "*Transformation Church is a multiethnic, multigenerational, mission-shaped community that loves God completely (Upward), ourselves correctly (Inward) and our neighbors compassionately (Outward).*" In order to make this Vision memorable, the motto of Transformation Church is "*Upward, Inward, Outward*" a motto which is constantly repeated.

4) Transformation Church, which is located in Indian Land, South Carolina (which is close to Charlotte, North Carolina) was launched in February, 2010. While this is not clearly stated in Dr. Gray's book it appears that this church came about, at least in part, because of a split up or split from a former church in which Dr. Gray was one of 3 lead pastors (Dr. Gray states that



he does not believe that a 3 lead pastor church is a workable model). Transformation Church, at its initial service held in some dusty vacant warehouse, attracted 701 people and it has since “grown like crazy”. (Note: I, Your Reviewer, would have liked to have information as to how Dr. Gray/Transformation Church (which at that time seems to have had Dr. Gray as the lead pastor and with two associate pastors, and Dr. Gray’s very talented wife, who helped with administrative details) went about attracting 701 people to a first, beginning church service. Were some of these people split offs from Dr. Gray’s previous church? What was done to attract them? It would also be helpful to know what the ethnic, social class, cultural demographics of this group of 701 people might have been, and what the ethnic, cultural and class demographics of the Indian Land, South Carolina area were. In other words, “What Did You Do?” and “How Did You Do It?” and “To What Demographic Groups Was Your Invitation Directed?” No such information appears in this book.)

5) In Dr. Gray’s strongly stated opinions, the local churches in America do not properly reflect the diverse, mosaic, multi-ethnic, multi-generational demography of the American population and this fact is going to become more and more pronounced as the demographics of the American population continue to change. So Dr. Gray states that: The American Church and its local churches “..does not exemplify reconciliation, which is the heartbeat of the gospel and God’s longing for humanity....(as).... the average church in America is ethnically, and socio-economically segregated....(although).... granted, sometimes, this is because of the demographics, but most of the time it’s by choice fueled by indifference, prejudices, petty preferences, or ignorance of the gospel. Instead of being fueled by Jesus’ heart for reconciliation, we are fueled by the status quo.” (Emphasis added-See pages 13 and 14 of Dr. Gray’s book.) Dr. Gray declares that pastors and church-planters, elders and Christ-followers have been entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation, which they are ignoring. In his view the American churches are as segregated as they are because of: 1. Racism, 2. The so called homogenous unit principle (HUP), and 3. A small-minded, individualistic, underdeveloped view of the gospel. (See page 61 of Dr. Gray’s book.) (Reviewers’s Purely Personal Note and Comment: I personally find these statements of Dr. Gray to contain a pretty harsh condemnation of many local pastors, church elders, church board members and the Christian members of many American congregations, who, popular thought notwithstanding are not, at least in this Reviewer’s mind “..indifferent, prejudiced, petty or ignorant of the gospel”, and are not racists, but are, to the contrary, struggling with trying to fulfill the gospel under the demographics, economics and other circumstances with which they are confronted. In Your Reviewer’s purely personal opinion, most pastors, church elders and Christians are highly desirous of including in their church believers and seekers of every race, gender, class, culture, etc. They would like to reach all people. What they need is advice as to how they might better do so, not condemnations of their personal characters. Your Reviewer’s purely personal, passing comment would be that “I find the very condemning tone of this book to be unwarranted and frankly not helpful. What might be more helpful would be some down to earth, practical, step by step advice as to how a pastor or church elder or board of elders might sit down and look at their individual church and its congregation, and the demographics of the community they are trying to attract and serve and minister to, and to then try to expand their congregation in such a way as to properly minister to, preach the gospel to, and serve their



community. While the theology and theological arguments in this book are beautiful, wonderful and well presented, and cannot generally be disputed, the condemning tone of this book is not helpful and might well be counter-productive. That is just a purely personal note.)

5) In Dr. Gray's experience (Dr. Gray is Black) White people and White churches are more open to the idea of ethnic diversity than is the case with Black churches. There are, therefore, more White Churches with a smattering of ethnic diversity than is the case with Black churches. Latino and Asian congregations seem to be less resistant to ethnically diverse congregations than is the case with Black churches, particularly in the case of second and third generation members of Latino and Asian congregations.

6) Dr. Gray states that 94% of churches in America are not growing, a sad fact which Dr. Gray attributes to the inability of American churches to attract multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi-class congregations, or to seek unity and reconciliation among all people.

7) Woven throughout Dr. Gray's book is a proposition, or argument that American churches, and, perhaps, American Christianity take(s) a much too narrow and limited view of the gospel, in that salvation of the individual and steps towards the sanctification and "good feelings" of the individual are emphasized to the point that the greater message, the real message of the gospel is lost, if it is mentioned at all. Sermons, music, songs and small group discussions are all directed to the individual, and his or her salvation and Christ's love for him or her. Precious little is sung or said about the greater gospel, the achievement on earth of God's intended family, a family of unity and reconciliation among all peoples of all kinds. Dr. Gray would certainly concede that salvation of each individual and the sanctification of each individual are of critical importance, but these goals of individual salvation and sanctification cannot be allowed to over shadow the overall message of the gospel, which is one for the establishment of an ethnically diverse, class diverse, generational diverse and gender diverse family which moves all people towards unity, in Christ, and with each other and towards reconciliation among all peoples. Therefore, Dr. Gray would argue that the American Church and its Local Churches, in their preaching and work, take a much too limited view of the gospel by their emphasis, sometimes sole emphasis on individualism, meaning individual salvation, individual sanctification, and individual needs, to the expense of the gospel's message for the establishment of God's Family on Earth.

8) Some limited step-by-step advice which is offered by Dr. Gray is as follows:

a) The racial/ethnic/gender makeup of the church staff should be reflective of the demographics of the congregation or of the congregation sought to be attracted to the church or of the community which the church seeks to serve. An homogenous staff leads to an homogenous congregation.

b) The music used in the church services should be music which is attractive to all of the peoples of the multi-ethnic congregation of the church or of the multi-ethnic congregation which the church seeks to attract. Some members of the congregation might have to be asked to accept or at least tolerate music which is not of their choosing.

c) Small Groups are to be strongly encouraged. Each small group should be make up of people of the various races, genders, and ages (generations) represented in the congregation, so that the differing views or outlooks of the various people can be discussed. In



Transformation Church, small groups meet weekly, and they are presented with discussion questions which are derived from that week's pastoral Sunday message to the congregation.

d) Pastors and Elders should emphasize discipleship among the members of the congregation. A strategy for development of disciples must be developed. In Dr. Gray's view, American churches take a much too narrow view of "disciples", considering them to be something akin to "Bible teachers." In his view the "disciple members" of the congregation are not just Bible teachers. On the contrary, they are the "outreach missionaries" to the people of the community. They are to: 1) see all life as worship, 2) connect in small groups, 3) serve in the local church, 4) give generously to the local church, and 5) live as missionaries inviting lost people to the local church. (See pages 176-177 of Dr. Gray's book.) Each of these characteristics of a disciple is analyzed by Dr. Gray at pages 177, et seq.

e) Leadership Development must be emphasized. Transformation Church has a four step, four circles process for leadership development. Its four circles are: "the community", "the congregation", "the committed" and "the core". The goal is to progressively move people from community, to the congregation, to the group of committed, to the core group. People are to be moved, by a strategic process, from one circle to the next, eventually reaching the "core circle." Transformation church seeks to develop leaders with 5 characteristics, the "5 Cs", same being Character, Competency, Catalytic, Collaboration and Chemistry. He describes each of these characteristics in detail. The staff of Transformation Church has grown to over 30 people, most of whom came from the church's Leadership Development process.

9) So I, your Reviewer, do not want to say that there is not, in Dr. Gray's book, any practical, step-by step advice as to how to conduct the affairs of a multi-ethnic church, or of any church for that matter. There is some such advice in the book, but I fear that any pastor, church board member or elder, or serious Christian who looks to this book in order to learn some steps for establishing a multi-ethnic church, as opposed to seeking well thought out theology (and sermon material) for the reasons to establish such a church will be very disappointed in what he or she finds in this book.

To What Audience or Reader is This Book Directed: This book is directed to church planters (for whom it would be most helpful), church pastors, church elders or board members and church leaders who desire to learn more of the theology behind the position that a local church should be a multi-ethnic church, or who desire to plant or establish a multi-ethnic church, or to lead an homogenous church to one of multi-ethnicity. However, it contains far more information about the "Why" to have a multi-ethnic church, than it does information about the "How" to have such a church.

How To Read This Book: Frankly, your Reviewer thinks that the essence, the heart of this book is contained in its Foreword, together with Its Introduction, and its Conclusion, which, taken in combination adequately summarize the very extended, detailed theological arguments for the necessity for multi-ethnic local churches that are set forth, in detail in this book. If someone wants to obtain sermon/message material or presentation material for the reasons why a multi-ethnic church should be established, then the various chapters of the book provide ample such material.



Limited, step by step advice as to how to operate or conduct a multi-ethnic church, if you have one, appears in pages 170-190 of the book. I have found no real advice as to how I might go about getting/establishing a multi-ethnic congregation. However, Dr. Gray does offer to set up meetings with himself and the staff of Transformation Church in order to provide assistance to church planters, pastors, elders and others in their efforts to establish a multi-ethnic church.

How Can This Book Be Used at TEI or in One of its Classes: Unless TEI/ECLI wants to establish a class or discussion group which deals with the questions of multi-ethnicity, multi-ethnic/multi-generational, multi-class church congregations, I don't think this book will be of much use to TEI/ECLI, although it does contain a marvelously thought out theological argument for multi-ethnicity, and that argument can serve as a model for just how a theological position can be properly argued.

Some Purely Personal Critiques: I, Your Reviewer, am not pastor or church planter, or church elder or board member. So my personal views might be of little significance. However, this is my Review, and I, therefore, feel that I am entitled to express some personal concerns (which are certainly open to debate) about what I perceive, rightly or wrongly, to be the rather unhelpful condemning tone of some of Dr. Gray's remarks. While I might quibble a bit with Dr. Gray's comparison of Paul's efforts to reconcile Jewish and Non-Jewish (Gentile) people who populated most of the local churches which Paul established or to which he wrote his letters to a present day church congregation made up of people of diverse races and ethnicities (i.e most of Paul's remarks were directed to a reconciliation of Jewish followers of Jesus, who felt that all were bound by the law, and gentile followers of Jesus who felt no allegiance to the law) I have no arguments with the overall thrust of Dr. Gray's theological arguments, or with his final conclusion which is that, at the end of times (those described by John in Revelation) God's eschatological family will be made up of all of the many diverse peoples of the world, people of every nation, tribe, culture and language, and that we are to strive to bring about God's eschatological world in this imperfect world, to the extent we have the abilities to do so. I also have no argument at all with Dr. Gray's conclusions that we, as Christians are, regardless of our race, color, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class (and I would argue, sexual orientation) a part of the body of Christ, and are brothers and sisters in Christ, and are to be loving of, welcoming of, and serving of all of our brothers and sisters in Christ and to the extent we have the ability to do so, are to work to achieve peace, and unity and justice, including social justice among all people. So my concerns are not with Dr. Gray's extremely well articulated theological positions and arguments.

My concerns with Dr. Gray's book rest with what I perceive (perhaps wrongly) to be his overly (in my view) condemning statements about the pastors, elders, board members, leaders and congregants of the local churches of America, and about what I find to be implied by his arguments, which is that every local church must be one with a congregational demographic which is reflective of the demographics of its "community" (although I don't think he provides any helpful definition or information about what the "community" of any local church might be, which is to say is it the entire city or town in which the church is located or is it the general



geographic area of the city in which the church is located, etc?). Candidly, I can also find agreement with Dr. Gray's assessment that the sermons, songs, music and discussions of our American Churches are too individualistic, as their sermons, music, songs and discussions seem to be directed largely if not completely towards individual salvation, sanctification and "good feelings" as opposed to the establishment of "God's Family" on earth. I just cannot accept Dr. Gray's condemning conclusions that the great majority of American churches are segregated because its pastors and leaders and members are narrow minded, small minded, prejudiced, racist bigots, who are fueled by racial prejudices, indifference to the gospel and petty preferences. I do not find such condemning terms to be ones which even remotely move us towards the path of "unity and reconciliation" which Dr. Gray seeks to establish. I cannot reconcile with a person by calling him a "total, complete jerk", even if he concedes that he is a "jerk", if I am not offering at least some advice as to what he might do in order to move forward from his "jerkiness." There is precious little advice in this book as to HOW to achieve a multi-cultural congregation. It is almost like Dr. Gray says "Dear Pastor the gospel requires that your congregation be a multi-ethnic and you are going about things all wrong, but I leave it to you to figure out how to achieve such a congregation, unless you want to contact me and come and visit with me and my staff."

So, I apologize Dr. Gray. I love your theological arguments, but I do not like the tone of your statements about American pastors, elders and church leaders, or of the congregations of American churches. I also find your book to be woefully lacking in advice as to how to establish the type of congregation, the necessity for which you so eloquently argue.

Now I would like to raise some questions:

1) Dr. Gray, assume if you will that I am a newly appointed pastor of an evangelical congregation which is located in a city of medium size, roughly 100,000 people. That city has a diverse racial population. That population, the majority of which is currently White, includes substantial Black, Asian, and Latino minorities. The city already has thriving Black, Chinese and Korean churches. My church is a medium sized church, and it is located in that part of the city which has a predominantly, white, lower, medium and upper middle class population. The demographics of my current congregation mirror the demographics of that area of the city in which our church is located, although we do have some black members, Asian members and Latino members. We seek to be very welcoming to all people, and our services are designed to be, hopefully, appealing to people of all generations, classes and ethnicities. Is it your position that unless our church achieves a congregation or people of regular attendance who demographically reflect the demographics of our entire city we are failing to meet the requirements of the gospel?

2) If that is your position, then what advice would you give to me and our church board of elders as to what we should do in order to do our best to meet the requirements of the gospel?

3) Some of us have spoken with the pastors of the Black Churches in our city. Their churches appear to be thriving. Yes, in some respects they have a culture, deep set traditions and worship practices, and even standards of dress, which are very different than ours. Some of them have expressed strong reluctance to somehow joining up with a largely white church, as they do not want to lose their longstanding traditions, culture and practices. In your view Dr. Gray is it



wrong for the people of these Black Churches to want to retain their long standing cultures and traditions, music, songs, and worship practices in order to commute, some substantial distances, in order to attend our church? On the other hand, is it wrong for the people of our church to not want to drive some appreciable distances in order to attend churches, the worship practices differ a good deal from our worship practices? Isn't it possible that various homogenous churches (as you describe them) work together, and partner together in some shared common goals and in dealing with some shared problems, or even with the problems of one of such congregations or its "community" without each of these churches having to give up its individual culture, traditions and worship practices? Isn't it possible that at least some of the goals you desire to attain can be attained by having churches of various ethnic makeup share pastors, have their pastors go to one of the others of said churches to deliver a Sunday message, share social events, etc.? Would cooperative efforts among churches, even homogenous churches as you describe them, accomplish at least partially some of the goals which you so eloquently espouse?

4) In your view, rather than for our church, other churches, the Black, Latino and Chinese and Korean Churches in our community to give up as separate churches and to, I guess, "merge" into multi-ethnic churches which reflect the demographic ethnicity of our city, would it be proper for all of us, all of our churches to seek to partner together, in some respects, so that we work together in order to better our city, while retaining our separate churches and identities, traditions and cultures? Could we for example, in your view, work together in some ways, and even have an exchange of social affairs (like dinners), while still retaining our separate cultures? Would that, in your view, be a bad thing?

5) Dr. Gray do you think that God intends that there be some sort of "merger" or "amalgamation" of all of those cultures which make up Christianity (if that is a word) or is God ok, in your view, with a continuation of the separate traditions and cultures which make up the Christian world, as long as all Christians and their churches are loving and welcoming and trying to do their best to achieve unity, and reconciliation and justice, including social justice among all peoples of their city or community, or even the world?

6) In your view, is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi socio-economic class congregation something which must be an immediate goal for each local church, or, rather, is such a congregation one which should be perhaps achieved over time by a "doing of church" in a manner which is welcoming to all, Christian love offered to all, receptive attitude offered to all, reaching out to all manner? In other words do we start out saying "we have to have in our congregation people of all races, ethnicities, cultures, classes and generations who live in our city, and if we don't do so then we are failing in our duties as defined in the gospel?" I guess what I am asking is: "Is a multi-ethnic church a goal or a result of a process which is not necessarily directed to such a goal but rather is directed towards doing church in a manner which is welcoming to all and is receptive of all?"

7) God clearly intends that His Church, the Church Universal, will at the eschaton include people of every nations, race, socio-economic class, gender, generation (and I would argue, sexual orientation). No arguments there. However, keeping in mind that we stand in the "already but not yet" period of time when things remain somewhat imperfect, does this clear intention of God mean that every local church, every local community of faith must be made up



of congregations which are so constituted? Does a pastor fail if he or she does his or her best to open the doors of his or her church to every believer and seeker, and to reach out to them and to welcome whomsoever the Holy Spirit moves to come to his or her church, without worrying about the ethnic, generational, socio-economic classes of those who are led to come?

You are going to have to help me out with some of these questions and concerns, Dr. Gray. I don't find responses to these questions and concerns in your very beautiful book. I truly want to confront and deal with my doubts. Please Help!