

WAYS OF BEING A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH:

**An Evaluation of Multicultural Church Models
in the Baptist Union of Victoria**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian-Born Chinese
AMES	Adult Migrant Education Service
Anglo	Anglo-Australian
BBC	Brunswick Baptist Church
BUV	Baptist Union of Victoria
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CEC	Christian Education Centre of BBC
ESL	English as a Second Language
HUP	Homogeneous Unit Principle
MBC	Mooroolbark Baptist Church
MCBC	Melbourne Chinese Baptist Church
MEC	Multiethnic Church
MMG	Multicultural Ministry Group of the BUV
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
MSBC	Malvern Slavic Baptist Church
NESB	Non-English-speaking background
NSBAV	New Settlers' Baptist Association of Victoria
RALS	Refugee Airfare Loan Scheme of the BUV
SBC	Syndal Baptist Church
VCBC	Victorian Chin Baptist Church

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1.5 generation	Immigrants who arrived as young children.
Anglo	A loose term meaning of English-speaking or British cultural background.
Anglo-Australian	In the mainstream English-speaking Australian culture today.
Assimilation	The process of losing one's old culture and fitting into a new culture, becoming 'like them'.
Asylum seeker	A person fleeing persecution and seeking safe haven as a refugee.
Bi-cultural	Living in two main cultures and in most circumstances capable of speaking English and their community language.
Contextualisation	The process of the gospel taking a particular shape in different cultures or contexts, so that it 'speaks their language'.
Cross-cultural	Referring to anything where the intention is to reach from one culture across to another. It tends to be a one-way outreach, making the effort to learn about another culture, but is sometimes used to mean 'intercultural' (both ways).
Culture	The integrated system of learned patterns of behaviour, ideas and products characteristic of a society.
Diversity	The presence of cultural difference.
Cultural diversity	Plurality in the system of beliefs and lifestyles in different communities.
Dominant	(Of a person) Speaking frequently; interrupting and controlling conversations.
Ethnic	To do with a group with a sense of identity provided by factors such as language, kinship, history, race or culture. It often refers to minorities, migrants or people of NESB.
Ethnicity	Linguistic, racial or cultural background.
Ethnocentrism	The belief that one's culture is superior to another.

Ethnorelativism	The belief that each different culture is a valid and effective way of existing in community.
Heterogeneous	Containing people of different kinds or cultures; multicultural.
High power-distance cultures	Hierarchical societies, where less powerful people accept that power is distributed unequally.
High-context cultures	Cultures where communication rules are not necessarily spelt out through words but by context. The Korean word, <i>nunchi</i> (being able to communicate with the eyes) well expresses the way that people take their cues from watching those around them, e.g. Asian and South Pacific cultures.
Homogeneous	All of the same kind or culture; monocultural.
Immigrants or migrants	People who come to settle permanently.
Inclusion	A commitment to actively include people regardless of their values, beliefs and lifestyle. It is not a mere commitment to tolerance in the multicultural context.
Integration	The process of being integrated (or amalgamated) into the dominant culture, so services are no longer provided on an ethnic basis.
Intercultural	To do with the movement between cultures (both ways).
Low power-distance cultures	Egalitarian societies, where most people believe that inequality should be minimised.
Low-context cultures	Where most of the communication is explicit, and relationships and context matter less, e.g. Western cultures.
Mainstream	Of the dominant culture, such as the English-speaking culture in Australia.
Marginality	Being pushed to the margins in society; being powerless or not having a voice.
Minority	A disadvantaged group outside the dominant culture of a society, whether due to ethnic, class, gender or other factors.
Migrant ethnic church:	A church formed to serve a migrant ethnic group, often worshipping in a language other than English.

Monocultural	Dominated by one culture.
Multicongregational	Any church organisation where there is the existence of more than one congregation.
Multicultural	Containing many cultures, usually a descriptive term.
Multiculturalism	A stance which affirms the value of diverse cultures coexisting creatively in one community, and which intentionally and genuinely engages in a cooperative manner.
Multiethnic	Containing many ethnic groups. Similar to multicultural or multiracial.
Pluralism	A belief system that sees many viewpoints as inevitable and good.
Plurality	The existence of diversity or many viewpoints.
Race	A socially constructed category based on one's biological heritage such as skin colour or ethnic group.
Reconciliation	Restoring relationships; becoming friends again. Between groups it requires justice, repentance, public ceremonies and forgiveness.
Racism	A belief that culture is mostly determined by race, and that one's own race is superior.
Refugee	A person determined by the United Nations or accepted by a particular country as genuinely fleeing persecution or danger.
Second generation	Being a son or daughter of a migrant, born in the new country.
'The other'	The person who is radically different from me, who challenges me to become different simply to accept them. The stranger or alien.
Worldview	Deep cultural framework in our minds on matters such as God, humanity, nature and questions of existence.

ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies four different models of multicultural church in the Baptist Union of Victoria. It describes the characteristics of each model and how each caters for the different characteristics, needs and circumstances of various migrant communities. The models are particularly examined in terms of how each relates to communities and congregations of other cultures, and how they seek to be part of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

It is assumed that the call of the gospel is to equality and inclusiveness of ‘the other’, so comment is made on power structures and how decision-making and hospitality to ‘the other’ are practised.

The four models of multicultural church were developed on the basis of those of Geoffrey Blackburn, Jeannie Mok and Manuel Ortiz, and an example of each model was chosen from within the churches of the BUV. Data on each church was collected through interviews with the pastor(s) of each congregation and with a representative focus group from each multicultural congregation. Each interview was conducted following the prepared question guide, and was transcribed, recorded and analysed. The aim of the study was to discover how each model works, what are its strengths and weaknesses, what is the likely future for each model, and how could this information be profitably used by the BUV in its development and support of multicultural churches.

The work is arranged in five chapters.

Chapter 1 provides a background and introduction to multicultural ministry in the Baptist Union of Victoria, to my own involvement and professional interest in the subject, and the methodology for the study.

Chapter 2 describes the four different models of multicultural church.

Chapter 3 presents the four case studies, one study for each of the four models.

Chapter 4 presents a critical evaluation of each model, looking at the strengths of and critical questions raised by each.

Chapter 5 offers a conclusion and recommendations regarding building multicultural church models in our multicultural society.

As a result of this study the Baptist Union of Victoria will gain a more nuanced appreciation of multiculturalism: how different churches and communities have different characteristics and needs, and therefore a realisation of the importance of having different models of multicultural church at different stages of their journey. This information will affect the kind of training and support the BUV can offer multicultural leaders and congregations, and will be helpful for congregations that are discerning a model that may be useful in determining the next step in their own future.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I come from a Korean background and work as the Multicultural Minister of the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV). I have also served as a member of the Pastoral Team of Brunswick Baptist Church, an intentional multicultural church.

On arriving in Australia twenty-two years ago as a migrant and student, I attended a Korean Baptist Church. I know the customs of my own Korean church community, an ethnic congregation that maintained its culture and language. The question for me was how to live vitally as a Korean-Australian, participating in the wider Australian society, when I was continually drawn back to this familiar place because of my language barrier and lack of confidence. I decided to leave the Korean church in order to explore more of Australian culture and Australian multicultural society.

I shared with my close Korean friends that I had made the decision to move to an Australian church (at that time I was a candidate for ordination with the BUV). They advised me not to go, saying, 'If you go you will fail or be disappointed because you don't look like them and will never speak like them'. I, too, had my concerns and doubts about the challenges involved in integrating into an Australian church.

Through my involvement with an Australian church, I experienced a different world and many different aspects of God. I found a model of the church as a community where people of all cultures can mix and meet, where people listen to each other and share their faith journeys.

As much as I enjoyed this wonderful multicultural church community, I soon experienced a problem. The problem was that as a non-Anglo Australian¹ from a non-English speaking background (NESB) I did not feel equal, particularly in times of tension, with issues of power between the dominant voices and the NESB migrant voices. My aspiration was not to withdraw, but to give a voice to the marginalised, encouraging the dominant people to give over their power because of their love. This characteristic of love is shown in Philippians 2:5-8, which points to the love of Christ

¹ I will use 'Anglo' to mean of British background or reflecting the dominant British-Australian culture.

who empties and humbles himself as an example for us to follow. Where intercultural encounters occur, this sort of love does not force those of another culture into the mould of the dominant culture. The love and hospitality of God makes room for the 'other' and reaches out, seeking to understand without requiring full understanding of the 'other'. Because this love accepts difference, it makes space for others to be who they are in their differences.

As a NESB migrant pastor ministering at a multicultural church, I have had to consider whether I need to relinquish my 'strangeness', or the characteristics of my 'otherness', in order to be acceptable in the role. Do I have to give up my own culture in order to fit into the dominant Western culture?

These questions reflect a marginal way of thinking: wrestling with what it means to be a migrant who doesn't speak English like others and who thinks differently from the dominant Anglo-Western culture, while longing for 'belonging' in an Australian multicultural church. In my leadership roles it is this kind of theological reflection that helps the dominant groups to include the marginal, and the marginal to find their voice as a growing part of Australian multicultural churches. This is an appropriate multicultural vision because we build community, not through assimilation, but by integration in love.

These questions became more than simply personal questions. They became a call, a vocation, and a quest to find answers within the questions.² This has resulted in my reflecting theologically on these issues, and that has resulted in this thesis.

²Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 74.

1.1 Background and Purpose

The aim of this study is to examine and evaluate various multicultural church models found within the BUV, and to offer recommendations for the future development of each of these models.

Multiculturalism is defined as ‘a stance which affirms the value of diverse cultures coexisting creatively in one community’³, and in this paper it particularly refers to those communities which are intentionally and genuinely engaging together in a cooperative manner, such that one does not dominate over the other. It implies more than a simple peaceful co-existence: in the church contexts examined here it essentially refers to intentional efforts to engage together with another community, open to whatever new developments this might entail.

Migrant ethnic churches initially develop church frameworks for the first generation while they cope with new cultures. Churches also find tension in how to address issues that arise where the first and second generations of people meet and worship together. This research aims to address this question of which kinds of frameworks are most helpful. How do churches discern when it is right to be separate and when migrant congregations should partner with other Australian churches? Anglo-Australian churches have also changed a lot through the growing multicultural nature of their church. How can these congregations be inclusive in their church life, and in building a vital church community? How is multiculturalism shaping both the migrant ethnic churches and the Australian churches?

Multicultural Ministries of the BUV

After World War II many migrants came to Australia, and the expectation of churches was that migrants would either be assimilated (‘become like us’) or would be segregated into separate non-English speaking congregations. Ken Manley states that until the 1960s, ‘Whilst Baptists had been quickly organised to welcome British

³ Bill Loader, ‘Biblical Perspectives on Issues of Multiculturalism and Interculturation’, *Colloquium* 24 (1992), 13.

migrants, relatively little had been done to assist non-English speaking migrants, mainly from Europe'.⁴

The BUV began work among non-English speaking migrant ethnic churches in 1961. In 1968, a New Settlers' Baptist Association of Victoria (NSBAV) was formed to foster fellowship between individuals, small groups and churches of new settlers, mainly from Eastern European countries. In 1974 the Australian Government, following the Canadian model, moved away from the White Australia Immigration Policy towards 'multiculturalism'. This was the impetus for further change as immigration broadened and churches sought to respond to this.⁵

In 1985 Charles Wilcox, a former missionary in Bolivia, was appointed as the BUV's cross-cultural worker and Paul James, a Russian-born Slavic leader, was appointed to be the pastor to the New Settlers' churches. These were the first official appointments which led to a link between the BUV and the New Settlers' churches.⁶

The New Settlers' congregations saw the BUV as a 'big brother' and respected the authority of the denominational leaders. The BUV saw them as fellow Baptists and assisted them with places of worship.⁷ These congregations were strong, homogeneous communities whose main desire was for practical support, while holding to their own values and preserving their culture. There were about twenty migrant ethnic Baptist churches or fellowships linked with the New Settlers' Association: Arabic, Chinese (2 churches), German, Greek Evangelical, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian (2), Slavic, Slovakian (2), Spanish (2), Ukrainian, Vietnamese (5 churches, all linked with Anglo congregations) and Yugoslav (2). Since that time some of the original congregations have folded and many new churches have been added.⁸

⁴ Ken Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity': A History of Australian Baptists*, vol. 2, *A National Church in a Global Community (1914 -2005)* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 654.

⁵ Geoffrey H. Blackburn, 'A Strategy for Cross-Cultural Ministry by the Baptist Churches of Melbourne, Australia', *Thesis* (DMin Dissertation), Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991, 72-73; Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 654; Ross Langmead and Meewon Yang, 'Multicultural Congregations: A Victorian Baptist Perspective', in *Crossing Borders: Shaping Faith, Ministry and Identity in Multicultural Australia*, eds. Helen Richmond and Myong Duk Yang (Sydney: Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry, The National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, 2006), 124.

⁶ Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 654.

⁷ Blackburn, 'A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry', 75.

⁸ Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 655.

The last twenty years has been a time of significant change due to the growing numbers of migrant ethnic churches and multicultural congregations within the BUV. As Australia abandoned the White Australia Policy and welcomed migrants from all around the world (especially from Asia, the Middle East and Africa), the range of Baptist migrant ethnic churches widened. There is currently a Multicultural Minister employed to offer leadership and pastoral support for migrant ethnic churches in the BUV. In addition, a Multicultural Ministry Group (MMG) was formed in 2001, replacing the former New Settlers' Association, to support churches engaged in this kind of ministry.⁹

Many migrant congregations are nested, with the initiative of church leaders, in Anglo-Australian churches. There has been generous practical support from host churches for refugees and migrants, who worship in their church building, and so a relationship has sometimes grown and the two congregations have developed into one church. Others are simply in a landlord/tenant relationship.

The migrant congregations' relationship with the BUV varies. Some are fully affiliated with the BUV, some are less formally linked to the Union and some remain as a ministry within an affiliated church. The strength of the links between congregations and the BUV also varies, and may be affected by their more conservative theology of the migrant congregations or by differences in language and culture.¹⁰

1.2 Potential Significance of Developing Church Frameworks

Multicultural ministry is increasingly a central theme of churches in Australia as the immigrant population is growing. A recent Australian survey reports that

Every second person in Australia is either a first- or second-generation immigrant. One person in six speaks a language other than English at home, and a greater proportion than that do in the major cities, such as Melbourne and Sydney.¹¹

⁹ Chinh Dinh, 'A Brief History of the Multicultural Ministry', *Witness: The Voice of Victorian Baptists* 113.10 (November 2005): 5; Langmead and Yang, 'Multicultural Congregations', 127.

¹⁰ Langmead and Yang, 'Multicultural Congregations', 124-125.

¹¹ Philip Hughes and Sharon Bond, *A Handbook for Cross-cultural Ministry* (Adelaide: Openbook, 2005), 4.

A need to embrace variety in the church is being called for more strongly today than ever. If the church is to be multicultural, there are implications for the daily practice of faith. Manuel Ortiz considers some of issues that become a reality when multiculturalism is embraced:

There is one set of crosscultural dynamics that is operative when bringing together various groups that all speak English. There is a different set of dynamics working when numerous languages are represented. Within these sets of differences we also find crossgenerational differences, first-generation immigrants being much more protective of the traditions and customs of their homeland.¹²

Closer to home, some Victorian Baptist churches are taking a distinctively multicultural approach to church life. Anglo-Australian churches are faced with a challenge to welcome and learn from others from different backgrounds. Simultaneously, migrant churches are encouraged to step forward and form relationships with English-speaking congregations, recognising the needs of the next generation and better equipping them by the sharing of resources.

In order to examine ways of being a multicultural church, we will consider the Australian church context.¹³ There are different church frameworks possible, and each one raises different issues.

Broadly speaking, there are three different groups of people in Australian churches:

- 1) First generation of non-English speaking migrants (including overseas students);
- 2) Second generation (being a son or daughter of a migrant, born in the new country), who are transitional. In this group we can include the 1.5 generation (those who arrived in Australia in their teens or before) and third generation;
- 3) Anglo-Australians (a loose term referring to English-speaking 'white' people of British cultural background).

¹²Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 37.

¹³ Indigenous people will not be considered in this thesis due to their unique status as Australia's first peoples. We'll limit ourselves to migrant ethnic churches.

I will address the characteristics and needs of each group.

The Characteristics of First Generation Migrants

First generation migrants in Victorian churches are distinctive. They experience a number of psychological stages which can be defined as ‘honeymoon, culture shock, initial adjustment, mental isolation, and adjustment’.¹⁴

Firstly, their social situation is segregated in some way from the mainstream Anglo-Australian culture, resulting in insufficient English and lack of familiarity with Anglo-Australian behaviour. This is intensified by the fact that they normally speak in their own language at home, which pushes them away from people who speak English at home.¹⁵ They create a separated community in order to keep their own traditions.

First generation migrants are more likely to maintain culture and preserve their tradition. For example, many take pride in wearing their national clothes¹⁶ and keeping their country of origin’s cultural celebration days. This celebrates cultural integrity and helps to ensure that identity is preserved and honoured. The longer they have been away from their homeland, the more first generation migrants hold to the culture of their homeland.¹⁷

Similarly, first generation migrants often adhere more closely to their traditional church practices than the second generation.¹⁸ Church becomes a place where they can connect closely with their own customs and language. Some new migrants who previously were not church attenders start coming to church to find support and make connections with

¹⁴ Kathryn Antil, ‘Multicultural Ministry and Missions in the 21st Century’, in *Becoming an Intentionally Intercultural Church: A Manual to Facilitate Transition*, eds. Robert Brynjolfson and Jonathan Lewis. 2nd edition (Canada: World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission, 2004), http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/rfiles/res3_57_link_1283201162.pdf, 64.

¹⁵ There are some English-speaking groups not included here, such as Pacific Islanders or Filipinos.

¹⁶ Particularly people of the more recently arrived refugee communities, such as Karen, Chin and Sudanese.

¹⁷ Rev Wai Kwong Sun, Pastor of Chinese congregation of Syndal Baptist Church, Interview by the author (4 May 2010). Pastoral experiences in Chinese congregations.

¹⁸ Gary D Bouma, ‘Religion and Identity Formation in a Multicultural Society’, in *Many Religions, All Australian: Religious Settlement, Identity and Cultural Diversity*, ed. Gary D Bouma (Kew, Vic.: Christian Research Association, 1996), 74-75, 118.

others as they work to adjust to and settle into the new land. These people often face challenges as their children grow older.¹⁹

The Needs of First Generation Migrants

On migrating to a new land there is an initial lack of resources for the first generation. They need help in finding places to meet and worship. Many migrant churches don't have their own building. Many churches nest within another church building, or hire school or community halls for Sunday services. First generation migrants need friendships with Australians so they can learn English, and have access to practical support and help. This becomes a window for them to learn about Australian society.

Factors Affecting the Migrant Church's Viability

The biggest factor in the ongoing viability of a migrant church is whether migration continues; the immigration policy of the day determines the arrival of new migrants. Waves of refugee populations are short-term in comparison to the ongoing stream of students and economic, skilled migrants. For example, most New Settlers' Baptist congregations were formed from refugees of a particular time but are now numerically stagnant, and the once booming community is ageing after no further migration from their homeland. The lifespan of specific language speaking members is, therefore, usually the marker of the lifespan of the congregation.

The congregation may extend its life by diversifying, through welcoming marriage partners from beyond the ethnic group and being able to integrate new people who do not speak the language. The Malvern Slavic Baptist church and the Chinese congregation of Syndal Baptist church, for example, have moved in this direction, with English-language services and an interpreter and PowerPoint slides for using their language at Sunday services.

If there are no new migrants then numbers decrease, the congregation and its leadership ages, and financial problems mean they cannot bring in a new pastor (which, for example, has been a difficult experience for the First Hungarian Baptist Church).

¹⁹ Philip Hughes and Sharon Bond, *A Handbook for Cross-cultural Ministry*, 34-36.

The Characteristics of Second Generation Migrants

Those born in Australia are more ‘Australianised’ than their parents, as they have been educated in Australian schools. They do not speak the language of their parents’ origin correctly, nor do they follow many of their parents’ preferred ways of doing things. Therefore, the second generation finds it difficult to fit into the congregation and community of their parents.

They are powerless in their parents’ churches and do not have a voice because they have to follow and respect the established tradition and leadership. This leadership is often conservative, hierarchical and patriarchal, and the second generation feel they do not fit, do not belong and do not have a place. They do not speak up because this would embarrass or otherwise reflect badly on their parents.

This is known as the ‘front door syndrome’.

While at home they are required to practise the values and beliefs and traditions of their parents, the moment they leave the front door they are in a Western, cosmopolitan culture that is quite different from that of their parents.²⁰

The second generation have fewer friends in their monocultural church than their parents. They have more friends in their wider local community than their parents. Even if they do not conform to their parents’ church practices and traditions, they are very aware of them and significantly affected by them. The second generation have considerable understanding of both the migrant experience of their parents and of Australian culture, and can appreciate other people’s struggles to settle, adapt and belong.

The Needs of Second Generation Migrants

The second generation needs a place to belong and this can be difficult to facilitate adequately. It may be tied to the use of English language, at least some of the time, in

²⁰ Jeannie Mok, *The Technicolour Faith: Building a Dynamic Multicultural Church* (Brisbane: Asian Pacific Institute, 2004), 28.

contemporary worship. They need a church context that they can bring their friends to. They need to have a voice and opportunities and resources for leadership and creativity.

Often the first generation parent speaks to their second generation children in their community language and the children reply in English. Thus as well as speaking English they need to be proficient in their community language and in the practices of the congregation. However it is often difficult for them to attain the standard the first generation desires of them, and thus they are not given much-needed affirmation and encouragement.

Factors Affecting the Church's Viability

The second generation may be lost to the church. We are seeing a large 'silent exodus' in many simply slipping out the 'back door'. Rather than trying to impose their own second generation identity, many choose rebellion and flight. Some who leave may go to an English speaking church, but if their parents do not affirm them in this move, then they are more likely to not go to any church at all.²¹

The Characteristics of Anglo-Australians

Many within the dominant culture are unaware of other cultural patterns. They assume that their Anglo-Australian Christian culture is the norm and that people from other cultures will be assimilated into their culture. They have dominance and power, and may assume they will retain it, not expecting minority groups to have a voice or have an impact on the direction and views of their children. Anglo-Australians tend to be individualistic, not as community-oriented as migrant ethnic groups. They use the English language only.

The Needs of Anglo-Australian Groups

There is always a need to be relevant to the surrounding community and that community is bursting with many cultures. The Anglo-Australian church needs to become able to integrate people from other cultures and minister effectively alongside

²¹ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 29.

them; otherwise it becomes a monocultural church in a multicultural community. Often the Anglo church has buildings that are used for only a few hours a week, and may struggle financially to maintain the buildings.

Factors Affecting the Church's Viability

If Anglo-Australian churches remain monocultural they can become less vital, and alienated from the surrounding community. Neighbours may be neglected because they are different, and opportunities for friendship and mission can be lost.

In order to be viable, the three broadly described groups need to be intentional about developing a multicultural vision, each in their own ever-changing context. Each group must develop strategies to help it move forward and adjust to the inevitable further changes that will come with time. The process of these changes is somewhat predictable and this thesis will discuss the process that will be involved for each model of church, illustrating and evaluating them with case studies.

1.3 The Christian Vision for Multiculturalism

Secular Australia's multicultural vision and understanding of multiculturalism implicitly involves much of the Christian vision for a multicultural community. I will look at some biblical foundations of multiculturalism showing how this underlies the theological vision of multicultural church ministry.

In the first book of the Bible we see that God created human beings in God's image and differently from each other (Gen 1:27). It is clear from God's creation that diversity is God's idea and God's great strategy. The Bible contains a vision of human beings created to live in harmony with God. It calls us to seek to unite diverse people as one people of God.

Later, the story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 9 and 10 shows the journey of Israel from a homogeneous to a pluralistic society. A multilingual, multinational humanity is God's intention (Gen 11:1-9). A diverse people come together to build a big tower and

city in order to avoid being scattered abroad, and to escape their God-given diversity. Walter Brueggemann comments that the Babel Tower story has been negatively interpreted as ‘disobedient unity’ and pride.²² But it positively shows that God has called us to a new unity based on faithfulness to God and all people as God’s agents. This affirms that different cultures and languages are part of God’s will and God’s creation. All nations are invited to turn to God (Mt 28:19).²³

Similarly, in the New Testament, the Gospels show Jesus living a life of openness where he breaks down barriers with those who are normally separated from each other.

Jesus welcomed the Samaritan woman (Jn 4), ate with the ‘unclean’ (Mk 2:13-17) and praised the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). When Jesus got angry in the temple he said it should be a house of prayer for all the nations (Mk 11:17). The temple was largely about keeping other cultures out and keeping Jews pure, and Jesus challenged that monocultural system to be more inclusive towards others. The kingdom of God is presented as being profoundly inclusive, and challenges all of our concepts of personal lifestyle and church life which are usually divided ‘along the lines of race, ethnic background, sex, or class’.²⁴

To the early church, Paul says, ‘He is our peace, who made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility’ (Eph 2:14), showing Paul’s experience of Jesus breaking down walls of separation. Jesus brings good news of healing and liberation to Jews and Gentiles alike (Gal 3:27-28). Paul’s central message is that our differences are less important than being united in love. John Barclay argues that in this, ‘Paul does not “erase” or “eradicate” cultural specificities, but relativises them’.²⁵ A part of God is reflected in every culture, while at the same time the gospel challenges every culture. The gospel neither eradicates cultures nor replaces them. Instead, it is a cluster of values focused on love which enable us to practise various cultural traditions.²⁶ This is the multicultural heart of mission. Gerd Baumann sees these multicultural aspirations as

²² Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation Bible Commentaries (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 99.

²³ Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 99.

²⁴ Jim Houston, *Seeds Blowing in the Wind: Review of Multicultural Ministry and Mission* (Melbourne: Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1994), 54.

²⁵ John M G Barclay, “‘Neither Jew nor Greek’: Multiculturalism and the New Perspective on Paul’, in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G Brett (Leiden: E J Brill, 1996), 211.

²⁶ Barclay, ‘Neither Jew nor Greek’, 211.

part of our rethinking, in which a new concern with the meaning and making of culture emerges.²⁷

There is strong biblical foundation for welcoming as the basis for a model of multicultural ministry. In Genesis, the story of Abraham and Sarah's hospitality to strangers becomes the welcoming of angels of God. In the Gospel of Luke, the risen Jesus was revealed as a stranger, a stranger with needs. Those who welcomed the stranger welcomed Jesus. The hospitality of God, as a way of inviting and including those who are different, has a strong message showing authentic ways of being multicultural church. John Koenig points out that hospitality enables the idea of partnership with strangers. Such a concept of partnership, in line with biblical images, reveals hospitality as being more inclusive, including a mutual giving and receiving within God's plan and mystery. This is possible because of our conviction that God's grace is limitless. It involves continually embracing the not-yet included-ones.²⁸ Therefore, the heart of being a multicultural church is the vocation of hospitality to the stranger in our midst.

This raises the question, 'How can the church possibly follow Jesus' example of openness, inclusiveness and marginality?' Being a multicultural church is one way which creates a new community where unity and diversity are equally possible, whether this is the first generation of migrants engaging with the second generation, or Anglo-Australian churches welcoming others and their differences being appreciated.

An American-Korean theologian, Jung Young Lee, speaks on how the marginal place can be a rich place if we preconceive it, not in terms of being powerless, but as following the example of Jesus. Many migrant Australians need to view differently the place where God wants us to be. The marginal way of theology is a place that is richer for being poorer, more sensitive for identifying with others on the edge, and benefits from a Christian view that being on the margins offers. Lee points out that the

²⁷ Gerd Baumann. *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 137-140.

²⁸ John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 7-10.

incarnation of God takes shape as a marginal person. This marginal theology leads to an inclusive approach which is holistic and appropriate for a multicultural society.²⁹

Yet this is God at work with world-changing love, transforming all people, particularly those who are on the edges. For ethnic minorities this means that the Australian church will see them differently. Ross Langmead reflects that they are given a new sense of both dignity and mission.³⁰ This transformation answers the questions that burn in our hearts, and leads to a re-reading of the scripture as in the Emmaus Road story where the roles of the stranger and the two disciples are reversed by the sharing of stories (Luke 24:13-33). As a result God's mission expands and the church becomes genuinely missional in multicultural Australia.

The hospitality is an important gospel metaphor for multicultural churches. Letty Russell describes hospitality as 'a welcoming of strangers out of a delight in the possibility that in that opening of community God might be present'.³¹ The stranger is identified as including all foreigners, the disadvantaged and outsiders in the multicultural context. The gospel welcomes outsiders and so the church is called and empowered to incarnate the mission of God. Authentic multicultural church is centred on the ministry of hospitality as a way of breaking the boundaries of our cultural and racial differences.

The inclusiveness of Jesus' ministry gives us a clue as to the very nature of God and God's desires for us. We are created in God's image and are connected to others.³² Relationship is central within God's hospitality to us. In the practice of the hospitality we offer to others, we are invited to find home. This hospitality of God includes the need for unity and diversity within the church. It is a great challenge, especially in churches where one cultural group has been dominant. The dominant group has to learn

²⁹ Lee, *Marginality*, 71-75.

³⁰ Ross Langmead, 'DM207/307: The Multicultural Church'. Lecture notes (Melbourne: Whitley College, 2nd Semester 2009), 7.

³¹ Letty M Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 152. See Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1975), 51; Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 8.

³² Russell, *Church in the Round*, 17-18.

about giving away its power to the marginal people, while the marginalised people have to learn about standing together instead of instinctively running away.³³

Hospitality therefore embraces a diversity of people and calls them to God's table of welcome. The purpose of sharing this hospitality of God is the unity found and demonstrated in Christ. In this hospitality or 'partnership with strangers' we welcome as Christ has welcomed us. The stranger, the one who is 'other', can be included through listening to their stories and helping them to feel at home.³⁴ Russell concludes, 'It is this unity without uniformity that makes hospitality and diversity possible'.³⁵

This theological vision of multicultural mission in hospitality strongly challenges the slogan-like Australian commitment to multiculturalism, as if it is just a fact of society. The genuine multicultural church does not automatically happen if we do not change, if we do not transform power, structure and practices.

This is never a matter of 'arrival' but only of journeying towards the future. Each group of people has challenges and gifts. First generation migrants need to step out of their comfort zone in order to mix more and have mission opportunities amongst Anglo and other Australians. In spite of fear of difference, Anglo-Australians need to stretch out their arms, opening themselves to the community who are on their doorstep, seeing the vast mission opportunities.

The multicultural vision is that this will be the doorway to a new reality in which cultural barriers are overcome and difference is celebrated in Christ.

1.4 Methodology

³³ Eric H F Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 1996), 71-77.

³⁴ These themes are explored by: Thomas W Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 2-4; Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 8; Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 2000), 4-5.

³⁵ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 173-174.

Research Methodology

This research followed a qualitative research method in order to uncover the shape of different types of multicultural churches and offer a critique based on their experience. ‘Qualitative research is a particular tradition in the social sciences that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms.’³⁶ This approach was considered the most appropriate for examining and evaluating models of multicultural church in the BUV.

Following the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* methods,³⁷ I built up case studies, and then developed theories based on the data I collected. Data was collected from four different churches representing four different models of multicultural church. Case studies for each model were constructed from in-depth interviews with pastors and a focus group from each church. I used the same question guide (see Appendix 2) for the four focus groups and seven individual interviews which yielded more than enough useful data for analysis. I used a highlighter and marked the key ideas that I had gathered from the focus group and key leaders. This enabled me to identify emerging themes and findings from the raw data.

I needed to be aware of my professional role in this research as I am employed by the BUV as the multicultural minister, and was a former multicultural minister of one of the churches in the study. So as the researcher, I inevitably bring some degree of bias and subjectivity to the case studies which need to be acknowledged. To minimise the bias, I withdrew from active involvement in my previous church for the period of the study, and in commenting on the data, I have sought to set aside my preferences so as not to bias the interpretation.

Selection and Choosing the Four Models

The congregations involved in this study were selected for their ability to represent each model, ensuring that each church also differed from the other three in terms of such

³⁶ Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), 9.

³⁷ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition, (London: Sage, 2000), 18-25.

criteria as language groups, migration patterns, economic circumstances, geographical location and size of congregation.

The four models and their representative churches are:

- a. *Monocultural*: Malvern Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church
- b. *Friendship*: Both Victorian Chin Baptist Church and Mooroolbark Baptist Church
- c. *Partnership*: Both the Chinese and English-speaking congregations at Syndal Baptist Church
- d. *Integrated*: Brunswick Baptist Church

Data Collection

The data was collected first of all through my observation while attending worship services in each of the churches. Then there were one or two in-depth interviews with each pastor, and with focus groups made up of a variety of participants in each congregation. In the case of the English congregations of the Friendship and Partnership models I interviewed only a pastor or key leader as I was focused on their experiences of relating to their partnering congregations.

Four congregations were invited to participate in focus-group interviews. The size for each focus group was six to thirteen. The members were selected in consultation with the pastor(s) or other leaders. (See Explanatory Statement, Appendix 1).

Interviews were conducted in English, with translation provided where necessary. The Slavic Church focus group didn't need an interpreter; however, the senior pastor did. For the 'Partnership' model the members of the focus group were diverse but all followed English well, though a couple were less confident than the second-generation young people. However, the Victorian Chin Baptist Church focus group members needed translation as many of them were new arrivals and—reflecting the congregation—had little English. The youth leader led as a translator, but all of them

had access to the question guide in their own language (Hakha Chin) beforehand. (See 'Question Guide' Translated into 'Chin' and 'Russian', Appendices 3 and 4).

The interviews were audio recorded using a digital recorder and later transcribed, in addition to note-taking at three focus groups. After each interview, a summary representing my perception of the interview content was sent to participants for comments on its accuracy.

Focus group participants are referred to anonymously in the thesis to ensure the anonymity of all focus group members in the data. Most reporting refers to group findings rather than individual responses. If individuals are quoted I use church roles to disguise identities. Names of churches and their pastors (or Secretary) are used. The churches and pastors are distinctive and identifiable.

CHAPTER 2

MODELS OF MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

In order to find ideas and principles for developing multicultural ministry and leadership in their individual local contexts I will look at various models of multicultural churches identified in other studies. I will then examine, by means of four different case studies, the character of multicultural church models amongst Baptists in Victoria.

2.1 Concepts of Multicultural Churches

Cross-cultural mission and multicultural ministry in the BUV began after the Second World War with the arrival of migrants from Eastern European countries. Later on, churches formed from the Latin Americas, Middle East countries, South East Asia and other Asian countries generally. Recently migrants from Burma and Africa have also arrived.³⁸

There are about fifty migrant congregations in the BUV,³⁹ representing over twenty different language groups and various different approaches to relating to the wider Victorian Baptist community. Most of them started as monocultural congregations for the first generation, but have been becoming increasingly more aware of the need to build relationships between NESB congregations and Anglo-Australian churches in order to meet the needs of the next generation.

Some migrant ethnic churches remain as separate monocultural structures; some rent facilities and build friendships; a few churches have developed a structural partnership and remain as two identified separate congregations; while others are moving towards being an integrated multicultural church.

³⁸ Langmead and Yang, 'Multicultural Congregations', 121-130.

³⁹ Baptist Union of Victoria, *Year Book 2011*, (Camberwell, Vic.: Baptist Union of Victoria 2011).

2.2 Other Classificatory Frameworks in the Literature

A number of models have been developed which categorise the structures and attitudes of NESB and Anglo churches. For instance, Geoffrey Blackburn outlines five models which relate to the use of languages other than English.⁴⁰ These are:

(i) *Independent Congregational Model*: An Anglo-Australian church shares its facilities with migrant ethnic churches as a way of fulfilling ‘the Great Commission’ of each autonomous church because of their different language and culture.⁴¹

(ii) *One Church Multicongregational Model*: An Anglo church that shares facilities with two or more migrant ethnic congregations where each congregation with has its own leadership and maintains its own autonomy. It is considered by Blackburn to be one church because they share finance and leadership governance. In this structure migrant ethnic congregations are part of the Anglo-Australian church ministry.⁴²

(iii) *Multiethnic or Integrated Congregational Model*: One multiracial congregation that is made up of diverse ethnic groups and cultures, and worships in English. Blackburn draws it as an international church model focusing on evangelism. Its emphasis is on unity: ‘oneness in Christ is more important than belonging to a particular ethnic or language/culture group’. Blackburn does not address the ways in which such a church’s structures and practices reflect cultural diversity.⁴³

(iv) *Bilingual Church Model*: This model provides for self-contained migrant congregations conducting different language services. This is where one church is made up of a partnership between two equal congregations, as is seen in the Tottenham Bilingual Baptist Church. This has one diaconate and finance and constitution. The younger people tend to worship together in English.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Blackburn, ‘A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry’, 245-267.

⁴¹ Blackburn, ‘A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry’, 247-249.

⁴² Blackburn, ‘A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry’, 249-252.

⁴³ Blackburn, ‘A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry’, 253-256.

⁴⁴ Blackburn, ‘A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry’, 257-258.

(v) *Mono-ethnic Church Model*: Separate churches of separate language and cultural groups. Complete autonomy.⁴⁵

Manuel Ortiz posits two groups he labels the *Multicongregational* and *Multiethnic Church* types.⁴⁶ Firstly, the Multicongregational type has three models: ‘renting’, ‘celebration’ and ‘integrative’. It is one church, yet meets as separate congregations that maintain their own autonomy but while being linked in common fellowship and regular services of celebration. A multicultural pastoral leadership team is an essential feature. The three models within his *Multicongregational* types are:

a) *Renting Model*: Provides migrant ethnic groups with facilities on a rental basis to get started in their new ministry. This has limited interactions beyond tenant and landlord relationship.⁴⁷

b) *Celebration Model*: Intends to build relationship through combined services on special occasions at a congregational level, and friendship exchanges at a personal level. It has the potential to become a more multiethnic context as friendship between the people and congregations goes deeper.⁴⁸

c) *Integrative Model*: Has one church partnership with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) congregations. In this model, two or more separated congregations share the vision of a church with equal ownership. They have mutual influence on the life and structure of the church.⁴⁹

Secondly, the *Multiethnic Church (MEC)* type is that of a congregation made up of diverse people using the common language of English.⁵⁰ It reflects an intentional intercultural interaction in the life of the church, utilising a common third culture and

⁴⁵ Blackburn, ‘A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry’, 258-265.

⁴⁶ Ortiz, *One New People*, 63-106.

⁴⁷ Ortiz, *One New People*, 66-69.

⁴⁸ Ortiz, *One New People*, 69-71.

⁴⁹ Ortiz, *One New People*, 72-85.

⁵⁰ Ortiz, *One New People*, 86-105.

dealing with structural changes necessary to assure continuation of diversity. The MEC motivates people to act for racial reconciliation and justice.⁵¹

Jeannie Mok in her book, *The Technicolour Faith: Building a Dynamic Multicultural Church*, distinguishes four models.⁵²

Firstly, the *Multi-Independent Congregation Model* refers to autonomous homogeneous congregations sharing facilities. 'Participation and interaction are normally limited to the leadership level in negotiating the use of space and time', with minimum interaction of diverse groups.⁵³ Leadership coordination is hierarchical.

Secondly, *The One Church Multi-Congregational Model* refers to a church in which different groups meet separately.⁵⁴

Thirdly, the *Satellite and Outreach Services Model* is a form of partnership in which the satellite congregations have their own ministries and meet at different times. Finance is managed by the English-speaking church business manager while each group has sub-accounts. Each group is responsible for their own group's use of resources. The senior pastor and the leaders of satellite congregations meet regularly for 'consultation and interaction'.⁵⁵

Lastly, the *Integration Multicultural Model* is where one congregation is made up of culturally and linguistically diverse groups. This model is defined by both quantitative and qualitative criteria. That is, a congregation which is made up of diverse people has significant commitments to the contextualising of ministry and to a structure reflecting this diverse cultural context.⁵⁶

Building on these other classificatory approaches, this research examines four different kinds of multicultural frameworks, which I devised as most closely describing the make-up and practices of multicultural churches in the BUV. My four models are

⁵¹ Ortiz, *One New People*, 88-89.

⁵² Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 36-45.

⁵³ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 37.

⁵⁴ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 37-39.

⁵⁵ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 39-40.

⁵⁶ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 40-45.

based on the models of multicultural church described by Geoffrey Blackburn, Manuel Ortiz and Jeannie Mok, but differ slightly in name and structure.

My four models are:

1. Monocultural Model
2. Friendship Model
3. Partnership Model
4. Integrated Model

I will now move on to describe my four models and then compare them with those of Blackburn, Ortiz and Mok, showing why I chose slightly different models.

2.3 The Four Models

Monocultural Model

The Monocultural model is defined as a congregational church that is homogeneous in language, ethnicity and culture. It is what Blackburn labels a mono-ethnic church and Mok labels an ethnic church. In this model, when migrants arrive from overseas they look for a place to meet people from their homeland, and worship according to their own customs and in their own language. Language is often pivotal to this model in which a church of one culture exists separated from significant relationships with those of other cultures.⁵⁷

Peter Wagner's Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP) claims that people like to worship with others like them, and that this is the best way to go in growing a church in the context of ethnic minorities or of any community.⁵⁸ The principles of homogeneity emphasise that evangelism and church growth will be most effective where a congregation and its leadership are of one racial and economic group. This claim is controversial, for the church's role in ministry and mission is to embrace all

⁵⁷ Ortiz, *One New People*, 65.

⁵⁸ Peter C Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990), 67.

humankind. Ortiz critiques the HUP that ‘has been a hindrance to race relations and to racial and ethnic reconciliation in the Christian community’.⁵⁹

In addition, it is not clear that the only way to grow is within homogeneous churches. For example, Moonee Ponds Baptist Church is multiracial, yet their church growth is evident as people from different ethnic backgrounds are incorporated into the body. Evangelism in this community has resulted in the growth of diversity in the church.

The monocultural model or structure of congregation provides a basis for a church community to maintain and celebrate cultural integrity and identity. Participation and interaction in recognised ministries are generally limited to the leadership level, with the pastor having the authority. Newcomers are expected to assimilate into the church culture. The congregations may start by renting a building, but the aim is to have their own church buildings and an independent congregational church. Such a model reflects the sociological fact that people like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers.

This monocultural model was assumed in the BUV’s ‘New Settlers’ Baptist Churches’ strategy. Anglo-Australian churches which follow the dominant culture also fall into this category, because they effectively minister only to Anglo people and those assimilated by this culture over several generations.

BUV churches I identify as operating in this model include:

Arabic, Central Chinese, Darebin Samoan, Dandenong Samoan, Eastern Chin, Emmanuel Grace Chinese, Indonesian, Hungarian, Kingsville (Slovakian), Malvern Slavic, Melbourne Chinese, The First Romanian, The Terminal (Pacific Islanders), Western Romanian, Melbourne Chin, Faith (Filipino), The Hope of Life (Filipino), and a number of Anglo-Australian churches.

Friendship Model

The Friendship model refers to a congregation that has some kind of cross-cultural relationship with another congregation. It encompasses Blackburn’s ‘independent

⁵⁹ Ortiz, *One New People*, 45.

congregations' and 'multi-congregational church', Ortiz's 'multicongregational church' and Mok's 'multi-independent congregations'. This model is also influenced by the Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP) that the congregation effectively evangelise and engage members of their own linguistic communities. The host congregation provides migrant ethnic groups with facilities on a rental basis, primarily for Sunday worship.⁶⁰ Each church retains its own leadership, constitution and financial and administrative structure. The two churches are alongside rather than interacting with each other, and usually express little desire to share in ministry.

While the newer migrant church is motivated by the need for a built environment to resource its ministry, the English-speaking church, as the 'landlord', is often motivated by stewardship, a desire to make good use of their buildings and to benefit from the financial return. Or they may see the support of the migrant church as its mission. For example, Box Hill Baptist Church hosted a Cambodian congregation, with a former missionary the anchor for both congregations. Pastors are central to this mission.

This model of ministry can develop to become a relational partnership, with each group moving beyond the landlord/tenant understanding towards various expressions of friendship. The church leaders may, in some circumstances, share in administration and prayers coordinated by the pastors. In some examples of this model, children from the two groups meet, play and talk with one another quite apart from their parents' intentions. Often, however, migrant ethnic churches experience little more than suspicion and a kind of repressed hostility.

This model can give new migrants the opportunity to either identify themselves with the predominantly Anglo-Australian services in the 'mother' church, or with their own ethnic group. However, the Anglo congregation's dominance in such arrangements is expressed through ownership of the building, its administration and its financial management. Synergy rarely takes place on the membership level as members do not regularly meet together.

BUV churches I identify in this model, in which the dominant group shares resources, with some solidarity and friendship, include:

⁶⁰ Ortiz, *One New People*, 66.

Box Hill (Cambodian), Doveton (Sudanese), Mooroolbark (Victorian Chin), Newport (Pwo Karen), Werribee (Karen), Reservoir (Vietnamese), Mitcham (Lai Chin), Bendigo Kangaroo Flat (Karen), Geelong Cloverdale (Karen), New Hope (Chinese), Westgate (Karen), Croydon Hills (Karen), Auburn (Grace Romanian), Balwyn (Indonesian Sidang), Rowville (Eastern Chinese), Templestowe (Chinese), Hawthorn West (Indian), Kingsville (Zhotung Chin), Tottenham (Matu Chin), Lautu Chin (Spotswood), Chin (The Hope of Life), Bendigo (Karen) and Crosspoint (Hosanna Samoan), and North Balwyn (Chinese).

Partnership Model

The Partnership model is not only about sharing a facility but also equal ownership and management of that facility for clearly negotiated missional purposes. Blackburn labels this type the bilingual church and Mok the one-church-multicongregational or the satellite and outreach services model.

This model desires more than a landlord-tenant relationship. Structure in constitution, finance and administration is centralised. This structure allows a ‘zone of comfort’ to emerge in which both established and migrant groups may interact. Worship is still separate, but with combined services on a regular basis. Leaders of the congregations see themselves as one team. Interaction across services happens at all levels. The Sunday school and young people tend to meet across congregations. In consequence, the second generation of the migrant congregation often attends a more youth-oriented English-speaking service.

This model defines a multicultural church with a balance of unity and diversity. Mok believes that in this kind of model, ‘Ethnic identity and differences are given room for expression in their own services, yet they join in unity with one another in vision and mission’.⁶¹ Ortiz advises that where both churches use each other’s languages in their services, its goals for racial and ethnic reconciliation become more attainable.⁶²

⁶¹ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 39.

⁶² Ortiz, *One New People*, 72.

A core ethos of such ministry is to reach out to others without losing one's own uniqueness. Evangelism is a high priority. At the same time, shared buildings make for better stewardship. From time to time joint celebrations of worship may be held, expressing a visible unity in Christ.

BUV churches in this model include:

Western New Community (Vietnamese and Chinese); Berwick (Nazaret Spanish-Speaking); Northcote (Chinese); Bently (Korean); Tottenham Bi-lingual (Spanish-Speaking); Sydal (Chinese and Vietnamese) and Crossway (Chinese - Mandarin and Cantonese -, Indonesian, Korean and Arabic).

Integrated Model

The Integrated model is made up of diverse ethnic and cultural groups including those of Anglo-Australian culture. Churches in this model not only have people of various ethnic backgrounds but also seek to ensure that such people are able to influence the life, theology and ministry of the church. My term 'integrate' is similar to Blackburn's and Mok's, while Ortiz labels it the multiethnic church.

Although there is one common language, English, such congregations exhibit many visual and spoken symbols of commitment to multiculturalism.⁶³ This commitment to multiculturalism expresses 'people's willingness and desire to integrate with other cultures'.⁶⁴ According to Ortiz, the key principles of this model are intentional inclusiveness, justice and racial reconciliation, multiethnic leadership and a contextualisation of worship and the Word in multicultural reality.⁶⁵ It recognises and affirms the different cultural values and practices of those in the minority, which marks it out as different from the Monocultural model.⁶⁶ The Integrated model can be exciting. However, it is also the most challenging of the models, as it seeks to embrace

⁶³ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 43.

⁶⁴ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 43.

⁶⁵ Ortiz, *One New People*, 88-90.

⁶⁶ Kathleen Graces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multicultural Church on a Mission* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 85.

and maintain a participation in the life of the church by people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

BUV churches in this model include:

Auburn, Brunswick, Camberwell, Footscray, Ferntree Gully, Moonee Ponds, New Hope, and Werribee.

In the table below, I have set out the four models of multicultural church as I have conceived them, and placed the models of the other authors in the corresponding columns underneath.

Of the other writers examined here, Blackburn and Mok's ethnic or monoethnic churches are basically the same as what I have termed a monocultural church, except that my model includes Anglo-Australian churches, where theirs refers only to migrant churches. Ortiz's study focuses on how to develop a multiethnic church, and does not examine the monoethnic church.

The category that I have designated the Friendship model is very similar to categories designated by Blackburn and Mok. Ortiz has only one category, 'multicongregational church', that spans two categories in each of the other models, and which are called Friendship and Partnership in my model. Ortiz has three models within his multicongregational type, and of these the first two, 'renting' and 'celebration', are parallel to my Friendship model.

Ortiz's third type of 'multicongregational church', labelled 'integrative', as well as both Blackburn's 'one church multi-congregational' and 'bilingual church' and Mok's 'the one church multi-congregation' and 'the satellite and outreach services' are parallel to my Partnership model in which a migrant church is in formal partnership with a host-country church.

The common thread for the final category, which I have called Integrated, is that the congregation is intentionally multicultural. However the definition of 'multicultural' varies: for Blackburn and Mok, the point is that there are significant numbers of people from various cultures attending the church. Mok describes 'Jesus Culture' as the transcendent culture for this diverse group. Ortiz highlights the importance of issues of

justice, non-racism and the level of engagement. My own model makes the point that the church is influenced by each of the cultures represented, and not just by the dominant culture. The primary difference between my concept of the models and that of the others featured here, is that I examine the necessity for movement between the models. That is, a church that represents a particular model needs to be aware of where it needs to move to next, in order to remain vital and viable. It cannot be presumed that any one model is an end point in itself.

Different Multicultural Church Models

	1	2	3	4
Meewon Yang	Monocultural	Friendship	Partnership	Integrated
Geoffrey Blackburn	Mono-ethnic Church	Independent Congregations	One Church Multi-congregational Bilingual Church	Multiethnic or Integrated Congregation
Manuel Ortiz		Multicongregational Church: a. Renting c. Integrative b. Celebration		Multiethnic Church
Jeannie Mok	Ethnic church	The Multi-Independent Congregation	The One Church Multi-Congregation The Satellite and Outreach Services	The Integration Multicultural

I categorise my four models as ‘Monocultural’, ‘Friendship’, ‘Partnership’ and ‘Integrated’. These models can be arranged along a spectrum, from a weak commitment to working with cultural and theological differences, to a strong commitment. The overlapping of these models means that some churches may fit more or less into two models, as in diagram 1. A church within the Friendship model, for example, may display stronger personal relationships than a church within the (usually stronger) Partnership model.

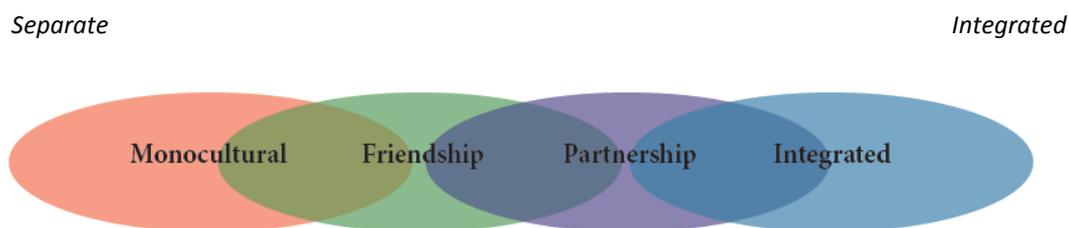


Diagram 1 – Overlap Between the Models

In fact, it seems more appropriate for the purpose of this study to envisage the models as positions on a circular continuum rather than a linear spectrum, as in diagram 2. A strong approach to the Integrated model, for example, in which integration approaches assimilation, might display characteristics of the Monocultural model. (See diagrams 1 and 2).

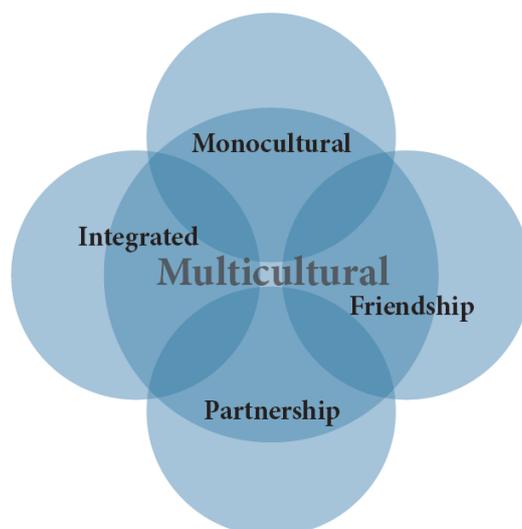


Diagram 2 – The Circular Relationship of the Models

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES

These case studies seek to show how each church studied approached the areas of worship, pastoral care, decision-making processes, leadership, mission statement and vision. Of particular interest were what resources the church had for continuing into the future, whether the young people were involved in the life of the church, and the extent to which the church was addressing issues arising from being in Australia. The church was also evaluated in terms of its attitude to other cultures, and to the gospel message of hospitality and inclusivity as expressed by its mission statements and actual practice as described in answers to the questionnaire.

3.1 MONOCULTURAL MODEL: Malvern Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church

The Slavic Baptist Church is situated in Malvern in the South Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and gathers about 250 Russian-speaking people from Slavic countries. The church is just over sixty years old and was initially comprised of refugees from the Second World War and communist oppression establishing a new life in Australia. The Slavic Baptist Church's approach is monocultural.⁶⁷ It serves different waves of migrants and their children, who have adopted the Australian lifestyle to different degrees, but specifically those who have a Slavic language and cultural background and feel at home in a Slavic evangelical tradition.⁶⁸

History and Background

The Slavic Baptist Church commenced with a home fellowship in 1949 and the church formed in 1950. In 1951 the church used the church building of Albert Street Baptist Church, and then moved to Richmond Baptist Church in 1958. Finally, in 1976, they moved to Malvern Baptist Church where they have been for 35 years.

⁶⁷ Although Slavic Baptist Church is diverse within the Slavic language group (mainly Russian, Ukrainian and Polish), I simply define it monocultural as it is dominated by one culture in Australia.

⁶⁸ Viktor Zander, 'Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria', *PhD thesis* (Deakin University, 1999), 8.

The Slavic church's ministry is to Slavic believers. They have had three large waves of migration and each has different characteristics.⁶⁹ The first wave was refugees from Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian backgrounds following World War II. They had lived in the USSR under communist rule. During WWII they were taken to Germany as slave labour for Nazi Germany. The refugees under the communist Soviet Union did not want to go back under the communist regime after the war and so came to Australia under the United Nations Refugee Resettlement Program.⁷⁰

A language-specific Slavic church was needed for those who could not speak English or who had insufficient English. With a different background to the Anglo-Australians, it was difficult for the Slavic, of both Orthodox and evangelical backgrounds, to attend an Australian Baptist church. Thus, the evangelical Slavic newcomers felt it necessary to form the Slavic Evangelical Baptist church.⁷¹

The second wave, between 1952 and 1975, comprised refugees (via China) from Stalinist oppression in the 1930s.⁷² They crossed borders illegally from the Soviet Union to China and settled there. When China became communist in 1949 they came to Australia under the United Nations Refugee Program, helped by the World Council of Churches.⁷³

The third large group of Slavic migrants resettled when communism collapsed in the Soviet Union in 1991 and they were given visas by the Australian government as qualified migrants. Their needs were different from the first two groups. Mostly they were educated, professional people who spoke some English. They were not mostly from Baptist churches in the Soviet Union, but secular people. Some of them were converted through the evangelistic outreach of Malvern Slavic Baptist Church.⁷⁴ Now

⁶⁹ 'Waves' are periods of intense immigration when a significant number of people migrate in a short period of time. Zander, 'Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria', 90-107.

⁷⁰ Zander, 'Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria', 90-97.

⁷¹ Rev Dr Nickolai Porublev, former national Slavic President and former pastor of Malvern Slavic Baptist Church, Phone interview by the author (11 Feb 2011).

⁷² The 'Second Wave' ethnic groups are Russian, Polish, Slovak and Yugoslav people who were born in China.

⁷³ Zander, 'Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria', 98-103 and 149.

⁷⁴ Zander, 'Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria', 104 -107; Porublev, Interview.

there are fewer coming because the Australian immigration system is more stringent and there are not as many people wishing to come from the former Soviet States.⁷⁵

People

The Slavic Baptist Church is characterised by a language group that has diverse ethnicities mainly from Russia and the former Soviet Union countries, such as Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Belorussia, Moldavia and Serbia.⁷⁶ Viktor Zander comments that although it appears a homogeneous group there is some diversity.⁷⁷

The church was planted especially for the first generation migrants who had little English and needed to have language-specific services. Like so many other first-generation migrant churches the group did not aim to form a new identity in a new culture but to preserve an old world identity in the new country, ‘where the maintenance of strong boundaries of identity requires emotional commitment’.⁷⁸

The identity of the Slavic community is closely connected with ethnicity and religion. Understanding the language and culture of those the church wishes to convert is a very strong factor for the Slavic Church who, acting on Peter Wagner’s Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP),⁷⁹ wish to allow more effective evangelism amongst their own people of Jewish and Orthodox backgrounds.

The congregation numbers approximately 250 people. They live in all different suburbs of Melbourne within a forty kilometre radius, some closer, but nobody within in the immediate vicinity of the church. The majority of people have lived in Australia for more than fifteen years and others have been in Australia since WWII.⁸⁰ There have been very few Russian-speaking migrants coming to Australia

⁷⁵ Porublev, Interview.

⁷⁶ Slavic Baptist Church, Focus group with author (13 June 2010).

⁷⁷ Zander, ‘Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria’, 2.

⁷⁸ Zander, ‘Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria’, 15.

⁷⁹ Zander, ‘Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria’, 148-149; Slavic, Focus group.

⁸⁰ For instance, there were eight people in the focus group: four people have lived in Australia between 51 and 61 years and the other four members have been here 15 to 18 years; this is indicative of the migrant congregation.

over the last ten years and those who do are highly educated professionals. Many migrants are Russian Orthodox and some are Russian Jews, both of whom are regarded by this group as non-Christians. Among the recent migrants are the pastor's family who have lived in Australia for three years after being called by the Slavic church to Australia from Russia.⁸¹

Worship

The community language is Russian. The structure of worship is formal, led by the pastors and leaders. It is Russian in style; for example, poems are always included - this is a part of people's stories and testimonies. Dress is formal; some women wear a scarf or hat and men generally wear suits.

Songs are on the screen, with a traditional and contemporary mix. Sometimes the congregation has special items in other languages and cultural songs from places where people are from. On the day I visited (13 June 2010) a woman led with a poem in Ukrainian. In including other languages there are some similarities to the Integrated model, illustrating my earlier suggestion that although it is conventional to see churches along a line from monocultural to integrated, a circular model is closer to reality. Special equipment with earphones and simultaneous translation is used for non-Russian-speaking visitors. The principle for this is inclusion, to help others feel welcomed at the service.⁸²

My observation of the worship was that everybody seemed to know the format well; families tended to sit together and speakers were older men, apart from song leaders. The announcements were made by the secretary and included people's news, indicating members who are back in their homelands for visits, and visitors from their homelands at the service. The pastoral and community prayers included prayers for their homelands (a few were mentioned) and the election of the Australian Government, reflecting a sense of 'home' in both countries.

⁸¹ Slavic, Focus group.

⁸² Slavic, Focus group.

Children and young people who are educated in English tend to go to English-speaking churches. The Slavic Church had parallel Slavic and English services for some years, but four years ago the English-speaking people from Slavic backgrounds decided to go to Australian churches, so they now do not have English language services. If there are young people who cannot understand Russian in the future, the church may need English services.⁸³

Pastoral Care

The senior pastor's authority is significant. The pastor's visitation, prayers and comfort for the migrants' lives is central to encouraging the community. Pastoral care and visitation is formally structured and there are special meetings with the church council when people have a crisis. All major pastoral care is by the pastor, or is delegated by him.⁸⁴

Often pastoral care is seen as evangelistic, with an opportunity for witnessing to God. For example, the pastor visits a newcomer who shares conversion experiences. Others come along with the pastor and find spiritual growth, sharing the encouragement. There are many aspects of pastoral support—illness, families in crisis, isolation and immigration matters such as bringing relatives out to Australia. The pastor opens his home and his wife provides table hospitality for the visitors. The pastor's wife plays an important role in this, together with the pastor.⁸⁵

Other forms of pastoral care for people include participating in the members' family events such as birthdays, weddings, Mother's Days and graduations. The principles of pastoral care are seen as encouragement, comfort, priestly duties, evangelism, consultation with families, and prayers.⁸⁶

⁸³ Porublev, Interview.

⁸⁴ Slavic, Focus group.

⁸⁵ Rev Alexander Puzanov, Senior Pastor of Malvern Slavic Baptist Church, Interview by the author (22 May 2010).

⁸⁶ Puzanov, Interview.

Church Life

There are regular structured worship gatherings at church during the week apart from Sunday's worship, such as Bible studies, prayer meetings, singing practice and Thursday and Friday night worship.

Outreach programs happen four times a year in order to invite Russian-speaking non-Christian friends and new people to the church; these are extended through friendship and social evenings. It helps people who don't have the chance to come to church because of work or distance. This gives opportunity to welcome newcomers and other minority cultural people by presenting traditional cultural items (Slovakian, Moldavian, etc.) and sharing cultural food. The messages are presented by the pastor at the church and all present have fellowship around the table afterwards.⁸⁷

The Russian school, founded with the mission to reach Russian-speaking people, is run by the church leadership. It is registered with the Victorian Board of Studies and began in 1993. This provides significant contact for community outreach and the pastor attends each week. Its main aim is outreach. There are 115 students each year including children and Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) students. It is also outreach to the students' non-Christian grandparents and parents who are Russian-speaking people.⁸⁸

National Slavic Baptist conferences are held once a year in different states. Growing spiritually and holidaying are the combined purposes. Non-Christians are invited and welcomed at the conference.⁸⁹

Decision-making Process

The pastor's authority is very high as the spiritual leader. The church council is elected by the church and it carries the church leadership alongside the pastor. It makes

⁸⁷ Slavic, Focus group.

⁸⁸ Puzanov, Interview.

⁸⁹ Puzanov, Interview.

decisions on behalf of the church, but the important and major items are voted on by the members' meeting.⁹⁰

The church council is made up of twelve men, currently between 29 and 80 years old of age. It acknowledges young and old people's spiritual gifts, but maintains strong boundaries of patriarchal tradition. Anyone can come and observe the council meeting but there is no opportunity to vote. At the focus group, however, a woman said that she had not known about this opportunity. They admitted it was very rare for anyone to take up this option.⁹¹ Women's voices can be heard through sub-committees that include women and they communicate with the deacons. They resolve tensions by trusting that good decisions will be made by the church council and they accept the results of a vote in line with the constitution. This is a formal structure with a traditional view, with the corollary that it is less open to change and flexibility than less hierarchical structures.⁹²

Leadership

Leadership is characterised by a hierarchical style by the pastor and the church council's leadership. Having great authority, the pastor is the head of the church; a dominant and prophetic figure befitting the patriarchal Russian culture. The pastor chairs and runs meetings and social events, and holds many responsibilities.⁹³

The leadership structure in the church goes from the pastor to the church council (twelve male deacons), and then the committee leaders (including women) and church members.

At the focus group, a woman acknowledged that the church council is an all-male team. She added that 'probably the younger generation will have more of an issue than we do and may demand to be included...there is always softening of the male dominance by a female presence'.⁹⁴ But the other women accepted it as a biblical principle of top-down

⁹⁰ Slavic, Focus group.

⁹¹ Slavic, Focus group.

⁹² Puzanov, Interview; Slavic, Focus group.

⁹³ Puzanov, Interview; Slavic, Focus group.

⁹⁴ Slavic, Focus group.

leadership done in consultation with the groups.⁹⁵ It is part of the identity of Slavic church that in preserving ethnic culture the gender issue is seen within an old world identity in the new country.⁹⁶

The Mission/Vision Statement

The main goal of the Slavic community is to reach out to Russian-speaking people in Melbourne, as indicated by the church's name 'Malvern Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church'.⁹⁷

The pastor describes the church's mission statement as follows: 'First is to glorify our God. Secondly, that those who attend our church meetings grow spiritually. Thirdly, as we are in a foreign country, with a different culture, and there are a lot of Russian-speaking people here, our vision is to reach as many of those Russian people as we can. A lot of Russian people would never go to an Australian church'.⁹⁸ Thus, a clear vision for the church is to bring Good News to Russian-speaking people in Melbourne. Both the pastor and focus group acknowledge that the majority of Russians are Orthodox and Russian Jews, and their mission is to reach out to these Russians in Melbourne. Russians are more effective than other churches because they speak the same language and 'we can understand them in that context of culture, and in the context of religion maybe approach them differently'.⁹⁹

A second, less formally stated reason for the church is that though some people speak English well, they prefer and understand more fully the Russian language, and it is seen as important to preserve and maintain the language for the people of the community.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Slavic, Focus group.

⁹⁶ Zander, 'Identity and Marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria', 15.

⁹⁷ Porublev, Interview.

⁹⁸ Puzanov, Interview.

⁹⁹ Slavic, Focus group.

¹⁰⁰ Slavic, Focus group.

Engaging in Multicultural Ministry

The Slavic Church's multicultural engagement is mainly with people of Eastern European countries who understand the Russian language. Russian commercial TV in Melbourne connects them to broader Slavic communities, including Orthodox and Russian Jewish communities.¹⁰¹

One focus group member mentioned that the congregation remembers the past events, such as the New Settlers' rallies organised by the NSBAV.¹⁰² In the past these events held a huge importance for the church's identity and connection with other churches. In the rallies they shared their cultural music through their choir, soloist and orchestra. The same person indicated that he was unaware of any current multicultural events within the BUV.¹⁰³

Multicultural mission can be seen in a number of strategies employed by the church. For example, the translation service for English-speaking people at service every Sunday is a way of multicultural inclusion.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, there are many social activities offered to the Slavic community¹⁰⁵ such as the Russian Club, run by the church, which is a social gathering place where Russians gather together to spend time. There are also special multicultural events once every three months for the wider Russian community. People wear their national costumes and prepare their culturally-specific food.

The church organises soccer games for Russian young people who love playing soccer. This is mostly with Russian-speaking people, including non-Christians, but sometimes with other Anglo-Australian Baptists as well. The church also sees the Russian school as a multicultural ministry because it gives the students an identity by learning the language and gaining more of the culture of Russian classics, history and the knowledge

¹⁰¹ Slavic, Focus group.

¹⁰² The program of the rallies included preaching and music from mainly eastern European migrant churches.

¹⁰³ Slavic, Focus group.

¹⁰⁴ Slavic, Focus group.

¹⁰⁵ Puzanov, Interview; Slavic, Focus group.

of Russian heritage. This reflects their view that they are a monolingual group with a certain multicultural breadth.

Relating to Other Congregations

The church relates closely only to other Russian-speaking congregations. Berwick Baptist Church also has some Russians as well as hierarchical and family ties, and they have a good relationship, sharing some activities such as soccer and mission projects.

There are no strong ties to the Baptist Union of Victoria. The pastor said, ‘In Australia we don’t have strong communication with other churches beyond the Slavic Baptist Churches in Australia’.¹⁰⁶

Hopes for the Future Slavic Church

The Slavic Baptist Church is hopeful about its future. Its members hope there may be an influx of Russian immigrants who don’t speak English, though there are no indicators that another wave is likely.¹⁰⁷

Children going to the Russian school will continue with the Russian language and, the church hopes, will stay members of the church. The pastor strongly believes that the second generation of young people will prefer to go to the Russian-speaking church for their spiritual growth. Having two languages, they can fit in well in both the Australian and Russian communities. On the other hand, a member of the focus group pointed out that the second-generation may not stay. They have already lost many who have gone to other English-speaking churches.

The pastor sees the future of church as monolingual, not moving to a bi-lingual service other than by translation: ‘If someone doesn’t speak the language and only speaks English, they can still be in the same service having it translated for them’. He said that

¹⁰⁶ Puzanov, Interview.

¹⁰⁷ Puzanov, Interview.

‘Jesus said a house that divides from within itself will not survive’.¹⁰⁸ He hopes the Russian-speaking church will bring much fruit for the kingdom of God.

Emerging Themes

The Slavic **people** are made up of many ethnicities from the former Soviet Union countries, based on the Russian language group. They are separate from other communities, identifying themselves as a monolingual and largely monocultural church community. The church caters primarily for first generation migrants who have limited English. The principle behind this is the preservation of culture and language. They face second and third-generational issues after more than sixty years as there is little ongoing migration and the congregation is ageing.

The structure of **worship** is formal, led by the pastors and leaders. Their worship style has the same format as in the Russian tradition. The language used is Russian, apart from special items from other cultures and languages. Dress is formal. Earphones with a simultaneous translation service indicate a welcome for non-Russian-speaking visitors.

Pastoral care is done by the pastor, who is the spiritual leader. The pastor’s arrival at his interview armed with briefcase and Bible symbolised this. Such care has a formal prayer style and is often structured as worship. Pastoral care is viewed as an opportunity for evangelism, witnessing to God.

Church life has been centred on providing meeting places for worship and fellowship as well as communities of support for people uprooted by war as migrants struggle to adjust to life in a foreign land.¹⁰⁹

The **decision-making process** is hierarchical, led by the pastor and the church council, with the congregation trusting the pastor’s and council’s decision, and accepting the results of a vote in line with the constitution.

The **leadership** style is formal and displays a patriarchal Russian approach. The pastor is the spiritual leader, the head of the church, and leads the life of the church and its

¹⁰⁸ Puzanov, Interview.

¹⁰⁹ Blackburn, ‘A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry’, 258.

events. Deacons are traditionally all male but of different ages. Women have a voice through the leaders of other sub-committees which meet regularly.

In terms of multiculturalism, **the mission and vision** of the Slavic church is to reach out to the Russian-speaking people in Melbourne, as they see themselves in a foreign country and a different culture. As the majority of Russians are Orthodox and Russian Jews, their mission is to reach out to these Russians in Melbourne. Russian-speaking people can approach other Russians more effectively than other Australian churches can because they understand them in the context of their own religion and culture.

3.2 FRIENDSHIP MODEL: Victorian Chin and Mooroolbark Baptist Church

Background and History

The Victorian Chin Baptist Church (VCBC) commenced in March 2003 with thirteen refugees from Burma via India. All of them were men except for the pastor's wife. A fast-growing community of Chin refugees has since resettled in Australia under the humanitarian settlement program. The church was formally recognised by the BUV in 2008. Most people have been in Australia less than ten years, with new refugee arrivals continuing to come.¹¹⁰ There are now over 500 people attending.¹¹¹

Mooroolbark Baptist Church (MBC) was approached by the Chin pastor to serve the Chin people, a large number of whom are living nearby. They needed a church building to accommodate people who speak little English as they are a new NESB group, and the expectation is that many more Chin refugees will arrive in the future. The location of the church building close to public transport is also important to a migrant congregation.¹¹²

The Chin pastor and a few Chin people started to worship at Mooroolbark Baptist Church, and then later on the Chin congregation began to worship separately from the

¹¹⁰ Some migrants have been in Australia for 10 years but most have been in Australia 3 to 6 years coming via Malaysia, India and Burma. All church members came as refugees.

¹¹¹ Rev Japheth Lian, Senior Pastor of Victorian Chin Baptist Church, Interview by the author (6 July, 2010).

¹¹² Lian, Interview.

English congregation as more Chin people gathered. The MBC pastor and deacons showed interest in this ministry opportunity, allowing the Chin congregation to use the building and supporting the new congregation. The Chin congregation is independent, with no expectation of a financial contribution from MBC; however, they do make regular contributions to MBC.¹¹³

The Chin pastor sees the English congregation's pastor as his mentor. The English-speaking senior pastor invited the Chin pastor to join the pastoral team especially for the first year, with the intention of supporting him for Chin ministry and praying together.¹¹⁴

The two congregations have a combined service once each year and, prior to the Chin pastor's ordination, the MBC pastor led communion and baptism services for them as an unordained pastor is unable to perform these rituals in Chin cultural tradition. The congregations pray for one another. On the church notice board and in MBC's church directory the Chin pastor is included on the ministry team. Chin ministry prayer points have been included in the MBC bulletin, particularly during the first few years.¹¹⁵ Chin children have joined some activities such as the Girls' and Boys' Brigades of MBC. Although there is little interaction between the churches at a grass roots level, communication functions well at the leadership level.¹¹⁶

In 2007 the VCBC formed a Building Committee and in 2009 purchased land to build their own church. Presently, they are waiting for building permission. The secretary said that MBC is happy to see the VCBC is doing well and blesses VCBC's future.¹¹⁷ The MBC sees the Chin congregation as a part of MBC's ministry and as an opportunity to share resources, but they are clearly two different churches in one building.

¹¹³ Stephen Blackwell, Secretary of Mooroolbark Baptist Church, Interview by the author (15 April 2011).

¹¹⁴ Lian, Interview.

¹¹⁵ Lian, Interview. Since the MBC pastor, who was the primary connection with the Chin pastor, moved on, the relationship has weakened and fewer are interested.

¹¹⁶ Blackwell, Interview.

¹¹⁷ Blackwell, Interview.

People

VCBC (approximately 540 people including children) is made up of people from Chin State in Burma, who have mostly arrived as refugees over the last five years. There are many Chin dialects but the congregation consists mainly of Hakha-speaking people or those who understand Hakha.¹¹⁸ As a young migrant community the children are strongly influenced by their parents to speak Hakha Chin (unlike the Slavic Baptist Church where children now need to be Sunday-schooled in English). This fact indicates the Chin church's understanding of its mission is primarily for Chin people in Victoria. Newcomers are expected to fit into the Hakha-Chin culture.¹¹⁹

There is diversity within the congregation despite ethnicity being central. For example, five or six different denominational backgrounds are represented.¹²⁰ The majority of the attendees live within five kilometres of the church but some travel from the west and north of Melbourne.¹²¹

Worship

The worship style reflects the Chin tradition. Sunday worship is organised by the pastor with the support of the pulpit committee. Essentially the worship is led by a roster of twelve deacons and the sermon is preached mainly by the pastor, but also by the deacons and members. The leaders sit on the platform as is Chin church tradition. The worship structure is predictable. Songs are largely from the Chin hymnal (missionary hymns) and contemporary praise and worship songs. Youth sing more contemporary songs, which are translated into Hakha.

When combined services are held they are bilingual. My interviews with both congregations indicate that there is virtually no impact or influence on each group by the other congregation, as services are separate, including the children and youth group.

¹¹⁸ There are also two Karen Burmese people who are partners of Chin members.

¹¹⁹ Victorian Chin Baptist Church, Focus group, (22 May 2010).

¹²⁰ Lian, Interview.

¹²¹ Chin, Focus group.

Church Life

The pastors occasionally exchange and preach at each other's services. The Chin pastor encourages the Chin members to connect with the MBC English congregations for encouragement. The Chin choir has performed once in a MBC service on a special occasion.¹²²

There are one hundred and twenty children in the Chin Sunday School which is organised by Chin leaders. Other programs are: youth service on Saturday night; fasting prayer on Saturday; youth choir practice on Friday night; and women's services on Sunday night held at Mooroolbark Anglican Church (as MBC also has its own youth service on Sunday night).

The activities and programs of each congregation and ministries are quite separate. For example, the English congregation has an active soccer ministry but it is rare that they play with teams from the Chin congregation. In reverse, the Chin congregation's programs are also to equip only the Chin people to serve.¹²³

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care primarily deals with resettlement issues, such as welcoming new arrivals, assisting in registering with Centrelink and Medicare, opening bank accounts and finding accommodation.¹²⁴ The pastor is trusted and, because of the language barrier, required to interpret at schools, medical appointments and agencies. The expectations by the community of the pastor are clearly huge:

People ask for pastoral care mostly over the phone without making an appointment; they come any time. For the Chin it's traditionally seven days a week and I have my mobile phone on twenty-four hours a day.¹²⁵

¹²² Lian, Interview.

¹²³ BUV runs a multicultural soccer day annually. Mooroolbark soccer club has taken part as an Anglo-Australian team. The Mooroolbark soccer team leader shared that there wasn't much interaction between the two cultural groups, even though the Chin congregation also has a soccer team.

¹²⁴ Lian, Interview. The pastor said even though the government, through the Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) and Migrant Resource Centre (MRC), is assisting them, this service is only Monday to Friday within office hours. Therefore, after hours and on weekends the church is heavily involved.

¹²⁵ Lian, Interview.

As leaders of the church, the pastor and deacons visit newcomers expressing support. They particularly visit new arrivals from their homeland with provision of a twenty-five kilogram bag of rice. This is a way of welcoming and blessing the new migrants.¹²⁶

In Chin culture, the pastor's wife is also actively involved in pastoral care support alongside the pastor. The pastor said,

As a pastor's wife, sometimes she can pray for a family, even on the telephone and give encouragement. We do pastoral care together and most of the time my wife is involved unless it's a confidential pastoral issue.¹²⁷

Home visits are very important. People move frequently as they rent their homes but they prefer to live close to others in the Chin community.

Pastoral care often happens through participation in family events. The pastor and church leaders are invited to many family events, including the time of a car purchase, the blessing of a rental property, baby dedication, birthday celebrations, hospital visits and for prayers during times of hardship.

Community gatherings are central to the Chin community as everybody has the same background and strong links with their homeland family. For instance, when there is sad news from Burma the community gathers together to pray and encourage each other and, in solidarity, sometimes collects money to send to relatives still in Burma.

MBC has taken on some pastoral support for the Chin leadership and the congregation. For example, the senior pastor supported the Chin pastor as his mentor, particularly prior to the Chin pastor's ordination in 2010. Additionally, a voluntary pastor from MBC was appointed to support the Chin congregation.¹²⁸

Other support has been provided, such as letters of support and sponsorship for Chin members' families, legal assistance and assistance for other government administrative requirements, including the obtaining of an Australian Business Number.¹²⁹ The

¹²⁶ Lian, Interview.

¹²⁷ Lian, Interview.

¹²⁸ Rev Harvey Clark was appointed by MBC diaconate in a voluntary capacity as pastor to the Chin congregation until a Chin pastor was ordained.

¹²⁹ Blackwell, Interview.

secretary of MBC said MBC recognises that the pastoral care for the Chin leadership team has been crucial as it is a big shift for them to deal with legal issues such as insurance for driving; an issue which arose when a Chin member had a car accident. The friendship between the two groups is indicated by care like this that occurs because of the relationships that have developed.¹³⁰

Decision-making Process

In the decision-making process this congregation sees the pastor as the spiritual leader of the church. The secretary of MBC said,

Their pastor plays a much higher role than ours. This made it a little easier for us because it was easier to relate to the pastor most of the time and know that was all we needed to do without having to meet with a board or diaconate.¹³¹

Alongside the pastor, the chairman has an important role in making decisions as a senior member of VCBC. The deacons take lots of responsibility for decision-making for the church congregation. The diaconate, twelve men¹³², meets monthly and manages church business. The broad-spectrum decision-making body is the executive committee made up of the pastor, deacons and the leaders of sub-committees. The executive committee is elected by the church, meets bi-monthly and is a place of decision-making, representing all the people. The congregation approves the yearly overall budget, appoints leaders and makes decisions about property purchase (such as that purchased in 2010).¹³³

The formal structure of the constitution gives clear guidelines for decision-making by the Chin congregation. This can, however, become a challenge when changes are needed due to the different context in a new country. This church's constitution was transferred directly from its homeland. The members followed the constitution for many years. For example, the pastor was not allowed to preside over the sacraments, including pronouncing the benediction, as he wasn't ordained. Yet in other BUV churches, anyone would have a right to do so. In the end there was a special arrangement between the

¹³⁰ Blackwell, Interview.

¹³¹ Blackwell, Interview.

¹³² The diaconate is exclusively male only, in the same way as the Slavic Baptist Church.

¹³³ Chin, Focus group; Lian, Interview.

Chin congregation and the BUV that the pastor, who was in the last year of candidacy for ordination, could lead the sacraments under supervision. This helped the pastor to put into practice his skills in the Chin congregation and the congregation valued his leadership, particularly as in that time MBC's senior pastor, who has had a closer relationship with the Chin congregation, was unable to help due to being on leave and then moving from MBC.¹³⁴

Leadership

There are clear differences between leadership styles in MBC and the VCBC. As noted by the MBC secretary, for instance:

As to differences between Mooroolbark Baptist and the Chin Church, my observation is that the Chins hold their leaders in higher regard than we do. We see our leaders as ordinary people who are prepared to take on a leadership role whilst the Chins appear to see their leadership more as special individuals who have been appointed by God for the role of leading the church. Whilst this is certainly true of leaders in both churches, the Chins appear to act on this perception and treat their leaders very much as God's appointed people whilst at Mooroolbark, the leaders are seen as the 'workers' and sometimes even as the people unlucky enough to volunteer for the positions.¹³⁵

The Secretary of MBC commented that MBC communicates with the Chin congregation through the pastor or the chairman. He observes that the Chin's diaconate has a lot of influence in decision-making compared to the English congregation, and that this is to do with the more hierarchical Chin culture.¹³⁶ In the Chin tradition it is expected that the chairman leads meetings and the secretary keeps the records at the church business meetings.¹³⁷ The chairman is the coordinator of each committee. As one of the focus group members said, culturally the chairman is the key leader in Chin but the BUV denomination identifies the key role as 'Secretary' which is confusing to them.¹³⁸

Chin pastors have a public role beyond the local Chin communities. For example, the pastor of VCBC participates in other Chin churches' events as a representative of the

¹³⁴ As Multicultural Minister of BUV I recall the discussions at BUV in 2008.

¹³⁵ Blackwell, email to author (13 November 2011).

¹³⁶ Blackwell, Interview.

¹³⁷ Lian, Interview.

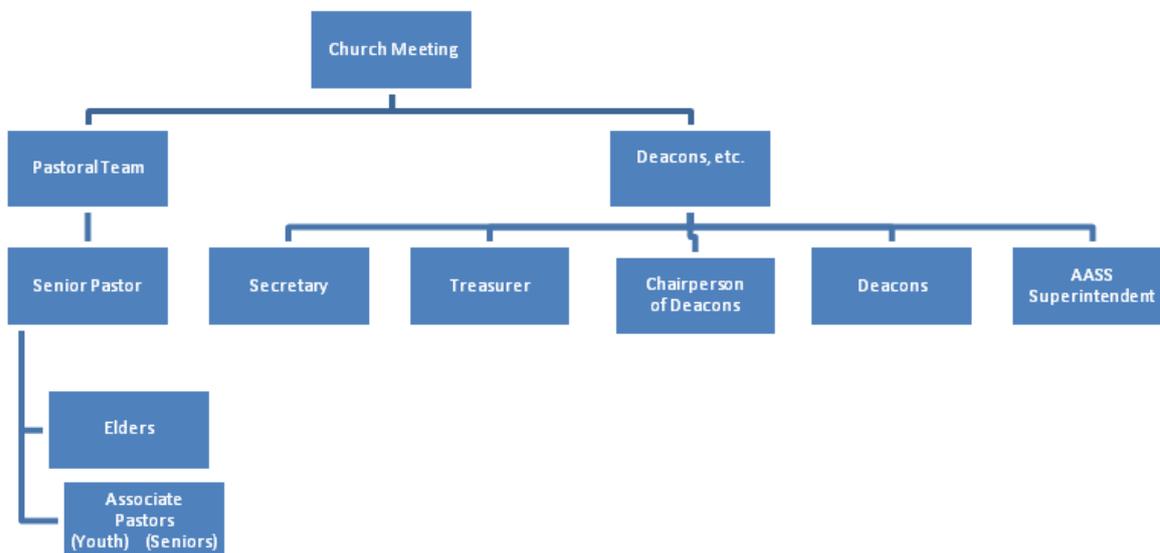
¹³⁸ Chin, Focus group.

church. This includes Chin events in the society. As a group of newcomers to Australia the community has many programs such as Chin National Day, and pastors are seen as public leaders.¹³⁹

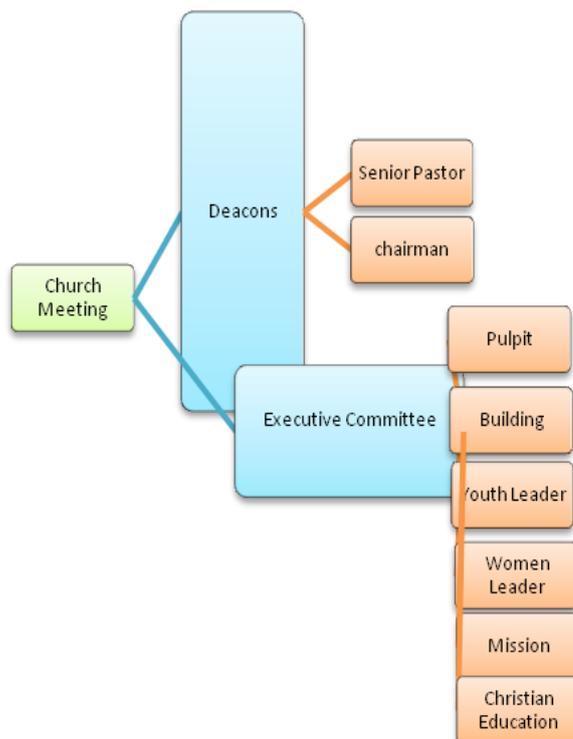
The two congregations each have their own leader and governing board as well as their own financial and administrative structure.

¹³⁹ Chin, Focus group.

MBC Leadership and Decision-making Structure¹⁴⁰



VCBC Leadership and decision-making structure



¹⁴⁰ This was prepared by the Secretary for the Pastoral Search Committee on MBC's church leadership and decision-making structure in 2011. Blackwell emailed (12 November 2011).

Mission and Vision Statement

VCBC aims to have an autonomous monocultural community, while relating to an English congregation. The focus is caring for the Chin migrants; many are still settling and 'finding their feet'. Through the use of facilities, the Chin community glimpses what an Australian church congregation looks like. The Chin befriend the English congregation through pastors' communications. Some friendships form, as seen in the fact that a few MBC people attend the Chin service.¹⁴¹

One of MBC's goals is to respond to the needs of the Chin community. MBC is focused on VCBC becoming independent as quickly as they are able. MBC has tried to assist the VCBC to be as autonomous and self-sufficient as they can be. There has been no formal vision or mission statement between the congregations. The secretary of MBC said that following the new MBC senior pastor's appointment it will look at their vision with a view to always including a migrant group.

It has opened our eyes to the needs of other groups and probably given us a bigger focus on mission and the sorts of problems that our missionaries are working on.¹⁴²

The Chin pastor describes the goal of multiculturalism as not yet clear as it is a new church focusing on the new arrivals and their settlement in its church. This has meant that the church is focusing solely on settlement issues. They are not yet ready for multiculturalism.¹⁴³ The major vision and goal of VCBC is to preserve their own culture and tradition into the next generation. They hope that young people will continue in the growth of the church and then the Chin will go as missionaries to all people.¹⁴⁴

Their mission is primarily to reach out to all Chin people but it does extend to other Burmese people in Burma. For example, VCBC actively supports three missionaries in Chin State. Two families work in Chin State and one family works in Burma with the Burmese people who are Buddhist.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Lian, Interview; Chin, Focus group.

¹⁴² Blackwell, Interview.

¹⁴³ Lian, Interview.

¹⁴⁴ Lian, Interview; Chin, Focus group.

¹⁴⁵ Lian, Interview.

The VCBC wishes to be a ‘mother’ church for all Chin people. The VCBC believes that God’s dream is that their migrant church will be missionary in outlook:

We are sent to Australia and to the world and believe we have been sent as missionaries to other countries. At VCBC we teach our next generation that they are missionaries to this country.¹⁴⁶

A Chin member said of the church’s goals, ‘the first is for the next generation not to lose Chin culture, and the second is to have faith in Jesus Christ and a true connection with God’.¹⁴⁷

Both the focus group and the pastor state that VCBC’s dream is that the next generation will be able to lead the Chin communities as well as Australians but that the first generation needs to belong to a Chin-speaking church because of the language barrier.

Our vision is not only for Chin people. However, for now we have language as a barrier and that is why we say it is a long-term process. However, the next generation will be able to speak English very well and our children will be able to proclaim the gospel to their neighbours.¹⁴⁸

VCBC has purchased 4.5 acres in Chirnside Park. They dream that their new church building will mean ‘we can facilitate fellowship for all Chin churches in Melbourne for celebration of life together, for example community meals, weddings, funerals and a conference here for Chin people from all over the world’.¹⁴⁹

The first generation Chin people yearn for land and a church where they can sing their own songs and worship in their own language. The parents say that children do not want to go to other Australian churches, as they follow after their parents. In this faith environment they want to teach their young people, and hope that the next generation will preserve Chin tradition and culture. Having their own building is seen as part of the guarantee for this culture.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Chin, Focus group.

¹⁴⁷ Chin Focus group.

¹⁴⁸ Chin Focus group.

¹⁴⁹ Lian, Interview.

¹⁵⁰ Chin, Focus group.

Relationship with the Wider Church and Community

Broader networks with other churches in the BUV have been established, such as with Bendigo Baptist Church. The Chin pastor, with a group of people, accepted Bendigo's invitation to visit and share about the Chin community and refugee issues. The congregation values this kind of sharing of stories.

The youth group has a strong network with the other seven Chin congregations of Melbourne. 'We regularly visit different churches and have activities together. We also host and visit with interstate Chin churches.'¹⁵¹ When the church invites a Chin guest speaker from Burma or U.S.A., they combine gatherings with other Chin churches.

One of the ministries of the Chin congregation is a new fellowship in Adelaide, with VCBC being the mother church. The VCBC pastor visits the new congregation regularly and helps particularly with matters that require an ordained pastor. The whole congregation at VCBC joins with the pastor to support and pray for this venture.¹⁵²

The Chin pastor attends meetings for Chin pastors in Melbourne, and has met with Chin representatives in Thailand. He visits Malaysia, where there are more than 30,000 Chin refugees. Donations are collected for Chin refugees at Christmas and New Year.¹⁵³

The relationship with the BUV has been strong. The pastor sees his ordination by the BUV as a 'multicultural development'. He added, 'Our church relates closely with the BUV. The BUV provided financial support to purchase our land, ministry support and RALS involvement [referring to the Refugee Airfare Loan Scheme]'.¹⁵⁴

The Relationship and Level of Interaction between MBC and VCBC

At the leadership level, the pastor participates in the pastoral team meeting at Mooroolbark, which is a way of engaging in multicultural ministry. At the congregational level, having combined services means two different congregations

¹⁵¹ Chin, Focus group.

¹⁵² Chin, Focus group.

¹⁵³ Lian, Interview.

¹⁵⁴ Lian, Interview. See the BUV website www.buv.com.au/ministries/multicultural/rals [Accessed 2.9.11]

recognise and learn from each other's culture, though it is to be observed that these services are very infrequent. Language is a huge barrier however, limiting integration with the English congregation. 'At this stage, because of the language barrier, we don't have fellowship with the English congregation. We do, though, respect each other and each other's opinions.'¹⁵⁵

A member said in the focus group, 'Since we are new to this country, all ideas and suggestions have been provided by MBC. They advise the pastor and our pastor values this advice.' The English congregation's deacons have been a support alongside the senior pastor. 'They allow us to use the facility and communion cups and trays. This is a supportive relationship in ministry.'¹⁵⁶

Some people from the English congregation come to the Chin service and make friends. Chin people love their visits and, although language is limited, friendships are formed. An example is a member of MBC who is a former missionary who relates well to the Chin people. Even though language may be limited there is understanding at the heart level.

Hopes for the Church

Both the pastor and focus group members expressed their dream for security and belonging in their own property where they know they will be able to settle into a congregational life keeping up Chin traditions.¹⁵⁷

The Chin congregation hopes the children will be taught in Chin in Sunday school so that they preserve their language, culture and tradition.¹⁵⁸ In addition, they try to give them pride in their own ethnic background and tell their parents' refugee stories :

Many Chin people are all over the world as refugees migrate to USA, Europe, Asia and Australia, and we Chin believe that we are sent as missionaries to other

¹⁵⁵ Chin, Focus group.

¹⁵⁶ Lian, Interview.

¹⁵⁷ Lian, Interview; Chin, Focus group.

¹⁵⁸ Lian, Interview; Chin, Focus group.

countries, so in that mind, the VCBC will keep teaching our next generation that we are the missionaries to this country.¹⁵⁹

Emerging Themes

The friendship model is very much a loose arrangement, with room for relationship without structural partnership or either party being forced to change. From MBC's point of view, having VCBC in the same church building has opened their eyes to other ethnic people who are neighbours. On the other hand, VCBC enjoys freedom as a migrant ethnic church, while receiving support to help its members cope in a new country as they grow to be independent.

The two congregations are not having much impact on each other as they are autonomous churches, but they respect each other. Communication is focused at the leadership level, as the very obvious barrier is that of language.

VCBC's **worship** is separate from MBC, at a different time and with different approaches. The worship offers a Chin language, which follows their tradition. Many people wear Chin national dress on Sunday which demonstrates their identity.

Pastoral care is done through home visiting and takes the form of prayers and worship. Many events are spontaneous in the gathering of the community, either together or individually with the pastor.

VCBC's **decision-making** style is formal, the culture being both hierarchical and patriarchal, bound by a constitution which gives little room to respond to changing influences, needs and contexts. The final decision-making occurs at the church members' meeting.

Leadership is exercised by the deacons and the executive council of the church, with the community trusting their authority and tradition.

The **mission and vision** of VCBC is centred on church growth and response to Chin community issues. They desire to engage with Chin people both in their homeland and in Australia.

¹⁵⁹ Chin, Focus group.

VCBC's relationship with MBC enables the church to promote friendship between the two congregations. VCBC values the resource of the worship space and support of the leaders for their church journey. For MBC, supporting the Chin congregation opens their eyes to mission and stewardship.

Both the VCBC pastor and the focus group identified that to own their own church building is very important as Australia is now their new permanent home. Owning their own place gives them a sense of belonging.

The church **hopes** for a way forward to pass on faith to the second generation and later generations of Chin people to maintain the Hakha language and culture.

It is worth noting that this turned out to be rather a minimal version of the Friendship model. In fact, the VCBC has purchased land and plans to construct a building for their own use, and seem to be headed back towards the Monocultural model.

3.3 PARTNERSHIP MODEL: Syndal Chinese Congregation

Under this model, two or more congregations become one church with each having equal privileges and responsibilities. They commit themselves to the church as partner congregations. Each of the congregations has its own leadership group and each usually worships separately. They share special occasions and support each other.

Churches in partnership share a common vision and their mission statements express common values. There are lots of interactive activities, comparable with the 'parallel lines' of life in the Friendship model. It observes Wagner's Homogeneous Unit Principle to some extent but is intentional in fostering interaction across boundaries. Multiculturalism here entails planning for the future by making active links between Anglo-Australian and migrant congregations. One of the key goals is to find places where young second-generation migrants can truly belong.

The core of the partnership is expressed in one financial and administrative structure. All congregations contribute to the main budget and the budget reflects the ministry of the whole church.

History and Background

Syndal Baptist Church (SBC) began in 1954, located in Glen Waverley, and is an actively growing large Anglo-Australian church.

In the 1970s the church welcomed an independent Vietnamese Baptist congregation comprised of refugees who had settled in nearby Nunawading and Springvale. SBC found a ministry opportunity and began transporting Vietnamese people to Sunday events. The Vietnamese numbers have diminished over the years from a high of eighty to one hundred, to the current size of about twenty-five, mainly because of the changes in Vietnamese refugee intake in Australia. The Vietnamese people continue to be a vital and interdependent part of Syndal Baptist.¹⁶⁰ This history is significant as it relates to the decisions made later with regard to the Chinese congregation being more relationally and structurally integrated within the church as a whole.

In 1999, two pastors began meeting together and this led to the commencement of a Chinese congregation at Syndal. Rev Dr Bill Brown, Senior Pastor at SBC, was responding to the increasing population of Asian migrants in the area.¹⁶¹ Rev Wai Kwong Sun, who had migrated from Hong Kong to minister to a Chinese church and now has his own second-generation children, had begun to question the monocultural migrant ethnic church's future during his ministry at a Chinese church.¹⁶²

Wai Kwong Sun had been seeking a multicultural vision where the second generation could be part of an English-speaking congregation, while maintaining a service in the Chinese language for the first generation.¹⁶³ To follow this dream of an identity both for

¹⁶⁰ Rev Dr Bill Brown, Senior Pastor, Syndal Baptist Church, Interview by the author (4 May 2010). Since the Vietnamese congregation is at this time small and more independent, in this paper I focus on the partnership between the Chinese and English congregations.

¹⁶¹ Brown, Interview.

¹⁶² Brown, Interview.

¹⁶³ Rev Wai Kwong Sun, Pastor, Multiculturalism and Outreach, Syndal Baptist Church, Interview by the author (4 May 2010).

the first and second generations, Wai Kwong determined to move to SBC, even by himself in the event of his congregation not adopting his vision. The former Chinese church respected Sun's vision and eventually seventy Chinese people moved with him with mutual blessing, joining the church at Syndal in 2001.¹⁶⁴

Wai Kwong recalls, following the move:

We were welcomed with great warmth. We soon realised that we were not treated as tenants, like many other ethnic churches are, but as members of the same church. The treasurer told me on the first day that there was no need to count the offering separately. Just put your offering into the offering plate like the evening service. 'Why do we want to know how much you have offered? We are the same church'. When finances are one, the church is one.¹⁶⁵

This illustrates the church's approach to finance and property. The microphones, pianos, rooms - anything that belonged to the English congregation - now also belonged to the Chinese congregation.¹⁶⁶

Over the years the Chinese congregation has grown. According to Bill Brown, the English congregation has also become much more multicultural with Asian and European nations represented in the congregation.¹⁶⁷ The church website describes SBC as a multicultural church.¹⁶⁸

People

The Chinese congregation consists roughly of three quarters Cantonese-speaking Chinese people from Hong Kong and one quarter Mandarin-speaking people, mainly from China, with a few people also from Taiwan, Macau, Singapore and Malaysia. For

¹⁶⁴ Brown, Interview; Sun, Interview.

¹⁶⁵ Sun, Interview.

¹⁶⁶ Sun, Interview.

¹⁶⁷ In the last ten years the racial diversity of the local area has become more pronounced, with a significant increase in numbers of overseas students in the local schools (primary and secondary, government and non-government). This is also reflected in the nations represented in the congregations of Syndal which include people from the U.K., Asia, South Africa, India and Sri Lanka. At a 10.30 service one Sunday morning Brown asked for a show of hands of those who were born outside of Australia and it was close to half the congregation; Brown, Interview.

¹⁶⁸ <http://sb.org.au/about-us> [accessed 25 September 2011] (SBC is 'a multi-ethnic church, with Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese speaking congregations as well as people from many other different cultural backgrounds'.)

the first few years Cantonese was the only language used, identifying the congregation as a homogeneous language group from Hong Kong. It now uses both Cantonese and Mandarin in worship since most Cantonese-speaking people are able to understand Mandarin because it is the official language of China. This enables the congregation to serve the broader Chinese community.

The Chinese congregation consists of more than two hundred adults gathering to worship on Sunday morning.¹⁶⁹ It draws from the current stream of Chinese-speaking migrants which consists mainly of skilled migrants, temporary professional workers and overseas students. Most of the attendees live within a five-to-ten kilometre radius of the church, in areas such as Glen Waverley, Mount Waverley, Blackburn South and Chadstone. Others are from Melbourne's South East, North East and even further afield.

Worship

Syndal Baptist Church has six services¹⁷⁰ with three different language groups (English at 8.30 am, 10.30 am, 4 pm and 6 pm; Chinese at 10.30 am; Vietnamese at 10.30 am).¹⁷¹ Three of the services which use different languages happen contemporaneously at 10:30 am to allow them to finish at the same time so that the congregations can share morning tea.¹⁷²

In the Chinese congregation the language used in worship is the same written language but spoken in two dialects, Cantonese and Mandarin, alternating each week. Everything is projected on slides during worship for all to read, even though some of them may not understand the spoken dialect. The singing is also in either Mandarin or Cantonese. The sermon is translated; everything else however, including prayer, is in one language.¹⁷³

Having services in two sanctuaries in one church has enabled 'welcoming' and has provided a solution for some intercultural married couples. For example, 'the man will

¹⁶⁹ Syndal Baptist Church Chinese congregation, Focus Group (30 May 2010); Sun, Interview.

¹⁷⁰ Syndal Baptist Church, [website], <http://sb.org.au/> [Accessed 1 October 2011].

¹⁷¹ Brown, Interview.

¹⁷² Brown, Interview; SBC Chinese, Focus Group (30 May 2010). At Focus Group it was commented that though the intention is there, walking to the other congregation is challenging.

¹⁷³ SBC Chinese, Focus Group; Author observed at worship in the Chinese Congregation of Syndal Baptist Church (4 July 2010).

go to the other side and the wife will come to this side or sometimes both of them will go to the English side, or when they come to the Chinese side the Chinese partner translates for the other partner'.¹⁷⁴ This has given rise to evangelistic opportunities. The Chinese pastor says, 'some [English-speaking congregation] people bring their Chinese neighbours to the church. "You go to Chinese, I go to the other and after church we will meet together for morning tea."' ¹⁷⁵

Syndal Baptist Church has a combined service on special occasions, such as Christmas and church anniversaries, when they have one service for the whole day in which all six congregations take part, with some translation. Bill Brown said a way of combining the service at Syndal is to relay the service to the auditorium: 'We can fit almost six hundred people in the sanctuaries and by using the downstairs space as well, we can accommodate close to one thousand, one hundred'. English is predominant in combined services but there is some translation and some prayers or greetings are offered in different languages at special times, like Christmas and Easter and the church anniversary.¹⁷⁶

In worship, the Chinese congregation sings mostly contemporary songs with some hymns. Most of the songs are composed in Chinese by Chinese composers from Hong Kong or Taiwan, but occasionally they also sing English songs. Choosing songs can be a tension for the migrant community. The pastor explained why contemporary songs are needed:

Most of the older people are not very happy to sing modern songs. They have told me we should sing more traditional songs. I tell them, for me, I like the traditional songs because I'm old too, but for the sake of the gospel I would rather sing the modern songs otherwise we will be driving the young people away. ... We used to sing many more hymns but, after many years, most of them have become obsolete and we only preserved a few. Most of the old songs in the hymn books we don't sing anymore. So, there is a process of elimination and we need to give the young people time to write plenty so many will be eliminated and only the good ones will be preserved.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Sun, Interview.

¹⁷⁵ Sun, Interview.

¹⁷⁶ Brown, Interview.

¹⁷⁷ Sun, Interview.

The community songs reflect Chinese contemporary theology. Encouraging young people to belong comes at a cost for the older people who prefer singing the traditional hymns.

Some Chinese people join the English Worship Team as back-up singers. It is relatively easy for non-Anglo Australians to get involved in the worship (music) team because many of them learn musical instruments.¹⁷⁸

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is seen as a shared concern, with a united vision and focus, in this model. Pastoral care at SBC is called ‘BIGCare’, and applies to all congregations.

‘B’ stands for best care that happens in small groups where those who know the person best know how to care for her/him. ‘I’ is for intensive care for those who are not in small groups, or who are in situations where the small group is unable to meet the intensive needs; then there are teams of people, like the cooks’ team or transport team or maintenance team. Then there is ‘G’, which stands for general care which happens for everybody who comes on site—things like nametags, morning teas, car parking, and ensuring that there is a host to welcome. ‘C’ stands for congregational care. Each congregation has a care team to look after the leaders and newcomers, and to follow up absentees within congregations. Thus people know the structure of care and can refer themselves or others to a care team according to what they need.¹⁷⁹

The church maintains three separate congregations with one pastoral team. The Vietnamese congregation, with its more separate history, is not focused as much on the partnership between the English-speaking and Chinese-speaking congregations. In the relationship between the English-speaking and the Chinese-speaking congregations there is limited sharing of pastoral care because of the language barriers. Nevertheless, there are some interactions between the two congregations.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Sun, Interview.

¹⁷⁹ This structure was described by Brown and Sun, and the Focus Group.

¹⁸⁰ Brown, Interview; Sun, Interview; SBC Chinese, Focus group.

For example, the elders of the English congregation give a lot of support in caring for Chinese people. This kind of care is also extended to Chinese people by the English congregation. Primary school children who join the English congregation at Sunday School offer the opportunity for mutual care, and help to create a strong bond between the Chinese and English-speaking congregations.¹⁸¹

According to the Chinese pastor, the issues of pastoral care for the Chinese congregation relate to things such as health, immigration matters, studies, family and personal matters, employment, psychological wellbeing, self-image and sexuality.¹⁸²

Church Life

The Sunday School, Youth Group and Young Adult Group draw on both the English-speaking and Chinese congregations. They include leaders from the Chinese congregation in each group. About forty to fifty Chinese-Australian children go to the English Sunday School.¹⁸³

The English-speaking Youth Group from both the English-speaking and Chinese congregation has about one hundred students involved. One third are Chinese second-generation youth, and some overseas Chinese students also attend in order to improve their language skills.¹⁸⁴

There is a separate Chinese-speaking Youth Fellowship which has around sixty Chinese students. They are mostly overseas students from mainland China and Hong Kong. The students usually study in Australia for three to four years and then many apply for permanent residence. Like other first-generation migrants they identify with their own peers in language and culture. However, the leaders, who are Chinese, share the multicultural vision. For example, the leaders organise home visits for the young people to allow them, in groups of ten, to visit a home from the English-speaking congregation for hospitality and conversation. Young people can choose to attend the English or

¹⁸¹ Sun Interview; SBC Chinese, Focus Group.

¹⁸² Sun, Interview.

¹⁸³ Sun, Interview.

¹⁸⁴ SBC Chinese, Focus group.

Chinese Youth Group, whichever serves them best.¹⁸⁵ Other Chinese young people's ministries are called 'Next', a weekly meeting for those who have completed high school and the '23 Plus' group, which meets monthly.¹⁸⁶

Several programs build bridges between the three different cultures. They encourage interaction between people. One example is the 'Grandparent program' which connects each Chinese child with an English-speaking grandparent. In Chinese culture grandparents are an important part of the family. It is a way of relational family adoption, where the Chinese children access an English-speaking family. Some adopted grandparents help with picking up children from school as if they were family. At church they interact with each other and this creates connections between two congregations. Wai Kwong Sun sees it as building multicultural community.¹⁸⁷

Life Groups are small groups where people 'do life together' and participate in times of Bible study, prayer, sharing, eating and fun. These groups are the basic building blocks of the church and include people in the English-speaking congregations from Scotland, South America, South Africa, Australia and the U.K., and also a number of Chinese congregation members. Bill Brown recognises this program as 'becoming very multicultural'.¹⁸⁸

The Chinese congregation has twelve Cantonese small groups for fellowship with different age groups and backgrounds: Young Families (with children under ten), Ladies' Group and Men's Group. Two Mandarin groups meet at different times so that participants may join in other groups as well. The leaders can usually speak both Cantonese and Mandarin. Some members join both groups. Chinese Adult Sunday School is held after the Sunday service in Cantonese and Mandarin, led by senior members.¹⁸⁹

SBC has many different ministries: daily playgroups, Counselling Centre, Prime Time (Seniors), Conversational English Classes, Food Bank (Chinese and English volunteers)

¹⁸⁵ Sun, Interview.

¹⁸⁶ SBC Chinese, Focus Group.

¹⁸⁷ Sun, Interview; Brown, Interview; SBC Chinese, Focus Group.

¹⁸⁸ Brown, interview.

¹⁸⁹ Sun, Interview; SBC Chinese, Focus group.

and Café Salt, which employs a Café Manager and a supervisor who organises the volunteers including Chinese people. One of the hospitality areas is preparing lunch for thirty to forty people who take part in Sunday School, as the students have lunch. Some Chinese people also volunteer to assist in the church office and with church cleaning.¹⁹⁰

The intention of morning tea is to allow everyone to get together, but in practice there is little interaction between the congregations. Services don't always finish at the same time and language and cultural barriers dissuade some people from chatting. The geography makes it difficult to join together because people have to walk intentionally along the corridor to where others meet, and have to make a conscious choice to do that. When I was at morning tea, an English-speaking congregation woman came across to say hello to a Chinese woman. This shows that personal friendship makes it easier. Some Chinese people need to pick their children up from Sunday School and in doing so are able to meet English-speaking families.¹⁹¹

Decision-Making Process

The decision-making structure at Syndal has two levels. The Church Council for the whole church makes the big decisions, such as changing worship time and locations. At present there are no Chinese congregation representatives on the Church Council, though the Pastor Administrator of SBC is Chinese. The senior pastor tries to include a Chinese representative as a way of communication and dialogue.¹⁹²

For the Chinese congregation the Core Group of ten Chinese people, including two pastors makes decisions for the Chinese congregation. The group meets once a month, chaired by the Chinese senior pastor, to develop strategies for community building and general operational matters.

In the decision-making process this congregation sees relationship as a key issue.

The English congregation has a lot of people who are retired and they volunteer to come and work, including cleaning work. In the Chinese congregation we don't have a lot of retirees so the Chinese side tends to be dirtier. Windows are not

¹⁹⁰ Brown, Interview; Sun, Interview; SBC Chinese, Focus group.

¹⁹¹ Sun, Interview; Sunday worship service (4 July 2010).

¹⁹² Brown, Interview; Sun admits that it's hard to find a Chinese who is able to be in the role or has time.

washed, walls are not clean and the English side complains it's very dirty. However, we resolve [to address this] because of a good relationship. When it is raised, we have a cleanup day and everybody comes and cleans.¹⁹³

There are times of tension between Chinese and English congregations but they are not considered major issues compared to the enormous benefit of their partnership. Both congregations recognise that communication with each other is central. For this, interaction is important. Both English and Chinese congregation pastors explain that they are available to the other congregation by preaching, praying for them, and making announcements regularly.¹⁹⁴

Other experiences of differences are that Chinese people like to cook and eat together.

When we first came to Sydal we had a young peoples' meeting on Friday evening and they came here and ate dinner as well so they put a lot of food into the fridge. And then there is a complaint: 'You are taking over the fridge'. So we have purchased another fridge downstairs for our food.¹⁹⁵

This is a creative solution for the two very different congregations. Having a good relationship which shows respect and a long-term commitment is important. The Chinese pastor reflected that the English-speaking people have generously treated the Chinese congregation as if they are family in one church. Through this kind of trust the Chinese congregation is also learning to love, respect and trust:

We have a very good cook in our Chinese congregation. He is not a professional cook; he is a computer man, but he is a very good cook. He cooks for the whole church for all the functions - breakfast, dinner - he enjoys cooking, so when we have a multicultural lunch sometimes, after Sunday service, there are maybe sausages on one side, hamburgers here and Chinese food here and all the people come to buy the Chinese food because they like his cooking and the English-speakers even ask him to go to the camps to cook for them. So there is much more fun than complaints.¹⁹⁶

There are cultural tensions but they are minor. The Chinese congregation has different values on money spending. For example, buying umbrellas for people to use on rainy days to walk into the car park is odd to them, and they would not spend money for

¹⁹³ Sun, Interview.

¹⁹⁴ Brown, Interview; Sun, Interview.

¹⁹⁵ Sun, Interview.

¹⁹⁶ Sun, Interview.

coffee and promotion. The Chinese want to save money. They believe that Chinese usually have surplus budgets because of their careful spending, whereas English-speaking churches usually have deficit budgets because of their extravagant spending. Chinese churches globally are the richest, they believe, because they are careful with money. In these matters Chinese do not criticise the English-speakers, but laugh because it is not a big issue.¹⁹⁷

The ethos of decision making has been one of affirmation. At the focus group one person said,

From the first day the English congregation has been affirming of the Chinese congregation and we have been affirming of them as well, so this culture has prevailed so far. The only thing that I can think we are not very happy with is our budget, but this is still not a conflict. A key is affirmation, not rebuke to each other; we interpret it as a commitment.¹⁹⁸

Budgeting is clearly a point of difference. The Chinese congregation focuses on growth, not maintenance. Affirmation and commitment mean that the tension, big or small, can be resolved.

The English-speaking congregation's culture of appreciation and affirmation has influenced the Chinese congregation to adopt the same culture. This influence means that 'in the Chinese congregation we now give much more appreciation than the pointing of fingers at people'.¹⁹⁹ Affirmation and appreciation are a starting point in trust and respect.

The decision-making process between the two different cultural congregations involves entering into dialogue. The SBC senior pastor said,

The Chinese are very respectful of authority but if there is a decision that affects everybody we would try and do lots of consultation, and one of the reasons that I wanted to go to the Chinese core group was so that they could ask me anything and I could talk with them.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ SBC Chinese, Focus Group.

¹⁹⁸ SBC Chinese, Focus Group.

¹⁹⁹ SBC Chinese, Focus Group.

²⁰⁰ Brown, Interview.

The English-speaking pastor commented that the main cultural issues between the Chinese and English-speaking congregations are about authority and hierarchy.²⁰¹ One of the examples is that the Chinese tend not to say ‘No’; they would rather say ‘Yes’ as a way of showing respect and being polite.²⁰² Learning from each other and being open in communication expresses the equality between congregations. Dialogue is an important way of communication, particularly when sharing matters with different ethnic groups. Brown willingly attends meetings to give space for people to ask questions, knowing that differences are more obvious in a time of tension.²⁰³

The conscious concern of the Chinese is not to make conflict in areas such as taking care of the kitchen and toilets. They think English speakers would prefer to have them tidier and cleaner, whereas the English-speakers have found that some of the Chinese people are excellent at catering and are really clean. There are simply different standards and expectations.²⁰⁴

Leadership

There is not much evidence of leadership crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries and seeking greater integration, but SBC is working on it. Numbers of Chinese leaders are involved in children’s work, in multicultural youth ministry and on the finance team. The leadership can play an important role acknowledging enormous language barriers and making space to work together.

SBC’s leadership style uses a consultative, discerning process, as the pastors want to get people owning the responsibility of a shared vision. A key responsibility of leadership is to lead the church and the staff, to cast vision, to give direction, to teach and to educate.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Brown, Interview.

²⁰² Brown, Interview.

²⁰³ Brown, Interview.

²⁰⁴ Brown, Interview.

²⁰⁵ Brown, Interview.

The leadership structure consists of the Church Council, staff team²⁰⁶ and volunteers in each ministry. The senior pastor is accountable to the Church Council. The ministry and vision side of leadership is through the six Area Leaders (pastors),²⁰⁷ whereas Church Council covers operational leadership such as matters of finance, budget, legal and physical matters. The Area Leaders directly report to the senior pastor. It is noted that the Chinese senior pastor is one of the six Area Leaders. Other Chinese pastoral team members and the Vietnamese pastor are accountable to the Chinese senior pastor.

The Chinese senior pastor emphasises affirmation as important in building relationships in a partnership multicultural church. The pastor endeavours to be hospitable by welcoming people, such as standing and greeting each person at the door. This helps to foster relationships.²⁰⁸

The Mission/Vision Statement

The whole church has a shared vision. The vision states that SBC is a church that wants to be growing in the community, reflecting it demographically, serving it and transforming it for the good of the world. The Mission Statement at SBC is to 'Present Jesus, Provide Nurture and Produce Disciples'. The church values the commitment to 'love God and love people'. Their goal is to go and make disciples so they want to help people grow as followers of Jesus.²⁰⁹ Multiculturalism is implied in the term 'reflecting the community' at SBC. Playgroups have children from different cultures. SBC's vision in essence, according to the English-speaking pastor, is to become a church in the community.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ Syndal Baptist Church, 'Church Staff', www.sb.org.au/people (accessed 14 September 2011). At the time of interview there were seventeen staff members including people in the office, though the church website later listed twenty-four.

²⁰⁷ See Appendix 6 (SBC Staff Care and Reporting, 14/03/11).

²⁰⁸ Sun, Interview.

²⁰⁹ Brown, Interview; Sun, Interview.

²¹⁰ Brown, Interview.

The SBC has a vision of what God's kingdom is like in terms of diversity and unity. The church wants to reflect 'the demographics, not just ethnically and culturally different but sociologically, economically, educationally'.²¹¹

The Chinese congregation also has its own vision to be vital and grow in numbers. By the year 2012 the congregation aims to divide into two congregations, Mandarin and Cantonese.²¹²

There has been some debate about multiculturalism amongst the church community. For example, there are different understandings of a multicultural church. The pastor recalls that one member insists that the church should be a place like Sydney, where all-Chinese suburbs exist. But for the pastor it is about a multicultural community, where different cultures can cooperate and interact.²¹³ In terms of the biblical vision for multiculturalism the pastor of the Chinese congregation states that in Ephesians and Galatians Paul said the dividing wall is down. He views the gospel not as limited to one ethnic group but overcoming different cultural barriers. That means they can engage in making disciples of all nations.²¹⁴

Engaging in Multicultural Ministry

Conversational English classes (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday) started because of a growing awareness of need. A number of people who have been trained with AMES (Adult Migrant Education Service) run tutor courses two or three times a year for other volunteers. This is to respond to the needs of non-English speaking migrants and it has given evangelistic opportunities as well. It aims to help people from other cultures to feel at home in Australia. This isn't only for Chinese-speakers but for anyone in the congregation. The pamphlets are displayed at the door and spread the information widely, and more than a hundred people attend the classes. These have been important

²¹¹ Brown, Interview.

²¹² Sun, Interview.

²¹³ Sun, Interview.

²¹⁴ Sun, Interview.

for the development of the multicultural ministry. Participants and tutors also become friends and speak to each other after Sunday service.²¹⁵

There are many people from overseas whose English is good and they are encouraged to participate in Life Groups. Another program for newcomers is 'Belong'. It is a three-week group experience on a Sunday afternoon for getting to know one another. This is for new people to integrate into the life of SBC, having a tour together and sharing fellowship. They often find out at this time that a new Life Group is starting so that is one of the ways SBC seeks to integrate newcomers.²¹⁶

Another program, introduced by the Chinese congregation, is a table tennis tournament. Sport is a way of building multicultural community as it does not need language. 'Even if your English is not good you can still play and meet with other people, eating together and so on'.²¹⁷ Other multicultural events include a multicultural concert, a church camp and lunch together. At Christmas time, for example, the Carols event has involved people of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Part of the multicultural ministry is the leadership exchange between the services at SBC. Some Chinese leaders go to the English services to keep in touch. Some are involved in various ministries, like the playgroup. The playgroup is opened up to the community, as is the men's group. One Chinese man is on the committee of the men's group. Participation and interaction between the congregations is encouraged. SBC intentionally assists those who don't speak English well.

We have two families where the Chinese adults don't speak English well but they have signed up for the grandparents project so we pair them up with another older couple from the English congregation and it works well - and their English has improved, they say.²¹⁸

Relating to Other Congregations

The Chinese congregation has relationships with sixty to seventy Chinese churches and, as part of the Chinese Church Association in Melbourne, engages in joint meetings. The

²¹⁵ Brown Interview; Sun Interview; SBC Chinese, Focus Group.

²¹⁶ Brown, Interview.

²¹⁷ Sun, Interview.

²¹⁸ Sun, Interview.

church as a whole has other connections with events and conferences, such as Planet Shaker Conferences, the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, and State Youth Games, as well as with parachurch organisations such as Scripture Union, World Vision. It is also active within the BUV.

Hopes for the Future Syndal Chinese Congregation

The Chinese congregation is likely to continue to grow regardless of immigration policy because the second generation has been integrating with the English-speaking congregations. The Chinese congregation of SBC hopes the children will be integrated into the English congregation. At this stage, some children are not interacting well with the English-speaking congregation. There are still barriers relating to the influence of their parents and their culture to overcome. The pastor said that Australian-born Chinese (ABC) children are still different from other Australian kids. The children realise they look different (including different height) and with children this can be a hindrance. Their language is perfect but the social culture is different. For example, ‘When Aussie kids play they make themselves dirty, wet and sometimes themselves get sore. The Chinese kids try to avoid all these things. When the Chinese kids can’t play it’s difficult to integrate well, and some haven’t.’²¹⁹ The barrier, therefore, is more than language. It is about different social behaviours and approaches to play. The combined Sunday School helps them to be children in an Australian context, not limiting them to be Chinese only.

Already there are a couple of churches that were once monocultural, such as the German Baptist Church, that have become fully English-speaking. Some other European churches still resist, even though they have very small numbers. The Chinese pastor believes that the children will carry on the future church in English as the Chinese congregation may gradually die, which is not a bad thing in his view. ‘The church as such never dies; it’s the Chinese speaking group that dies. The future is open, not so much as a Chinese congregation but the anticipation of an alternative church; it’s a journey.’²²⁰

²¹⁹ Sun, Interview.

²²⁰ Sun, Interview.

Emerging Themes

The Sydal Chinese congregation is largely made up of one ethnic group of Chinese **people** who are mainly from Hong Kong, but with others from different countries who have migrated over the last thirty years, and are living in the eastern suburbs. They identify themselves as a bi-lingual community (Cantonese and Mandarin). The Chinese congregation joined SBC ten years ago, with the vision that the second generation will be integrated into the English-speaking congregations.

The **worship** in the Chinese congregation is a contemporary, culturally-Chinese bi-lingual service with simultaneous translation service (in turn) using slide projection for the written language. The service is led by worship leaders and the congregation participates quietly. The sermon is central and songs are mixed, with hymns and contemporary songs. It is a separate worship service in Chinese, but Sunday School and Youth Group are combined. The morning tea time creates opportunities for interaction with the English-speaking congregation. At worship, communication between the two congregations occurs when the pastors of the other congregation come and announce important information. The occasional combined services are held to celebrate their unity in diversity.

Pastoral care at SBC has a shared vision and structure. There is a lot of interaction through pastoral care teams as the English and the Chinese congregations are connected through programs in Sunday School and Youth Group, grandparents program and small groups. They mutually listen to each other's ideas of pastoral care.

Their **church life** has room for diversity, with the English-speaking and Chinese congregations developing their own ministry, although symbolic of the partnership is the combining of the Sunday School, Youth Group and Young Adult Group. The creative programs to build bridges between the different cultures are an effort to develop multicultural community building.

The shift to a multicultural **decision-making process** at SBC involves working through openness and direct talk for growing relationships, which is an important foundation for creating one multicultural church. The church tries to develop a sense of openness

between the two congregations and relationships are the basis of all that. This is an intention to create equal partnership.

The **leadership** style is consultative as the senior pastors of each congregation want to get people owning the responsibility of a shared vision. The senior pastor of the English-speaking congregation coordinates the whole church. The Chinese congregation shares in the leadership structure through the Church Council of SBC. In terms of the Chinese congregation the pastor, with the Core Group, plays the major role in the decision-making process. The Vietnamese congregation plays a smaller part in leadership, due partly to its size and the employment elsewhere of its pastor.

The **mission and vision** of SBC is shared. Both the English congregations and the Chinese congregation focus on the kingdom of God in diversity and unity, with a multicultural vision to go and make disciples of all nations, reflecting the diversity of the region. Their vision is to improve the equality of members in one church relationship by increasing the dialogue between the congregations through more joint leaders' meetings and activities.

The mission of the Chinese congregation is for the second generation to belong in the English-speaking congregation.

The Chinese congregation **hopes** that the second-generation Chinese people will become integrated into their future life in Australia. Maintaining a Chinese identity can be successful in helping young people to succeed in study but, in the view of their pastor, they are limited by a migrant's mentality in separating themselves from the English-speaking congregation. The structure of two congregations within one church partnership helps to maintain Chinese identity for the first generation as they have their own service, while the second generation integrates with the English-speaking service and with other Australian peers, helping the second-generation Chinese to be future leaders in an Australian context.

3.4 INTEGRATED MODEL: Brunswick Baptist Church

History and Background

Brunswick Baptist Church (BBC) is a small to medium sized, multicultural, diverse church with a culture of openness and concern for justice. The church is located in Melbourne's inner urban northern suburbs. Being on Sydney Road, the church building is positioned in the centre of Brunswick and is very visible.

BBC was begun in 1862.²²¹ The older generations of current members reminisce about the old days when it was a church of much activity, providing a warm welcome, and hospitable activities which opened the church to many new people.²²²

People from other cultures, especially NESB people, had started to come to BBC toward the end of the 1970s when the church appointed an Italian pastor to visit Italians in the area. In the 1980s the Arabic Baptist Church came to use the facilities for the next seven years. The fact that Pastor Rick Hayes's wife had a Filipino background along with Hayes' support for overseas students may have contributed to the growth in NESB attendees. At this time NESB members came from Lebanon, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, Pacific Islands and the Philippines.²²³ In 1989, for the first time the position of Treasurer was taken by a non-Anglo member. During that time newcomers were, however, expected to fit in with Anglo-Australians — assimilation was expected.²²⁴

This shift in the church's demographic between the multicultural participants and the dominant culture of the church was a reflection of changes in the wider Brunswick community. Over the last twenty years Brunswick has attracted many other new migrants, young professionals and students due to being close to the city and to the inner-city universities in Melbourne. In 1992, the church was looking for a pastor who had a community orientation which would enable them to build bridges between the

²²¹ G Benson, *'Hitherto': A History of the Brunswick Baptist Church 1862-1962* (Brunswick, Vic.: Brunswick Baptist Church, 1962), 8.

²²² Meewon Yang. 'Becoming a Multicultural Church: Embodying the Hospitality of God by Welcoming the 'Other'' (*Master of Theology Qualifying*, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2003), 9.

²²³ Yang, 'Becoming a Multicultural Church', 9.

²²⁴ Yang, 'Becoming a Multicultural Church', 10.

different groups in the church, and help them to work effectively together, utilising the membership. The pastoral search committee also specifically stated that they wanted a minister who ‘identified with migrants’.²²⁵ This indicates that the church embraced migrant issues. Hence by this time the church had already recognised ministry with migrants as important to its life. The church had a theoretical vision of leadership and ministry with migrants that involved the pastoral team including NESB people. Since 1995, the pastoral team has deliberately included NESB pastors.²²⁶

BBC has played a leading role in multiculturalism in the BUUV with an ethos based strongly upon principles of social justice and equity.²²⁷

People

BBC currently comprises people of thirty different cultural backgrounds, including one of indigenous descent, and of whom less than half are Australian born.²²⁸

The different cultures include Burmese, Chin, Afro-American, Iranian, Chinese, Lebanese, Indian, Korean, Congolese, Ghanaian, Naga, Hong Kong Chinese, Bangladeshi, Papuan, Timorese, Taiwanese, Turkish and New Zealander. The range of 1.5 generation (migrants who arrived as young children) and second-generation (being a son or daughter of a migrant, born in the new country) Australians include Dutch, Italian, Czech, British, Polish/Maltese, Chilean/Argentinean, Sri Lankan/Swiss, Chinese/Scottish, Greek, Samoan, Indigenous/Irish and Anglo-Australian. These figures give a rough indication only, as the boundaries of the church are fluid and the congregation is transitional in line with the wider Brunswick community.²²⁹ An Asian NESB person said,

²²⁵ A document written to the Advisory Board of the Baptist Union of Victoria by the Secretary of BBC (28 June 1991).

²²⁶ Yang, ‘Becoming a Multicultural Church’, 10-11.

²²⁷ Brunswick Baptist Church, Focus group (27 June 2010).

²²⁸ Rev Beryl Turner, a Pastor of Brunswick Baptist Church, interview by the author (5 June 2010).

²²⁹ The June 2010 church directory lists a congregation of 102 people including children. Fifty-two are known to have been born in Australia, and fifty (49%) born overseas: 40 in Asia, 10 in the Middle East, 6 in Africa, 7 in Oceania, 16 in Europe and 1 in South America. Another 16 have one or more parents born overseas. At least 10 members of the congregation come from non-English speaking backgrounds. Approximately 20% of them have been refugees.

One thing I observe here is that some people could have gone to a more migrant ethnic church but come here. It takes more effort to come to BBC [for NESB people] and they are prepared to do some crossing of culture; happy to cross barriers; language being one.²³⁰

A pastor said,

At Brunswick we almost find a common English which is not a high level Anglo-English, neither is it a pidgin English. We do actually find a way of speaking where we can understand each other.²³¹

Most attendees live in the Brunswick area but because property is so expensive they move out further when purchasing their own homes, usually towards the west such as Sunshine and Caroline Springs. Some people travel from Heidelberg, Bundoora, Glen Waverley and Roxburgh Park.

Some attendees have been in Australia all their lives. Many have come here in the last ten to twenty years and then there is a constant stream of those who have arrived relatively recently. BBC has a high turnover, especially of migrants and students. BBC consists of fifty to seventy people gathering to worship on Sunday morning.²³²

Worship

The worship service is in English. Because of the diversity of languages, it is not feasible to use another language. There is not one dominant language apart from English.²³³ BBC tries to make a point of having at least one of the Bible readings every week in one of the languages of the congregation as an intentional inclusion of other ethnic backgrounds. A pastor said,

We recognise that people hear in their own language at a deeper level than they hear in another language, so if they hear scripture in their own language they hear it more profoundly than they would hear in English. Even if the person reading is

²³⁰ Brunswick Baptist Church, Focus group by the author (27 June 2010).

²³¹ Rev Dr Colin Hunter, Pastoral Team Leader of Brunswick Baptist Church, interview by the author (21 July 2010).

²³² Turner, Interview.

²³³ Brunswick, Focus Group.

the only person understanding that language, nevertheless, ‘we listen in our hearts with them as they hear it in their own mother tongue’.²³⁴

The song selection is diverse. Some old hymns are common for the older generation and people from other cultures. Songs are carefully chosen for the meaning of the words and use of inclusive language, drawing on resources such as the Iona Community, Ross Langmead, Digby Hannah, and Taizé. Some songs are in another language, to emphasise the multicultural mix of the congregation. Singing in different languages is one example of the preparedness of the congregation to make changes to enable people to feel more at home, rather than always expecting others to adapt to English.²³⁵ This is a shift from the Anglo-Australian monocultural model to an integrated model which is quite distinct from ‘assimilation’.

BBC includes NESB people and children in leading worship and other aspects of the service. Prayers in different languages are included for the building project, initiated by a Chin Burmese woman. A pastor said, ‘it is not unusual for those who are not confident in English to be encouraged to pray in their own language’.²³⁶

One of the creative intentional inclusions is story sharing during the service. For example, on communion Sundays once a month, instead of a sermon, people have the opportunity to share their faith story. It is called ‘Turning Point’, a form of hospitality practised through listening respectfully to the experiences of another. A pastor said,

This serves many purposes, as often people from other cultures have a powerful story to tell. It is empowering for the person telling the story and moving for the congregation, enabling them to feel a very strong connection to the person.²³⁷

She points out that this strengthens bonds and creates a lot of understanding, warmth and affection for that person. This becomes a mutual sharing of hospitality.²³⁸

The BBC’s focus group wrestled with whether using English is the most inclusive medium of communication. One person said,

²³⁴ Turner, Interview.

²³⁵ Turner, Interview.

²³⁶ Turner, Interview.

²³⁷ Turner, Interview.

²³⁸ Turner, Interview.

English allows people to cross cultural boundaries and, for the most part, this is a global reality. Language doesn't necessarily coerce people to think a certain way; the language and structure of the service doesn't mean it is all English.²³⁹

In reality, as the primary medium of communication in Australia, English is the most inclusive language. While the challenge of unequal power remains, NESB people often feel encouraged to use English in a social context that is affirming. The BBC people get used to different accents, and those who have accents feel more confident in speaking up.²⁴⁰

There are visual displays to assist the church's multicultural intentions, for example a banner of 'Welcome' which was written in thirty different languages at the front of the church. One person said that coming into the church and seeing 'Welcome' written in her language on the big banner was to indeed experience a big welcome to worship.²⁴¹

When leaders slow down during worship, more people tend to feel part of it. The worship coordinator commented that when she chooses songs she intentionally uses at least one song with few words so if they sing it a few times they can get it.²⁴² The participation of NESB people in worship is enhanced by them being able to read the words in songs, whereas in sermons people often miss the track and there is no second chance. Slide presentations help to deliver the message. In other words, more pictures and fewer words are needed.²⁴³

The new context that has been created includes paradox, a postmodern ethos, a certain transcendence of ethnocentrism, and an intense truth-seeking amidst diversity. The worldview is bigger and contains more inner-tensions than is found in a monocultural context.²⁴⁴

One Asian person said that worship at BBC feels like an Asian version of Christianity, not entirely westernised. In negotiating between both their inherited culture and the many Australian cultures, participants create their own spiritual journey for the

²³⁹ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁴⁰ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁴¹ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁴² Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁴³ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁴⁴ Brunswick, Focus group.

community. One person suggested that there is no particular culture or worldview at BBC as there are so many different backgrounds in the one church.²⁴⁵

Pastoral Care

Pastoral team members are responsible for making sure pastoral care is done, but do not necessarily do all the pastoral care themselves. It is not necessarily structured; much pastoral care happens informally at a grassroots level. For instance, an older couple is very active in maintaining contact with the elderly who can't come anymore, and then feeding their needs back to the congregation.²⁴⁶

Multicultural pastoral care issues for people coming from overseas vary and can be huge. For some people it is about finding some connection between their culture and Australian culture. A pastor illustrates with this example:

A Bangladesh family (two sisters) now have an infant in the family and part of pastoral care for them was conducting a dedication service and, in a sense, allowing myself to become part of the extended family because they don't have a dad in Australia. As team leader, I see how they can relate to an older person like myself as kind of a grandfather figure, and I don't think that is inappropriate. You are always wondering about boundaries in pastoral care. Rightly or wrongly I am taking the view that it is not crossing a boundary to allow that to happen. It's a difficult judgment.²⁴⁷

Since boundaries are perceived differently in different cultures, pastoral care in a diverse cultural context is a complex undertaking.²⁴⁸ An Anglo-Western set of boundaries can be disempowering of newcomers. Emmanuel Y. Lartey suggests that a good pastoral practice lies in not losing the importance of different cultural contexts, but in dealing with tensions in creative and imaginative ways to create unity-in-diversity.²⁴⁹ In one BBC pastor's view, 'We need to recognise when we might be taking

²⁴⁵ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁴⁶ Turner, Interview.

²⁴⁷ Hunter, Interview.

²⁴⁸ Emmanuel Y Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (Peterborough, UK: Epworth, 2006), 8-11.

²⁴⁹ Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World*, 126-127.

advantage of someone else, but also not be afraid to cross boundaries when it is for their benefit'.²⁵⁰

It is essential to spend time with those who are not fluent in English and to listen through their accent and language structure. This requires English-speakers to use simple language and be active in their listening.

We are actually meeting each other (not quite half-way because Anglo-speakers have a big advantage in this being their native language), but there is definitely a shift and you can see it when you are in a group and listening to people talk and you can hear how a native English speaker modifies their language so someone who is of non-English speaking background can understand what they are talking about. I think that's one of Brunswick's great strengths. All that is part of pastoral care.²⁵¹

One of the big pastoral care ministries is advocacy. There are steady streams of people who are either refugees, asylum seekers or fairly new to Australia. One of the pastoral care issues is advocating for permanent residency and supporting people who are in transition, who are moving from other religious backgrounds towards becoming Christians. With them pastors meet on a regular basis, doing Bible study and talking about what Christian faith means, and also helping with some of the practical issues of dealing with families and some of the cost of becoming Christian, particularly from different religious backgrounds.²⁵²

Advocacy, of course, has to be balanced in pastoral care work with the demands of confidentiality.

Confidentiality is respected and dealt with in a very careful way through the advocacy of the multicultural minister. This applies particularly to asylum seekers and that very delicate situation of offering a level of support.²⁵³

Pastoral care is also present through ritual. An example is a memorial service held to acknowledge loss when a loved one had died overseas and the member was unable to attend the funeral. This gave others the opportunity, in similar circumstances, to share in this remembrance service. Another example is weddings held during the Sunday

²⁵⁰ Hunter, Interview.

²⁵¹ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁵² Hunter, Interview.

²⁵³ Brunswick, Focus group. The role of multicultural minister is currently vacant.

service, allowing everyone to share in the celebration. This is a way of caring pastorally.²⁵⁴

Another form of pastoral care happens at worship through communal prayer. People are encouraged to care for each other and listening is highly valued.

Group prayers can be quite a scary thing for a lot of people to do, particularly when language is a barrier. When people put forward the request for others, such as ‘This person is to apply for this visa’, people are caring enough to follow up with that person.²⁵⁵

Another characteristic of caring at BBC is that they are not afraid to hug and to put their arm around someone and say, ‘I am walking with you’. Touch speaks, particularly when language is a barrier.²⁵⁶

A further dimension of pastoral care is about developing a whole community that is able to provide a safe place for people who are going through particular kinds of struggles like mental ill-health. The education of the rest of the congregation enables a very broad based response.²⁵⁷

Church Life

Congregational life at BBC takes an event-centred approach which allows relational hospitality to draw people together.²⁵⁸ Worship is a reflection of everything that happens in the community. Morning tea flows on from worship and is the way people mix together. This kind of flexibility gives people from other cultures a space that is welcoming and enables them to experience community life.²⁵⁹

Shared meals have been organised, such as a night with Indian food, and an Iranian movie night organised by congregation members. Parties in the church’s Asylum

²⁵⁴ Turner, Interview.

²⁵⁵ Brunswick Focus group, a second generation voice.

²⁵⁶ Turner, Interview.

²⁵⁷ Hunter Interview; Turner Interview.

²⁵⁸ Charles R Foster, *Embracing Diversity: Leadership in Multicultural Congregations* (New York: The Alban Institute, 1997), 103-114. Foster names two types of congregational lives: Program-centred, which emphasises efficiency and produces activities for a congregation with similar interests, and event-centred, which embraces people of diverse races and cultures and empowers everybody to participate.

²⁵⁹ Turner, Interview; Brunswick, Focus group.

Seekers House met around food, shared stories and cultural music. Other small groups include an informal theological discussion group and men's group.²⁶⁰

There are lots of forums on different topics, such as the building project and other important issues the church is facing. People seek ways of discussing that gives everyone, including the NESB people, the opportunity to have a say. Yet this is still very challenging when, for example, the standard church meeting assumes that everyone has the capacity for debate and exchange in a Western-style format.²⁶¹

Church life at BBC strongly values social justice and inclusiveness. A conversational English class has formed for asylum seekers, overseas students and new migrants. It has served their English skills while forming friendship. The other long-term engagement is the Multicultural Women's Sewing Group, which meets twice weekly, for marginalised refugees and migrant women. This is recognised by the Moreland City Council to be an important local development and the co-ordinator received a community engagement award recently.²⁶²

Another most vulnerable group are asylum seekers with no income, who need transitional housing and support during the waiting period. The Christian Education Centre [CEC] next door to the church has been an asylum seekers' accommodation house for eight years (concluded at the end of 2010). BBC continues in partnership with an asylum seekers project with Baptcare.²⁶³

Decision-making Process

The decision-making process can be very dynamic at BBC, whether making small or big decisions, with people from a wide range of backgrounds and ways of finding consensus. Language is a barrier for people whose first language is not English, hampering free expression. A way to assist with this is having intentional small group

²⁶⁰ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁶¹ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁶² Brunswick, Focus Group.

²⁶³ Brunswick, Focus group; Hunter, Interview; Turner, Interview.

discussions as a means of giving voice to NESB people. It takes time and the slow process is challenging.²⁶⁴

Leadership inclusion is vital. Having people from a different culture on the pastoral team, diaconate and committees is an important way of making inclusive decisions together.²⁶⁵ Another way of empowerment is the inclusion of an NESB church member in the interview process carried out by two church people for potential new members. 'My understanding is that the interview wasn't any power thing but a beautiful experience'.²⁶⁶

Sharing together is a way of valuing diversity in decision-making:

I remember when we had discussions about people with different sexual orientations I became conscious of how you can be part of a community that is made up of lots of different cultures and there are some things that you all share as important but you realise how much you can differ on some issues.²⁶⁷

NESB people are not just invited to worship but to participate in church meetings. The church strongly advocates reaching decisions by consensus. There is a strong emphasis on direction and decisions being set by the whole congregation, not just by leadership. Genuine 'bottom-up' decision-making is inclusive of NESB voices as participants in decision-making, as opposed to a hierarchical approach.²⁶⁸

The tension when using this model to make decisions is that NESB people are more conservative and tend not to modify their views, but look for a sense of security. Some tension is created when leaders allow for different beliefs and yet certain cultures naturally look to the leader to decide the vision and determine the course of action that will fulfil the vision.²⁶⁹ The big challenge in this model is to affirm the equality of the minority cultures.

²⁶⁴ Brunswick, Focus group; Hunter, Interview; Turner, Interview.

²⁶⁵ Brunswick, Focus group; Hunter, Interview; Turner, Interview.

²⁶⁶ Brunswick, Focus group. An NESB person.

²⁶⁷ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁶⁸ Brunswick, Focus group; Hunter, Interview, Turner, Interview.

²⁶⁹ Hunter, Interview.

Leadership

The pastoral team is a multidimensional team of ‘a number of people including both genders and different cultures and understandings of the different needs reflected in the congregation. The team works co-operatively and each has an area of responsibility.’²⁷⁰

In terms of leadership, there are a number of levels. The leadership demonstrates its vision of inclusiveness by welcoming and including migrants, and those suffering mental illness. Forums are an effective way for leadership to listen to the community.²⁷¹

The deacons manage church policy and practice, guiding decisions about property and expenditure. This leadership also relies on gender and cultural representation but it is always a challenge to get people to be deacons. Currently, there is one person on the diaconate from another culture.²⁷²

A congregation-based leadership decision-making process empowers the person to exercise their leadership. However, BBC recognises that that is problematic for some people from other cultures looking for a more hierarchical style of leadership. This kind of leadership encourages and equips people of other cultures to carry out unique multicultural ministry.²⁷³

The cost of discipleship in this leadership model comes from a theological grounding in the dignity of the individual. Jesus welcomed a woman caught in adultery as well as tax collectors and sinners, affirming their growth into the potential of their being. BBC tries to embody in their leadership, not always successfully, a strong link between theology and leadership practice.²⁷⁴

The Mission/Vision Statement

BBC engages in multicultural ministry through hospitality embracing diversity. This hospitality of God includes the need for unity and diversity within the church. It is a

²⁷⁰ Hunter, Interview.

²⁷¹ Hunter, Interview.

²⁷² Hunter, Interview.

²⁷³ Turner, Interview.

²⁷⁴ Hunter, Interview.

great challenge, especially in churches where one cultural group has been dominant. Is it possible to bring unity and diversity without cultural imperialism by the dominant culture? Letty Russell states that the way to achieve this is to emphasise and encourage compassion and hospitality as an expression of unity.²⁷⁵

The vision of multicultural mission is growing together in a multicultural community where difference is celebrated. The gospel welcomes outsiders and so the church is called and empowered to incarnate the mission of God. It is about enabling other marginalised people to be the 'host'. At BBC, this mission is centred on the ministry of hospitality as a way of breaking down the boundaries of cultural and racial differences.²⁷⁶

The statement used to welcome people into membership is also a commitment to an inclusive community. People make these promises because they have already experienced the church's welcome and are learning to welcome others. 'When we welcome people into membership the words of welcome are a strong expression of what it means to be a member at Brunswick.'²⁷⁷

The vision is centred on inclusiveness. The words of welcoming and the banners at church are intentionally welcoming of people from other cultures. But what it means to be accepting of different ideas and philosophies, with permission to disagree, is an ongoing learning curve.²⁷⁸

BBC's mission clearly includes people at the margins of society. For example, BBC has openly welcomed gay people as members and leaders, asylum seekers and refugees, people with mental illness and the Indigenous community. In the building redevelopment project, people want to acknowledge the traditional owners and establish some kind of relationship with the Indigenous communities. Though challenging, this response is not mere tokenism.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁵ Letty M Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/Knox, 1993), 173.

²⁷⁶ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁷⁷ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁷⁸ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁷⁹ Turner, Interview.

BBC has no formal mission statement, but often refers to a Statement of Welcome²⁸⁰ first written by community members twenty years ago and modified by incoming members over the ensuing years. As a pastor explains, ‘We have a set of values. You can sense it and embrace it. Probably it’s something better than a mission statement.’²⁸¹

Hospitality means that many people in the community are good friends with each other, and are also very good at including people who are very new to the community. They are not just sharing worship but real relationship. They are not just sharing meals but participating in each others’ lives with honesty and trust.

Someone said to another African guy, ‘Why don’t you go to the church up the road? You would be much more comfortable there because that’s the kind of theology that would suit you’. He said, ‘But I feel welcome here; I feel at home here’.²⁸²

BBC grasps friendship as a multicultural vision. An NESB person says, ‘In Australia there is some racism but not here—everyone is friendly’. Racism, the fear of being a stranger, can be overcome by interaction and education, raising issues of social justice.²⁸³ The work of anti-racism is stronger in a community where there is a welcome and an inclusion of people from different cultures.²⁸⁴

Relationship with Other Churches

BBC strongly engages with other local churches. There is a regular linking of ecumenical special services, such as on Palm Sunday, Pentecost Sunday and for Christmas carol singing. There has been a good connection with neighbouring churches over supporting asylum seekers.²⁸⁵

Denominationally BBC has a strong involvement in the mission activities of BUV.

²⁸⁰ See Appendix 7.

²⁸¹ Brunswick, Focus Group; Turner, Interview.

²⁸² Turner, Interview.

²⁸³ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁸⁴ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁸⁵ Hunter, Interview.

Some people from non-English-speaking backgrounds straddle two churches. They go to their ethnic community church so they get cultural connections with other churches around, for example, Chin people, Chinese and Africans. This indicates that many have connections with other churches as individuals.²⁸⁶

Hopes for the future of church

BBC values becoming a truly multicultural community where acceptance and understanding of people from other faith backgrounds and spirituality is respected while holding to the core values of the Christian faith.²⁸⁷

The interviews show that the inclusion of a serving multicultural pastor (currently vacant) is important in fostering multiculturalism.

The second generation of young people grow into the life of the church and are becoming leaders who hold to this tradition of multiculturalism. They will keep inclusion going so long as they are at home in both worlds—in the culture of their parents as well as in the dominant culture in Australia.²⁸⁸

There is an ongoing yearning to engage with Aboriginal issues:

We are fortunate to have an Aboriginal man as a member who is a national leader, facilitating leadership programs for Aboriginal people all over Australia.²⁸⁹

The gospel and social justice are inseparable. For example, support of asylum seekers and refugees has been important and it is hoped this will continue. When involved with different cultures, the awareness of different issues abounds and that brings out a desire to do something for social equality.²⁹⁰

BBC's worship style provides a great deal of diversity and includes new and creative ways of being a church. Hopefully, there will be other ways that enable people who are

²⁸⁶ Brunswick Focus Group.

²⁸⁷ Hunter, Interview.

²⁸⁸ Hunter, Interview.

²⁸⁹ Brunswick, Focus group.

²⁹⁰ Brunswick, Focus group.

from other cultures to create their own future so that everybody, regardless of where they come from, can be part of that bright future.²⁹¹

Emerging Themes

Hospitality has been the key theme in developing a multicultural mission at Brunswick Baptist Church. BBC has grappled with the challenge to move beyond the monocultural church to include people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

It has been discovered that although the idea of unity-and-diversity within the church is a great challenge, it is possible to enjoy unity and diversity without cultural imperialism by the dominant culture.

BBC's **worship** offers an opportunity to share individual faith journeys and this helps create connections between different cultural backgrounds. This service continues into a morning tea time where the welcome to one another continues.

Careful **pastoral care** is provided here, but barriers may unintentionally be crossed through lack of understanding. The shared pastoral care approach makes it possible for members to continue to learn from each other, and the sharing of stories builds a community that is strong through its diversity.

BBC's values have led the community into choosing an open style of **decision-making**, where people honour diversity. However, the participation of newly arrived migrants in the leadership and decision-making processes of the church remains a difficult issue. A very obvious barrier is that of language. Modifying the language implies reducing the power of dominant culture. This requires much patience and listening.

The **mission and vision** of BBC is centred on inclusiveness and social justice. It expresses a clear desire to engage with people on the margins of society. BBC's mission of hospitality is never easy or straightforward, but it enables the church to embrace diverse peoples and call them to God's table of welcome. The ministry of hospitality is a way of breaking the boundaries of cultural and racial differences.

²⁹¹ Turner, Interview.

The church **hopes** for a way forward in passing on faith to the second generation and later generations of migrants - that they may become the leaders who keep this tradition of multiculturalism moving, where people of other cultures are at home in both worlds.

CHAPTER 4

CRITICAL EVALUATION

In chapter one I argued that a multicultural church is based on the gospel call to diversity in the pressing context of multicultural Australia. This is a call to diversity and inclusiveness, a call which involves addressing issues of power which is a central dimension of all social relationships, but particularly present when one culture tends to dominate and others are marginalised. To be genuinely inclusive we must share power more equitably.²⁹² Russell points out that when power is unbalanced it fosters uniformity instead of unity in diversity.²⁹³

Each model has the potential for diversity and for reflecting what the gospel means for today. Individual churches using each model may reach this goal to greater or lesser extents. However, each model also presents areas of challenge, or particular issues which must be addressed. This chapter presents a critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the four models, specifically addressing issues of power and diversity because they are key questions for assessing the vitality, and congruence with gospel values, of multicultural church communities.²⁹⁴

4.1 Overview

Australia has become the second most cosmopolitan nation in the world.²⁹⁵ As immigration has increased, Australian communities have become culturally more diverse. In the U.S., Harvey Conn, in his introduction of Manuel Ortiz's book *One New People*, points out that Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week because Christians tend to gather in ethnic groups.²⁹⁶ The churches must respond to these changes in the particular contexts in which they are situated. Yet there are doorways for

²⁹² Law, *The Wolf shall Dwell with the Lamb*, 9-10.

²⁹³ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 173-174.

²⁹⁴ Eric H F Law, *The Bush was Blazing but not Consumed: Developing a Multicultural Community through Dialogue and Liturgy* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 1996), x.

²⁹⁵ Meredith Griffiths, 'Australia nearly most multicultural nation', *AM: Current Affairs Program*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (17 November 2010), <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2010/s3068429.htm> [Accessed 14 September 2011].

²⁹⁶ Ortiz, *One New People*, 10.

welcoming and engaging in multicultural mission. Today congregations need to address questions such as:

- How long can we maintain our church according to this model?
- What are the advantages of holding solely to our own culture?
- Can we also explore a transition to other models?

These are questions not only for migrant congregations. Anglo-Australian congregations are also finding themselves in a changing intercultural context. Some Anglo-Australian churches are hesitant to become more inclusive, even though they are declining in numbers. They want to maintain their comfortable monocultural Anglo-Australian ethos, and resist being challenged by people of different cultural backgrounds and the changes that their inclusion may entail.

The case studies in chapter three illustrate various ways NESB congregations can relate to English-speaking congregations. There are challenges and opportunities for all congregations, both migrant-Australian and Anglo-Australian, to examine the gospel's implications for our understanding of a culture of inclusivity. There are many different ways to embrace a variety of ethnicities and cultures while expressing true oneness as followers of Jesus Christ.

4.2 Four Metaphors

Four metaphors for the four models we have considered might be useful in understanding the nature of the relationships involved.

A Biological Family

A metaphor for the *monocultural church model* is 'a biological family' connected by language, ethnicity and culture. It is the idea that 'birds of a feather stick together'. This model assumes the Homogeneous Unit Principle, believing that evangelism and church growth is most effective amongst people of the same cultural background.

These monocultural congregations, however, may include members from across a continent or language group, and this may be a starting point for extending multicultural

ministry opportunities. For example, the Slavic Baptist Church has people from more than ten different nationalities in Eastern Europe who understand, to some degree, Russian language and culture (Case study 1). The common tradition and culture is central. This strong bond gives people security and a sense of belonging. It also connects them to their homelands as well as the Australian context.

A Shared House

A good metaphor for the *friendship church model* is ‘a shared house’, where people cohabit without commitment. In this model, it is usually a long established English-speaking church that shares its space with a new migrant congregation. This arrangement begins a relationship between the congregations where they start to learn more about one another. Mooroolbark and the Victorian Chin Baptist Church enjoy a relationship very like that of a shared house (Case study 2). While both congregations are enriched by the other, they maintain autonomy and do not expect to amalgamate. The arrangement is temporary and based simply on shared use of the same building.

An Intercultural Engaged Couple

One metaphor for the *partnership church model* is ‘an intercultural engaged couple’ who are committed to an ongoing relationship. Two congregations are separate yet envision a future together, through such structures as Sunday School and Youth Group. This model works best when congregations are of a similar size, so that the power structure is balanced. The English and Chinese congregations of Syndal Baptist church illustrate such an engagement (Case study 3). The two groups intentionally interact with each other and seek to work together, yet still remain two distinct congregations, each with its own leadership.

A Blended Family

The *integrated church model* is like ‘a blended family’ where participants are brought together from different cultural backgrounds through different circumstances. Thus they look more like a foster-family, adopted-family, mixed marriage or step-parents and children that all are mixed together as a family. This model has considerable diversity in

structures, along with a range of different expectations and cultures. There are constant challenges and opportunities as new people are continually included. Brunswick Baptist Church is a longstanding example of a congregation pursuing this kind of inclusivity (Case study 4).

4.3 Evaluation of Each Model

I will assess and contrast the four models under discussion, considering critical questions for each model. I will begin by looking at the strengths of each in their context and the contributions that they make to multicultural Australia.

Decision-making structures are vital to any assessment of a model of multicultural church ministry:

- How is conflict handled?
- Do structures lead to avoidance of conflict or management of conflict by keeping things or people separate?
- Who has power in this model? How is such power used?
- Who doesn't have power? What consequences are there when someone doesn't have power?

4.3.1 The Monocultural Model

Strengths

I identify two main categories of migrants who tend to establish monocultural churches:

- refugees (such as Chin, Karen and Sudanese) and
- economic migrants (such as Chinese, Indonesian and Korean).

Many ethnic congregations began as a wave of refugees arrived, but later migrants have come by choice for economic reasons. For instance, a Chinese church began with refugees following the Tiananmen Square massacre, but later Chinese migrants came for different reasons (using skilled migration programs). This can also be seen in some

Slavic churches, where the first congregation was composed of refugees, while later arrivals came for study or business reasons.

The pattern of arrival of migrants also depends on the type of migration involved. One pattern would be when refugees come in waves, for a limited period of time. Another pattern is where economic migrants come in a steady slow stream. For instance, Sudanese congregations began with waves of refugees, but currently Australia no longer receives Sudanese refugees, the only arrivals being those who come through family reunions.

Despite the difference in circumstances of the migrants, many of their needs are similar and are best met in the initial stages of settlement by a monocultural church (or perhaps a migrant ethnic church connected in the friendship model). Monocultural congregations are an important starting point for new migrants who have little English and who share a common language with other new migrants. In such a homogeneous congregation, new migrants find support in a familiar cultural environment and in their own language as they struggle to settle and find their way in a new and unfamiliar land.

Refugees in particular need a safe place to regroup and to work as activists for their homeland, and the church is a supportive public place where they can gather and reform community. For those who have been traumatised by war, it is helpful to be amongst their own people who understand what they have been through and who can support newcomers in their healing and rehabilitation.

All kinds of migrants can hanker after their homeland, and a public community such as a church is a place where they can seek to recreate their culture in Australia, commemorate their national holidays or celebration days and maintain their ethnic identity.

An ethnic church can be best suited to reaching out in evangelism to others of the same culture. The Slavic church, for example, has specified that its goal is to bring the message of the gospel to Russian-speaking people in Melbourne. They feel that their understanding of Russian culture and particularly its religious culture enables them to reach out to other (Jewish and Orthodox) Russians in ways that non-Russians are unwilling or unable to do.

Peer relationships and a sense of belonging are easily possible with one's own people. In friendships with people of a dominant culture, a migrant may not feel quite as 'equal' in the friendship. Similarly, in the church community, migrants are equal with others of their culture; they may not feel or be accepted as equals in a church where they are of a minority group.

Worship and prayer are also simple as ways of expressing one's own language and cultural style, and a monocultural church caters well for those worship needs of the congregation. Using one's native language allows for freedom of expression and a connection to shared heritage. Some migrants whose English is fluent are still attracted to the community language-base at church.

Studies by Blackburn and Woods show that cultural and even national identity may continue longer than the use of a community's spoken language.²⁹⁷ For example, two Filipino churches in Melbourne are monocultural, and yet worship in English. Although they worship in English, their worship, social structure and practices remain the same as those in the Philippines.

In contrast, some Korean and Chinese churches have many people continuously coming, so they always have new first generation migrants that keep the church with reasons for being.²⁹⁸

A key issue for monocultural churches is how long is it healthy for them to remain monocultural. For the first generation, adjusting to a new place is a major task. The second generation, however, will undoubtedly have different needs and desires. In the past, such churches tended to be independent, and therefore their church only existed for the needs of the first generation and for as long as the first generation survived. Those churches without new first generation members tend to be unsustainable because there are not enough new resources (people and finances). Thus, they need to partner with another church. For instance, what once was a thriving German speaking church in Melbourne's outer east has now become the Ferntree Gully Baptist Church, because

²⁹⁷ Blackburn, 'A Strategy for Cross Cultural Ministry', 178-191; Anya Woods, *Medium or Message: Language and Faith in Ethnic Churches* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2004), 163-172.

²⁹⁸ Sun, Interview.

there has been no significant German migration in recent decades and the whole congregation was able to move together towards an English-speaking focus.²⁹⁹

There are also Anglo-Australian churches that remain monocultural even though their local community context is changing ethnically. Often they prefer their own comfort and it is difficult for them to include anyone who looks and behaves differently from them. Monocultural churches need to realise there are a range of options available that still preserve the original culture.

In an example of a monocultural church which has changed to a more open model, Melbourne Chinese Baptist Church (MCBC), formerly East Kew Baptist Church, used to have a Cantonese service as their major service and an English-speaking service which was small. MCBC wanted an English-speaking youth pastor who could speak fluent Cantonese as well as English. Unable to find such a leader, they have appointed both Cantonese-speaking and English-speaking pastors to cooperate in the church as a whole. The two services are held concurrently in different parts of the building, and the joint deacons' meeting is mainly conducted in English.

Despite deep-seated traditionalism, the Cantonese church has opened itself to the influence of the English-speaking second generation. Moreover, their English-speaking youth pastor is Filipino, and their English-speaking leading pastor is Anglo-Australian, a visible demonstration of their acceptance of diversity. They have also recently begun holding Mandarin language services for those who speak only Mandarin.

By retaining the traditional Cantonese service as well as supporting English and Mandarin language services and communities, MCBC is succeeding at both preserving its language and culture and enabling its members to become integrated into its Australian context, and both congregations are growing. Furthermore, what began as a Hong Kong Cantonese-speaking church has broadened to include Chinese migrants from mainland China, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and elsewhere.

In another example, there are two Victorian Filipino Baptist churches—the *Hope of Life* and *Faith* churches—that worship in English. They also include some English-speaking people. In these churches, the monocultural model has become more open to its

²⁹⁹ Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 657.

Australian context through the use of English. These congregations want a good future for their children, and thus acknowledge the need to offer opportunities for their children to be integrated into the Australian community.

A key strength of homogeneous churches is their ability to evangelise within their ethnic group; this is particularly true for groups with a continuous intake of new migrants. Such churches can also be effective in reaching those from similar backgrounds. For example, the Russian church has expanded their target group to include a pan-Slavic focus.

Critical Questions

Power, Conflict and Decision-making

Within the monocultural model, and common to many NESB churches, the pastor and other leaders often have great power. Outsiders, young people and women typically have limited roles in decision-making and can easily feel marginalised, and may quietly leave. In established migrant churches the approach to leadership can be inflexible and leaders may be unwilling to share power, or congregants unwilling to assume it. Leaders can have difficulty negotiating change. In addition, some leaders lack confidence in building relationships with other congregations.

This kind of patriarchal tradition is problematic in the broader Australian multicultural context, where both men and women take on leadership roles. A woman from the Slavic Baptist congregation, who was part of a focus group, recognised that their patriarchal system was a challenge for second-generation people who might be interested in their church.

Senior people usually form and represent the tradition, particularly for churches from Asian backgrounds. Younger people respect them and often remain silent in times of conflict, as is evident with some of the Korean second generation. As a consequence, these churches tend to lose younger people, since they feel disempowered.³⁰⁰ At the Melbourne Chinese Baptist Church, the intentional inclusion of young people and

³⁰⁰ Mok, *The Technicolour Faith*, 29.

women in the pastoral team and deacons group has challenged and made a difference to this pattern.

Diversity and the Gospel

Monocultural churches are often quite resistant to change, and their Constitution may be considered 'sacred' and above challenge. There is also no opportunity to compare with or learn from other approaches to church practice, due to the segregated nature of monocultural communities.

Thus it is difficult for such congregations to pass on leadership to those interested in bi-lingual activities. The first generation leadership feels a responsibility for passing on the native language and traditions. While this is a good aim in and of itself, churches like the Slavic church have clearly struggled to embrace second-generation adults who are not fluent in Russian.³⁰¹

Not all monocultural churches are alike. Some communities anticipate ongoing arrivals, such as the Chinese and Koreans, and need to continue their native cultural style. There are also migrant congregations for whom waves of migration have passed and thus the communities are maintained primarily by the original, relatively static membership, as found in Slavic Church. What can even occur is the return of key first-generation migrant leaders to their country of origin, such as we are seeing currently with the Sudanese community following the creation of South Sudan in 2011. There are also monocultural churches, such as the Burmese Chin and Karen churches that currently have large numbers of new immigrants but recognise that this pattern will not necessarily continue.

It is important for each of these types of monocultural congregations to recognise that the needs of the second and the future generations are different from those of the first generation. And it is vital that there is a demonstrated valuing of the needs of subsequent generations.

³⁰¹ Woods, *Medium or Message*, 175-178. Woods in her research demonstrates that for mono-ethnic communities, language shows the 'true' expression of ethno-religious identity and that dialogue between leaders and young people is crucial in order to cater for younger generations.

Melbourne Chinese Baptist Church (MCBC) provides a healthy example of how to do this. The MCBC has Cantonese/Mandarin Chinese speaking congregations and an English-speaking congregation. They are 'pan-Chinese', consisting of people from Chinese backgrounds from various Asian countries. The English-speaking congregation's pastor has become the senior pastor. The diverse multicultural pastoral team sensitively communicates the church's multicultural values. Through these leaders, the church has started to open the window so that what was, using our metaphor, a biological family, has become a bit more like a blended family.

In another example, both Filipino churches in Melbourne are also good illustrations of monocultural churches becoming more integrated multiculturally. These congregations began with a monocultural style but have begun to use English in worship. Thus, the second generation has the option of worshipping in English and also of staying connected with their community.

In conclusion, a monocultural church is an important starting point for recently arrived migrants, especially those who cannot speak English. However, as churches in this model move into their second and future generations there will need to be a variety of ways for a monocultural model to modify and to make links to the wider Australian church and culture in which they live. The call to diversity is the biggest challenge for this model as it deals with the danger of separateness and caters for its second generation.

4.3.2 The Friendship Model

Strengths

Often, migrant ethnic churches desire to worship and build a church community in their own language and culture in order to retain their ethnic and cultural identity and heritage. While in many cases this finds expression in the formation of monocultural churches, some congregations form a relationship with an English-speaking congregation as the 'host' church. In this Friendship model, both congregations retain their separate identities, but share buildings and resources.

While the advantages of being a monocultural church are retained, there are added advantages in being in some collaboration with an Anglo-Australian congregation. Clearly one significant advantage is financial. The migrant congregation is almost always unable to buy or build a church, so being able to share an existing building is an obvious solution. This often works well for the host church too, as it is an extra source of income and assistance for maintaining its own buildings. The migrant church is often a very solid contributor to working bees and other patterns of maintenance (as found at Chin and Mooroolbark).

This model also enables a new migrant congregation to form and to minister immediately, without having to wait until better financial resources are incoming, or until they may qualify as a constituent church of a particular denomination in their own right. This is particularly important for instance when a large number of refugees arrive in a short space of time, and are in need of support and community as soon as they arrive in Australia.

A salient example is the Karen church in Bendigo: when a group of Karen refugees arrived in Bendigo they attended the Baptist churches at Bendigo and Kangaroo Flat, and soon asked if they could conduct their own services in the afternoons. These congregations are two of eight Karen Baptist congregations who have established Friendship model churches in Victoria. This is a typical pattern we are seeing and expect to continue to see.

There are other advantages for both the host and migrant church in this model. For the migrant church, this model offers autonomy whilst enabling them to grow in confidence as they are supported in learning to operate in an Australian context. They are able to focus on their ministry while the host church takes care of issues such as building compliance and maintenance, duty of care, provision of sound systems, kitchen facilities, and all the other issues and expenses involved in running a church. The host church is able to initiate the migrant church into how to deal with all these matters. They may also deal helpfully with other issues such as insurance and legal issues.³⁰² Many of these situations are unfamiliar to migrants when they first arrive in Australia. It is important

³⁰² Blackwell, Interview.

to understand that the locus of the friendship can extend way beyond typical ‘church matters’.

The host church also finds advantages in partnering with a migrant church. They see their support of the migrant church as part of their mission and ministry. In the sharing of church buildings, both communities are enriched by a growing awareness of each other. Of Mooroolbark, the interim pastor said that ‘unlike other churches who link with adoption projects overseas, here Mooroolbark has direct, first-hand experiences similar to missionaries and it has been an opportunity’ to engage as a whole church.³⁰³ This experimental relationship can enable significant mutual learning.

The secretary of Mooroolbark identified that the strength of the Friendship model is that it is very easy for them to implement: it ‘is very much hands-off for the “host” church’. Mooroolbark provides great freedom for the ethnic church while giving significant support with minimal oversight. He further commented that the model encourages the rapid growth to maturity of an ethnic congregation.³⁰⁴

The Chin pastor at MBC identified key strengths of the model as the significant mentoring and pastoral support he gained from the senior pastor of MBC, particularly in administering sacraments which in the Chin tradition he was not able to perform himself until he was ordained. This issue is very common for migrant churches, which usually have no ordained leadership when they start, even though their tradition may require ordination for the administration of sacraments and for leading many of the special services.

The host and migrant churches involved in the Friendship model usually have relatively limited interaction with each other. However some have developed the relationship into something closer to the Partnership model. Some congregations, particularly Karen, but also others have taken this path by having a more interactive relationship with their host churches. The migrant church shares its stories and hospitality, and develops personal friendships with members of the host church. They share together in occasional combined services, and the host church actively supports the migrant community in job

³⁰³ Rev Dr Bob Fergie, Interim Pastor of Mooroolbark Baptist Church, Phone interview by the author (7 April 2011).

³⁰⁴ Blackwell, Interview.

seeking, advocacy, migration and resettlement issues, teaching English, and helping the migrant church's support for the struggles of their compatriots in their homeland.

Where applicable, the host church can assist with preparing funding applications for projects such as payment for community workers funded by local agencies. One such project is a Men's Shed for Karen men at Croydon Hills Baptist Church, funded by the local council.³⁰⁵ These activities have in turn fostered a deeper commitment from the English-speaking congregation, which then has begun to share the perspectives and aspirations of the migrant congregation despite differences in theology and culture.

Critical Questions

Power, Conflict and Decision-making

The power structure of the NESB congregation in the Friendship model is similar to the characteristics of the Monocultural model. In most cases, though generous intentions exist, the power tends to be held by the host church. At Mooroolbark paternalism is evident in that when leadership meetings are held, they are in English and the Chin pastor and leaders are invited to join in. It is never the other way around. When it is a paternalistic relationship the NESB church needs support to find its voice in an asymmetric power structure.

In a healthy relationship, there is a need for both congregations to actively work to support each other. Contrary to this, a relationship like that of landlord and tenant means that if there are conflicts or the contract ends for whatever reason, the landlord stays and the tenant moves. The landlord is always secure and the tenant is not. Difficulties with language and an unfamiliar culture can be a disadvantage, and intensive listening to one another becomes vital. Though this takes time and commitment, sharing friendship overcomes difficulties and enables each to influence the other.

In this model, finance and administration are kept separate, thus avoiding opportunity for conflict and unequal negotiation in that area. However this limits opportunities for

³⁰⁵ Marg Moran, Karen Support Co-ordinator of Croydon Hills Baptist Church, presenting at a Multicultural Elective of the BUV Gathering (29 October 2010).

sharing and learning from each other and can contribute to the framework being a more superficial relationship. Similarly, when there is separate worship, ministry, community activities and general social time, the ordinary sharing between people is not activated and this also leads to a more shallow relationship without authentic mutual influence.

The host church can be driven by responsibilities and become focused upon functional management, leaving little energy or impetus for sharing vision together. Often a polite manner is felt to be crucial for avoiding conflict for the migrant congregation. For this reason, often a silent or withdrawn manner will be evident at times of tension or conflict or even making simple decisions. It is vital for both congregations to consider how to discern: how to listen, share and deliberate with those who think in a language other than English as well as those who think and speak only in English. Having some joint meetings that are not conducted in English is an interesting idea that I would like to see developed to a greater degree.

The Friendship model reflects a minimal level of sharing compared with churches in the Partnership framework. It is also a kind of sharing that is easier to withdraw from and to conclude. Such withdrawal is most likely to be controlled by the host church. Not all host churches are as flexible as Mooroolbark, and sometimes the issues that cause an arrangement to break down are trivial and relate more to sensibilities regarding the buildings than to questions of vision and mission. The migrant congregation will also be longing for their own buildings and facilities to control. Activities are always more limited when negotiation over space is required and unrestricted use is not possible.

In the Friendship model, the NESB congregation tends to feel that the host church always holds the power regardless of the size of the NESB congregation. This imbalance may foster the desire for independence if they can afford it. This can be seen in the Chin/Mooroolbark situation.

When comparing the Westgate/Karen example of the Friendship model and the Mooroolbark/Chin example it can be seen that different outcomes evolve, depending on the equality of the relationship. The Westgate church has been impacted on strongly by the Karen, so much so that they have given up some power in terms of the effort and

adjustment needed to accommodate the Karen into their regular worship, providing a more equal relationship.

We established a pattern of bilingual services with regular translations into Chin and Karen. This often made services longer and needed thought and effort beforehand. In more recent times the building use has involved us giving up our control over many aspects of the building, especially the arrangement of seats and furniture for the Sunday Service. As a result of our ongoing accommodation of the Karen church we literally have to set up our own church building in the way we prefer every Sunday morning.³⁰⁶

The power issue is therefore an important one for churches to consider explicitly because it will influence their future.

Diversity and the Gospel

Where there is no intention to become one an autonomous or Friendship approach is not very different to the Monocultural model of multicultural church. The Friendship model has wonderful potential for two communities to develop shared ministry side by side. However, where there is no intention to become one and where it seems that each congregation does not want to open themselves up to being changed by the other, the potential for interaction is somewhat stifled. Some churches have operated side by side for decades but have not been greatly influenced by the other, such as Grace Romanian Baptist Church which meets in the building of the Auburn Baptist Church.

Even in an apparently healthy Friendship context, the intercultural opportunities can be missed by some. Not every individual will have the same interest in learning from the 'other'. At one meeting involving a member of Mooroolbark, for example, an English-speaking church member said to me that he didn't know who the Chin people are.³⁰⁷

Such a superficial relationship is not an expression of diversity. It may be better than no relationship at all, and it may have some latent potential, but it ignores much of the gospel imperative discussed in chapter one.

³⁰⁶ Rev Geoff Wraight, Senior Pastor of Westgate Baptist Church (21 November 2011).

³⁰⁷ An informal conversation with a member of Mooroolbark Baptist Church.

Other Issues Regarding this Model

While NESB congregations certainly need help in the formative stage, the significant issue we face is how to grow and develop congregations of new arrivals beyond their initial formation. The help and support provided by English-speaking congregations is often highly respected and long remembered, and can grow into true mutual friendship. There is a window of opportunity, when a style of friendship that is more like a partnership can begin to be developed. This requires an interest in developing ministry together, sharing some burdens on equal terms and working across diversity, as well as an openness to being changed by the other.

For the NESB congregation, the common challenge is the lack of intention for a long-term friendship on the part of the initially enthusiastic host church. Without deliberate intention, the initial relationship can fade after the NESB congregation becomes settled, and they may even move away from each other. When a Friendship model just continues, with the ‘friends’ side by side, without turning into a partnership, their relationship reflects that of the landlord and tenant. It also leads to monocultural ways of functioning. For these reasons, the Friendship model is ideally seen as a temporary phase on the way to the Partnership model.

For the NESB congregation, the Friendship model provides support and mentoring and easy access to English-speaking services as a window into the new culture. Children, especially of the second generation, have some opportunities to develop friendships between the two congregations. In some cases the friendship begins to flower at various levels between members of congregations despite the limited opportunities for interaction. As a model it has some warmth in relationship, but lacks structures that encourage persistence in the overcoming of difference. It is like a flower in bud, full of potential but vulnerable to the first frost.

4.3.3 The Partnership Model

Strengths

In the Partnership model two or more congregations each worship in their own language at the same time, in the same building if space permits. It differs from the

Friendship model in that this is a permanent arrangement: the church has one constitution for the two congregations. It has joint finances and administration, combined Sunday School, youth groups and study groups, and a combined diaconate and leadership team in addition to separate congregational leadership structures.

The advantages for those in the migrant church are that this new place of partnership becomes their home church and they don't need to look for another. There is a sense of ownership and belonging for both congregations. There is also the opportunity for the second and later generations who no longer use their community language to remain in the church, but attend the English-language service. In this way they are able to belong in the two communities and access the benefits of an Australian church leadership resource, which would not be available if the community worshipped alone.

For both congregations there are considerable advantages in increased numbers. A greater diversity of missional programs such as Sunday School and youth work is possible because of increased resources, and the visible ethnic diversity in the congregation enables people of other ethnic backgrounds to feel more at home.

On a social level, there is much to be enjoyed in shared hospitality, forming personal friendships, and in celebrating and eating together with people of a different tradition. The partnership church becomes a safe and sympathetic environment in which each congregation can learn at close quarters about relating with a very different culture. An example of the intention to befriend each other is demonstrated in the Grandparent Program at Syndal, where older Anglo-Australians become active honorary grandparents to Chinese youngsters whose biological grandparents are not in Australia.

At Syndal, directly because of the partnership the community reconstructed the building and established a second large auditorium, so one worship space can be used by the English-speaking congregation and the other by the Chinese congregation. The built space reflects a serious intention to be in partnership, despite the limitation it creates for any combined services.

In another example, the Berwick/Spanish-speaking church has similar numbers in both congregations and has developed one constitution. They have a similar history, with both congregations being fifteen years old. Each congregation has its own pastor and

there is a joint pastor for the young people from both congregations. Having a joint pastor is possible as they both contribute to the payment of the stipend. This pastor is a second-generation migrant himself, his background enabling a solid understanding of the issues facing second-generation young Australians. Both congregations benefit.

Critical questions

Power, Conflict and Decision-making

In the partnership model, the NESB partnered congregation is still a homogenous community yet it co-operates and interacts with the partner Anglo-Australian church. Language is pivotal because where English is limited there is potential for the congregation that has the advantage of speaking the English language to hold the power of the dominant culture. They may slip into acting like a landlord, with or without awareness that this is their mode of behaviour and assumption.

According to Larry Samovar and Richard Porter, people from different cultures have different ways of expressing themselves and of being.³⁰⁸ This can be clearly seen in relation to conflict. For example, the pastors of Syndal expressed different emphases on assertiveness and harmony, similar to those listed in the table below. Difference can also be seen in the Syndal congregation members' approach to issues.

³⁰⁸ Larry A Samovar and Richard E Porter, *Communication Between Cultures*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), 84-86.

Assertiveness or Harmony³⁰⁹

Assertiveness	Harmony
Frank, open and direct	Values harmonious relationships over expressing one's view or feelings
Found in individualistic cultures	Found in collectivist cultures
Values debate, self-defence and being able to say what you think and feel	Values indirectness, non-confrontation and silence
Sees conflict as sometimes necessary	Avoids conflict
Can be aggressive	Can be hard to read

The English congregation approaches issues directly, aiming for clear communication, though there are times when it sounds like complaint to someone with a different perspective. The Chinese, on the other hand, approach issues more indirectly so as to protect the relationship and avoid confrontation. Even though they talk consistently about wanting to work together, the interviews illustrate that Bill Brown and Wai Kwong Sun operate with different communication styles, which fundamentally give more power to the Anglo culture.³¹⁰ This is regardless of Bill Brown's obvious intentions, which goes to show how complex 'partnership' can be.

As the English-speaking pastor communicates that the central value is for frank, open and direct communication. He values discussions and being able to explain what the issues are though there are times when this is risky. He sees conflict as sometimes necessary and believes that it gives opportunity to hear different perspectives. Juxtaposed with this, the Chinese pastor, Wai Kwong Sun values harmonious relationships above expressing his views or feelings. He values non-confrontation and seeks to avoid conflict.

³⁰⁹ Samovar and Porter, *Communication Between Cultures*, 84-86; Ross Langmead, 'DM207/307: The Multicultural Church', Lecture notes, 'Cultural Differences', Week 5, 10.

³¹⁰ This is so despite the fact that Wai Kwong Sun would be considered more direct than many of his Asian colleagues.

One example was when the English-speaking people raised issues about the use of a fridge.³¹¹ The Chinese congregation dealt with this by focusing on the need for harmonious relationship and simply bought a new fridge. Even though there was a satisfactory outcome on this particular issue, the danger may be that one group speaks and the other withdraws or tries to problem solve in silence, causing a collision of two different communication styles.

Power is an issue that can always be detected in the leadership structure (governance) and finance areas. In Syndal's case, the leadership structure places the Chinese ministry as one of several Area Ministries.³¹² This means that the Chinese pastor reports to the Senior Pastor of Syndal. To have a true partnership, the challenge is to have equal voices in leadership. Additionally, at Syndal all committees aim to include Chinese members, though according to the senior pastor and Chinese pastor it is hard to find Chinese representatives to join committees. The Chinese pastor indicated one reason as being that those who are potential appointees don't have time, but he also feels that the English congregation has much broader resources and people. It might also be important to make a space for others, including emerging Chinese leadership, by providing intentional mentoring strategies. In my view, Syndal is still on the way to becoming a true partnership where all voices have equal access and equal merit in the leadership and functioning of the church.

It is important for churches building a partnership to share experiences of difference, to address issues of power and to discuss openly how to work in the healthiest ways. Hofstede discusses the distance between the powers held by members of a particular culture. He defines Power-Distance as 'the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations accept power is distributed unequally'.³¹³ High power distance cultures are less egalitarian and strongly hierarchical. People in these cultures expect authoritative communications and leadership styles. Low power distance cultures tend to more egalitarian with relational leadership styles. For example, Bill Brown finds that the Chinese are more respectful of authority while Wai Kwong Sun

³¹¹ See Partnership Case study (Decision-making process, 80); Sun, Interview.

³¹² See Appendix 5: 'SBC STAFF Care and Reporting'.

³¹³ Geert Hofstede and Michael H Bond, 'Hofstede's Culture Dimensions: An Independent Validation Using Rokeach's Value Survey', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 15 (1984): 419.

experiences Anglo-Australians as much more egalitarian in relationship. This understanding has concrete implications for how decisions might be made between two different power distance cultures, and intentional effort must be made to navigate these differences.³¹⁴

Diversity and the Gospel

Syndal's Mission Statement shows clearly the impact of diversity on the church's ability to live out the gospel call to mission. It can be seen especially in the way the English congregation has grown to become more multicultural, and the Chinese congregation has expanded to pan-Chinese ministry as they embrace all sorts of Chinese people, including anyone who speaks Mandarin or Cantonese.

The Grandparent Program is a very positive example of the church's commitment to multiculturalism. It creates family-like relationships which are genuine cross-cultural connections. Through this program people are enabled to interact interculturally between the two communities; this reflects the gospel call to diversity through intercultural learning and simply sharing quality time together.

Whilst the pan-Chinese diversity makes things somewhat more complex, the Chinese congregation limits the overarching Syndal ability to be multicultural because it does not allow enough diversity. It limits it to a bi-cultural diversity. The Chinese pastor says, 'We are still not multicultural because we do not have people from many different cultures here.' What he is saying is that, in a way, 'partnership' doesn't go far enough. He wants to be a congregation for all people. At the same time, he thinks the Chinese-specific congregation is best for his community to enhance the ability to attract newcomers from Chinese backgrounds because people know that culture. The fact is that the Chinese are one group likely to have ongoing migration, so perhaps there is a case for ongoing Chinese-speaking congregations which, to some extent, reflect the monocultural model.

Where the NESB congregation has bigger numbers, other issues are raised. The NESB congregation has some power, and so they do not necessarily want to go for

³¹⁴ Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, 13-27.

‘integration’ because they are able to function on their own and it is more comfortable than having to negotiate with another group. Thus, the NESB congregation in partnership deals with balancing a number of tensions in responding to diversity.

Firstly, it faces the tension between, on the one hand, being willing to be open - to share and to partner - and having to negotiate power and the differences of communication styles and, on the other hand, being comfortable within one’s own community and retaining power.

Secondly, there is a tension between wanting to be open to more diversity and seeing that a Chinese-speaking community is the best way to work with ongoing Chinese migrants.

Issues Regarding this Model

At Syndal, Sunday services are synchronised so that people from both congregations can have morning tea together, but at social times the challenge remains with issues of cultural identity, language and difference.

In terms of interactions during morning tea, the Chinese pastor reflected, ‘It hasn’t really worked because each group needs time for their own catch-up’. They each need their own space and comfort zone. A physical distance between the two halls makes it unrealistic for mixing because ‘mixers’ would have to physically move some distance. On the whole there is segregation, just as in a Friendship church. Syndal could possibly be described as an example of the Partnership model at the leadership level but a Friendship model at the congregation level.

Syndal also has a Vietnamese congregation but it is very small (about twenty people), and because of the small numbers their pastor works full-time outside the church. In the formal partnership this congregation doesn’t have any effective role or place in meetings. The structure and resourcing is not really there to make that possible. The Vietnamese congregation of Syndal, however, has potential for the future.

Other examples can be seen where there are imbalanced numbers between the two congregations. In the case of the Korean and Bently churches’ partnership, the

Korean community has larger numbers (about a hundred) than Bentleigh's long established congregation (about thirty). The Korean congregation maintains the building and contributes to English-speaking services with music and other needs. The manse is used by the Koreans as a mission house for their Korean student ministry. In this case the partnership is not a mutual one as the Korean congregation is much larger, but far less influential. In reality, this example is really more a Monocultural or Friendship model as it is two independent congregations, rather than communities in authentic, explored partnership.

The Northcote/Chinese partnership is similar to the Korean/Bentleigh situation. The English-speaking congregation has fewer than thirty people while the Chinese congregation averages two hundred. The Chinese congregation uses the main auditorium and the English-speaking congregation the smaller hall. They both worship at the same time. This is a case of a newer congregation continuing to grow while the original congregation appears to be in decline.

Strong partnership dynamics take time and considerable commitment to develop. A key vulnerability with the partnership model is that the healthy, engaged system required to realise the potential strengths of the model requires great energy, particularly from key leaders.

Summary

The Partnership model works more effectively when the English-speaking and NESB congregations are of similar size and have a shared vision. This is in direct comparison to the Integrated model which can work effectively when there are lots of small groups of people from many different communities.

The Partnership model goes further than the concept of the single language congregation within a church and avoids the weakness resulting from the mono-ethnic church structure. Christians of different ethnic groups are encouraged to see themselves as members of one body in relation to reconciliation and justice, and to express visibly their unity in diversity that captures the essence of Paul's message in Ephesians 2:11-22

and 4:1-16. The tension may be never eased but the challenge remains of finding ways to grow together to expand God's reign.

4.3.4 The Integrated Model

Strengths

An integrated church model is where the congregation consists of individuals from a diverse collection of ethnic groups, and where each of them has a voice in the life and ministry of the church.

On one level it looks like an Anglo-Australian monocultural church in that, for instance, the services are all very similar regardless of the culture or country that the service leader and preacher may be from. However it is different in that people of all backgrounds have equal standing in the life and ministry of the church, whereas a monocultural church is more likely to be dominated by Anglo-Australians, with people of other nationalities remaining included but peripheral. In this model, the 'culture' of the church is no longer Anglo-Australian but multicultural in each aspect of the life of the church, and diversity is deliberately celebrated and visible.

An example of this difference is my experience of two different Australian churches. In the first one, I attended weekly for two years but I was never invited to be included in meetings or on rosters in the life of the church. I was always regarded as a visitor, even after two years. In the second church there was a deliberate effort to make room for me in the life of the church and to include me in the ministry of the church even though I did not feel as competent as the others, spoke English with an accent, and came with my own set of cultural assumptions.

In this model the individual is welcomed and counted firstly as a member of the community, and secondly as a representative of his or her culture. The background cultures may be acknowledged and celebrated in the church in various ways, such as in having the Bible readings read in a different language as well as in English each week, a map on the wall indicating the birthplaces of each member of the congregation and

church lunches including dishes from many parts of the world. The fact that all attendees of the church are encouraged to participate in speaking in the services means that different races are visible and different levels of ability in the English language are accepted, with the effect that visitors quickly feel that if these people are accepted then they will be too. An example is the comment of a Vietnamese-background visitor to Brunswick who said that the service started like any other church, but when people of other cultures participated in the community prayers, when a member who was about to go and work in Thailand was blessed and when the Lord's prayer was said in many different languages, he felt included in a way that he didn't in a monocultural church.³¹⁵

Hospitality is the key to developing an Integrated church model. BBC, for example, grappled with the challenge to move beyond the Anglo monocultural church mindset to embrace people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The strength of this has been a more open and welcoming attitude towards strangers rather than withdrawing due to a fear of difference.

The Integrated model provides a church where people of all cultures can overcome fear of non-acceptance and insecurity regarding the extent to which they can feel a sense of belonging, a sense of home. This is achieved by welcome and hospitality, interaction and education, and the church's intentional efforts to find ways to include all people in the worship, life and decision-making of the church. A church may not have achieved all that is possible, but its genuine attempts are recognised and appreciated. For instance, at Brunswick's focus group, a member pointed out 'we read the Bible from a very ethnocentric, monocultural perspective. I think it would be an enriching experience to read the Bible with the perspective of many different cultures'. It is significant that someone is aware enough of that to at least ask the question, even though the person is saying that Brunswick is not there yet. An Integrated church model is able to work towards and engage in 'unity in diversity' fully where they can read the Bible from an ethno-relative multicultural perspective. This indicates that the voices of different backgrounds are welcomed to the centre.

³¹⁵ A student who studied the unit 'The Multicultural Church' at Whitley College, and who visited Brunswick for his research on the 'Integrated church model' in October 2009.

The Integrated model is open to those who do not fit into the dominant Australian culture and is a response to injustice due to race, class or other aspects of difference. Although the idea of unity-and-diversity within the church is a great challenge, it is possible to enjoy unity and diversity without the cultural imperialism of the dominant culture. This perspective points out difference as a gift. A focus group member said that Brunswick people from different cultures feel that ‘this is a place where we are valued and respected and we don’t have to conform to the dominant culture’.³¹⁶

Another example is Footscray Baptist Church, which intentionally planned to become an integrated multicultural community twelve years ago, facilitated by the BUV. At that time, the congregation was approximately 20% Anglo-Australian and 80% Filipino. Now, however, there is a very mixed, integrated congregation that is an expression of the biblical diversity in unity to which their mission statement aspires. The leadership has included people from a number of other cultures, and the diaconate includes people from Anglo-Australian, Filipino, and a number of other cultures.³¹⁷

In this Integrated model, NESB migrants gain confidence as they are able to participate in the community. A focus group member from Brunswick pointed out that it was a safe place for her in overcoming racism, as she is regarded as a member of the community. An asylum seeker at a focus group expressed his experience of BBC as a church that has been the centre of healing, education and training for him. ‘The church is a centre that makes me feel like a human being’.³¹⁸

Critical questions

Power, Conflict and Decision-making

The key to the effectiveness of the Integrated model is integration, not assimilation. Integration involves mutual influence and change for all whilst assimilation sees one side changing to fit the pattern of the dominant other. In assimilation, the dominant

³¹⁶ Brunswick, Focus group.

³¹⁷ The Footscray vision statement is: ‘Making our services inclusive, relevant and balanced – in race, gender and age – and encouraging the use of inclusive language. Being a multicultural church, encouraging the use of different languages in our services’. <http://www.footscraybaptist.org.au/Vision-Statement.php> [Accessed 4 September 2011].

³¹⁸ Brunswick, Focus group.

culture is the English-speaking group, who have the most power. This difference is crucial.

Nevertheless, it is easy for a congregation striving for integration to find that they are inadvertently working with assimilation. One reason for this is the difference in communication styles.³¹⁹ NESB people tend to have an indirect approach. When decision-making is required, the louder voices tend to be the English-speaking people as they can articulate more easily and tend to use more frank speech. Those with limited English have less power because of difficulty with terminology and context. As an example, Brunswick's recent discussions around a building project have been most challenging for NESB people in navigating genuine and comfortable participation.

As with the Partnership model, leadership style is an important factor. A designated multicultural leader is vital in the Integrated model, giving visibility and voice to help the congregation to see and listen to difference. Having a leader who is different from the dominant English-speaking leader means that NESB people can feel included, whatever the background of the multicultural leader.

The goal of diversity in one community involves constantly interacting with power dynamics due to language and culture. A different kind of listening is required. Repeated explanations help to clarify issues, even for English-speaking people. Without significant attention being paid to these issues it is easy for a church to slide into being run by a few voices of the active English-speaking culture, with the NESB group being the bystanders.

Brunswick addresses these issues through hospitality and by paying attention to the need for conversational dialogues. In addition, it tries to have many forums for conversation on issues. Small group conversations have been important so that the English-speaking person is able to explain to the NESB person, and sometimes vice versa. Another strategy is to create pre-meetings for NESB people to go through issues that will be discussed, keeping them engaged, supplying them with key terminology

³¹⁹ Samovar and Porter, *Communication Between Cultures*, 79-82. Low context and high context theory shows how this kind of difference in communication styles impacts concretely on day to day functioning of the integrated community.

and giving time for them to think through the issues and their feelings when not required to speak in a public forum.

The successful operation of an Integrated model, therefore, means working towards equality. Hospitality suggests this idea of inclusion, which is a way of making room for strangers, including NESB people, and all ‘those who don’t fit’.³²⁰ As is evident in several biblical passages, this hospitality is not one-way. As each of us—whether from a dominant or marginalised position—opens ourselves as hosts to the guest who is ‘other’, we find that we, the host, become the guest in God’s divine mystery. Further, the integrated model is a call to inclusiveness in the light of justice and the ‘discipleship of equals’, to borrow a term from Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza.³²¹ If church is to be an authentic community, it is imperative that we have a discipleship model where everyone is given equal justice, equal dignity, equal rights and equal love.³²² It is all about working towards equality, and full humanity.

Another complexity in an integrated model is that some people from other cultures tend to look for a more hierarchical style of leadership. For example, a strong tradition is that it is not all right to challenge or disagree with a pastor. Brunswick tries to be open and sensitive to a variety of people’s styles of leadership, but it also insists upon a congregationally-based leadership and decision-making. So, despite being open, there is a tension in that there do need to be some agreed core values for processes such as congregational discernment. In an Integrated model, there needs to be active agreement that everyone will participate in the decision making. This is an example where empowering people means the Anglo-Australians or dominant group do not assume the right to automatically do things their way, but give opportunity, resources and encouragement for people from other traditions to find ways to participate meaningfully in the shared activities of the church. Such ongoing issues are at least somewhat more manageable when they are expected. People do not expect congregational discernment to be straightforward in an Integrated model, such as that seen at Brunswick. It takes

³²⁰ John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 7-10.

³²¹ Fiorenza talks about inclusiveness of women as ‘wellbeing’ in the consensual partnership with God for the salvation of everyone. ‘Wellbeing’ as inclusiveness of people from other cultures is when there can be shared partnership and commitment. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (London: SCM, 1993), 272.

³²² From the ‘Welcome into Membership Statement’, Brunswick Baptist Church (see Appendix 1).

more time to make a decision. Eric Law points out that multicultural churches will need to spend lots of time ‘contexting’, that is, building relationships so that we can communicate well.³²³ This leads to issues of energy, tiredness and time. It’s important for a congregation to think consciously about what they do and how they do it in order to be a healthy integrated church.

Diversity and the Gospel

Hospitality and inclusion are key themes for a theological vision of multicultural mission expressed in an Integrated model. The central issue in developing a multicultural ministry is to nurture a more open and welcoming attitude towards strangers instead of fearing those who come into our midst. This sense of inclusiveness can lead to the intentional welcome of people from other cultures rather than either intentional or unintentional exclusion.

The illustration of the Brunswick community shows the reversal of the norm, in that the dominant English-speaking people allow themselves to become more marginal so that the NESB people can be more central. This helps make it possible for NESB people to dare to be involved in leadership. It is through hospitality that people are mutually influenced and changed. Hospitality specifically becomes a way of breaking boundaries. For example, a pastor described the spoken English at Brunswick as ‘changed to be a communicative English to allow understanding so that those with broken English are encouraged to speak and the native English-speaking people try to speak simply and clearly’.³²⁴ This shows a mutual community because of hospitality, where inclusion is possible without being patronising.

In the earlier findings on Brunswick, one of the intentional ‘inclusions’ is story sharing as a way of being together, a form of hospitality practised and experienced at BBC. The sharing of stories gives room for people from other cultures who have a powerful story to tell, and enables a strong connection to the story teller.³²⁵

³²³ Law, *The Bush was Blazing but not Consumed*, 105.

³²⁴ Hunter, Interview.

³²⁵ Turner, Interview.

In an Integrated church there isn't an inherent hierarchical structure or dominant culture. It is normal for those from any culture to be a friend and not just a helper. This is evidenced by the many long-term friendships across cultures in the community. This friendship may begin as one between a helper and a receiver, but the continuing relationship of sharing life in one church moves it beyond a helping relationship to being a mutually vital connection.

There is a question to be addressed about how worship can reflect diversity, especially when that worship is in English. It is necessary to have one common language for communication in the Australian context; the obvious language is English. There is a downside for NESB people, for whom English is their second language, as they struggle while still learning. Yet for them, the advantage is that their English is quickly improved whilst learning about other cultures.

There are other ways to include a multiplicity of languages. At Brunswick, Bible reading in a different community language each Sunday has become normal even though most of the congregation do not understand. Prayers, items and songs in other languages can be included easily. Hearing another language together is another way of empowering the community to be diverse.

Issues Regarding this Model

This model reflects the gospel imperative to welcome outsiders and the call to the church to incarnational mission as a way of breaking down the boundaries of cultural and racial differences. However, it is very difficult to 'do integration' well. The participation of newly arrived migrants in the leadership and decision-making processes of the church remains a difficult issue.

An obvious barrier is that of language. It is difficult to participate fully in discussions in a church meeting, for example, if the terminology and language used is unfamiliar. Where a multicultural model of being church has led the community into choosing an open style of decision-making, this takes a lot of energy requiring much patience and listening. It can involve a lot of walking over the same ground. This kind of engagement may only work in a small church, as such congregations have the ability to focus on

each person and to build strong relationships. They might also have a greater commitment to, or tolerance for, a slower decision-making process.

The balancing of differences is desirable, but when people from many different cultures come together that is a challenge. Also, what would happen if larger numbers from one single ethnic group came? Vulnerability is a necessary part of the process as people shift from the margins to the centre or from the centre to the edge and even back again. Sometimes it can look like centre-less-ness as all groups of people are marginalised to some extent. All stand out of their own comfort zone in this model.³²⁶

It is an open question as to whether the particular processes adopted by BBC are the most effective. There is, though, a very strong case emerging that sharing stories among church members has transformed their lives together and enabled a community to find identity and determine its pathway in peace and justice.

A further critical issue for the effectiveness of the Integrated model concerns the discomfort people naturally feel in the presence of people and practices which are unfamiliar. Some people may feel uncomfortable in the presence of 'the other' in a church service where everyone is publicly invited to contribute in their own cultural style, thus threatening the unspoken 'comfort zone' for that church. People who wish to avoid such discomfort consider that alternative cultural worship styles should be limited to expression in private and between individuals whose relationship includes an understanding of those cultural styles.

Geddes Hanson asks, 'Is multicultural worship ever satisfying?'³²⁷ The challenge is that multicultural worship can be chaotic at times when it includes participation of different people, which changes routines and moves everyone towards a new way. Careful pastoral care is needed here, giving attention to those whose comfort barrier may unintentionally be crossed due to lack of understanding. This approach makes it possible for members to continue to learn from each other, and the sharing of stories builds a community that is in a stronger position to actually relish its diversity.

³²⁶ Brunswick, Focus group.

³²⁷ Geddes W Hanson, "'Multicultural' Worship: A Careful Consideration', in *Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship*, eds. Brian K Blount and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 145-159.

Some limitations remain for those whose ability to understand worship depends on their English skills. There are ways of including songs and prayers in worship that are not too wordy; having visual stimuli as well as spoken and written, and using familiar structures in the same way each week, but having the variety within that to help people feel comfortable with the unfamiliar parts.

There is more that can help this process than just having a visible multicultural leader. An NESB leader who has adapted to the dominant culture is not necessarily an advocate for a truly integrated approach. A church may also have an Anglo-Australian leader who is very sensitive to the issues and helps make an Integrated church work. It is important to have a multicultural leader, but it is also important to make sure that it is a genuine commitment to multiculturalism, not just a token.

Summary

The celebration of diversity and unity as shown in this model reflects the gospel call to diversity as a taste of heaven in the life of community. The gospel is present as people connect as community. Choosing to be together rather than separate is a way of responding to Galatians 3:28 'all one in Jesus Christ', with those who make up the community bringing different gifts from God yet expressing that we are one in Christ. This diversity brings more challenges to any church and requires a strong commitment to working together through a range of issues. As such, it celebrates the kingdom values of 'the now and the not yet' tasted contemporaneously.

This model, however, may be less suited to big churches, or the Anglo-Australian churches without NESB people, or to a large NESB group in an Australian church.

The key issues that churches attempting this model need to consider are power issues between English-speaking and NESB people, the communication styles in decision-making, enabling NESB people to take on positions of leadership and, in all of this, how to address the language issues. And on a weekly basis there is the challenge of how to create worship that works well for everyone while not being able to suit everyone all the time.

The gospel is 'offensive' to some people. Not everyone can handle multiculturalism and open acceptance of people who are different or who challenge their values. Some people find this 'hard to stomach'. For instance, some people find unfamiliar faces difficult, blended worship is not the same as their familiar styles, and consensus decision-making tries their patience.

Another weakness was expressed at the multicultural forum at BBC (October 2010): everybody, to some degree, feels they are an outsider. So an Integrated model church may become a community of 'outsiders' who feel they don't belong. The challenge is to create a community where everybody truly belongs by sharing a core vision and core ways of being.³²⁸

³²⁸ Hunter, Interview.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Multiculturalism as defined in this thesis shapes our identity through interaction with others. It is more than simply accepting different cultures like a mosaic image of simple peaceful co-existence. It implies intentionally choosing to embrace the other. Miroslav Volf reminds us how such a genuine embrace leads to change for both as a result of the interaction.³²⁹ The multicultural models help churches change, on the part of both the migrants and the Anglo-Australians. It involves identifying that the cross of Christ and the life of the triune God include embracing the diversity of people.³³⁰

Churches in all of the models I have discussed in this thesis are on the journey to this understanding of becoming multicultural. The key is to be always conscious that the church is intentionally seeking to be open to the other, to be hospitable, and to meet the gospel call to diversity. However, no one model suits every congregation at every time. Local contexts and stages in time must be considered. As differences are recognised, different needs are met. At the same time, each congregation must be challenged by the gospel message of inclusion and diversity. Each congregation can then consciously reflect on and choose which model they are working towards, and be aware of which model is right for them at that time, and which might be the best one for the future. None of the models is complete. No congregation fully expresses the potential of the particular model into which they fit. Thus, becoming a multicultural church requires flexibility and openness to growth, change and ongoing learning.

The four models are all useful for different churches, in different situations, at different times. For example as a starting point, the Monocultural church is needed when there is a large group who have little English, requiring the group to worship separately. The Friendship model is needed for churches operating in a monocultural way but having a relationship with an Anglo-Australian church, providing a gentle learning period. The orientation of the Partnership model has a strong future and a deeper commitment to

³²⁹ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 140-147.

³³⁰ Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 146.

developing relationships between groups. The Integrated model works best with small numbers from many different cultures.

As we have seen, some models, specifically the Partnership and Integrated Models, are more open to respond to the diversity of the gospel in today's world. Others, such as the Monocultural and Friendship models, are not ends in themselves but can be more usefully seen as stepping stones on the way towards either a Partnership or Integrated model.

There is no place for a Monocultural church if it fails to recognise that the needs of the second generation will be different from those of the first. The needs of the next generation need to be recognised in order for it to be healthy. We have seen this at the Slavic Church and many other monocultural churches. Additionally, a congregation that remains in the Monocultural model beyond the initial period of settlement is failing to respond to and recognise the gospel call to inclusivity and diversity. In contrast, the Melbourne Chinese Church is a strong, healthy example of the monocultural model because, having both Chinese and English-speaking ministries available, the church embraces more than only Cantonese-speaking people. In this regard, I see hope for monocultural churches which choose to open themselves up to groups a little different from theirs as one way of becoming a more multicultural church.

The Friendship and Partnership models keep room for expressing specific cultural values, while also making space for relationship with their partner English-speaking congregation. Both models can enable churches to engage in multicultural mission. The Friendship model offers opportunities for developing relationships in a temporary period, but it should not be seen as an ongoing model. It can develop further, or even end in one of two ways - one being to seek Partnership with its co-located congregation, and the other being to revert to being Monocultural, having grown to be a secure community in its own right, as seen in the case of the Victorian Chin Baptist Church.

When an interaction is building-orientated there is often no meaningful relationship between each congregation, which can make 'Friendship' look more like 'Monocultural'. Healthy Friendship model examples are shown to be moving towards looking more like Partnership contexts, in which mission and ministry are shared, such

as at seen the beginning of Chin and Mooroolbark's relationship and at Westgate Baptist Community. It takes mutual effort and deliberate intent to make relationship out of initiatives such as regular combined services.

A Partnership model has the potential to reflect gospel values strongly because it signals a long-term relationship with co-ownership and a definite intent to include. Positive outcomes of this are that second-generation and young people can find a sense of place that remains conjoined to both their parents and their Anglo-Australian worship life. The administration, finance and ministry interactions are more visible than in the Friendship model, as often Friendship works as merely 'one alongside the other'. To be healthy, Partnership congregations must continually work on understanding power perceptions in cultural differences and also on their communication styles for growing relationship. This model has the danger of looking more like the Monocultural model if it is driven by buildings and not ministry.

The Integrated church model is based on a theological vision of multicultural mission. It has the potential to strongly reflect diversity and inclusivity because it is not only inclusive of people of other cultural backgrounds but indeed its diversity influences and changes the community, in stark contrast to the Monocultural church model. Healthy Integrated congregations show a leadership team with representation that reflects that diversity. Life in such communities involves constantly interacting and working towards equality in the light of justice. The sharing of stories is central at services, hospitality and celebrations. A high level of awareness is needed around differences in power perceptions and communication styles, which can lead to strategies for the genuine inclusion of NESB voices. One key challenge in this model is that churches need to be aware of issues of power balance between the English-speaking and NESB people. If these are not intentionally addressed it's probably true that the church has reverted to functioning in a Monocultural way.

Multicultural churches need to be inclusive in the life of their church, and intentional in building a vital church community as a place of embracing the other. Such multiculturalism shapes both the migrant ethnic churches and the Australian churches as they struggle with how to express intentionally that the kingdom of God is both inclusive and diverse in its unity.

Ways Ahead

This research suggests some directions for the future, particularly for the BUV as a denomination committed to fostering a multicultural church.

Charles Foster writes:

Denominational policies and programs promote models of “successful” congregations drawn primarily from the organisational structures, traditions, and experience of their dominant cultural groups.³³¹

If this is the case, then the BUV must carefully examine its policies and processes with the view to ensuring full participation of all those who come into our midst. The models described and analysed in this research will assist churches and the denomination to think constructively about the ways to become more multicultural - that is, inclusive of diversity. We actively encourage multicultural congregations to think carefully about what model is best for them now and which is best for them in the future so as to keep presenting the challenge of the multicultural gospel. Additionally, churches identified as belonging to each of the four models could be linked together in networks, organised by the BUV.

As discussed above, the issue of power distance significantly affects how minority cultures participate in decision making processes.³³² Inclusion of NESB migrants in the process of decision-making is an important strategy as they tend to believe that they are powerless to make any change outside of their own community. The BUV can practise making space for the voices of NESB churches at the regular Gathering (or Assembly) delegates’ meeting. For instance, for churches in the Partnership model, the non-Anglo congregations are not normally included directly as participants because there are a limited number of delegates, and existing English-speaking delegates currently represent the church as a whole. For churches in the Friendship, Partnership and Integrated models, it is important that NESB members are also included as delegates.

It is also important to work towards multiculturalism at all levels of the denomination, including funding and implementing suitable strategies for the NESB, youth and young

³³¹ Foster, *Embracing Diversity*, 17.

³³² Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, 13-28.

adult work, employed positions, committees, ways of conducting Gatherings, representation at Gatherings, and educating those of all cultures about the ways of the denomination.

Baptist churches need education on the meaning of genuine multicultural worship, leadership and sharing of resources. Since multicultural worship is a key to the Integrated model, there needs to be some intentional work done at a denominational level on developing resources to enable this.

Two other key areas need to be addressed. They are intercultural communication and conflict resolution. In all the models, power is a key issue. We need to train church leaders in intercultural communication and conflict resolution, to help them to grow in intercultural relationships.

It is hoped that as a result of this study, the Baptist Union of Victoria will gain a more nuanced appreciation of multiculturalism: how different churches and communities have different characteristics and needs, and therefore the importance of having different models of multicultural church at different stages of their journey. This information will affect the kind of training and support the BUV can offer multicultural leaders and congregations, and will be helpful for congregations that are discerning a model that may be useful in determining the next step in their own future.

Appendix 1: Explanatory Statement for Participants



Melbourne College of Divinity

Established by the Melbourne College of Divinity Act (Victoria) 1910.

www.mcd.edu.au CRICOS Code: 01037A

WAYS OF BEING A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH: an Evaluation of Multicultural Church Models in the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV) (Master of Theology research project - Explanatory Statement for participants)

Dear [potential participant],

My name is Rev Meewon Yang and I work as the Multicultural Minister of the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV), and am currently a Master of Theology student at Whitley College (Melbourne College of Divinity), researching multicultural churches. Thanks for being willing to work through this form. I am writing to introduce myself and my research and to ask you to please consider the possibility of allowing me to collect research data within your congregation.

Purpose

This research project is intended to explore ways of being a multicultural church in Victoria. I have identified four models of multicultural churches to study and compare. I would like to attend and observe in your church, interview the pastor(s), and interview a group of members.

I hope this study will be helpful to both migrant and Anglo-Australian churches by suggesting ways forward in expressing the multicultural nature of Australia—and God’s kingdom. Your experiences and reflections will help many others.

Requirements

I will interview pastors at a time to suit them and for one to two hours. (If there are things to clarify, I may ask for a second one-hour appointment.) Other church attenders who volunteer and are chosen for the research group (6 to 12 people) will take part in one focus group discussion session for one to two hours. I may contact a group member for further clarification, for less than an hour.

In the focus group, the kind of questions asked for the session will be: “Describe what the ethnic make-up of your congregation is. How would you describe your church and its focus, values and vision? How do you engage in multicultural ministry in your congregation? What hopes do you have for the future of your church?” Focus groups will be asked to explore these topics and to keep their contributions and those of other participants confidential. Interviews and group sessions will be audio-taped and then transcribed.

Implications

The research is part of a Master of Theology degree through the Melbourne College of Divinity. The research will result in a set of data that will be used in evaluating the contribution of four identified models for churches in a multicultural context. Church names will be identified but the real names of participants will not be used, except for pastors. The thesis will focus on what is said, and will protect the privacy of the group members who said it.

The thesis that results from this work will be published in hard copy at Whitley College and with the MCD. Research findings may also be published in journals and/or a book. It is unlikely that a participant would experience difficulties with any of the processes involved in the research. However, if any participant experiences discomfort through their involvement in the research (e.g., by recalling a difficult church situation), pastoral support is available. Each participant is free to withdraw from the project at any time until four weeks after their interview. Any participant may request a copy of the transcript of their interview and the chance to suggest changes to the transcript.

Timetable

The interviews and groups will take place over a few weeks, at a time to suit each congregation during 2010. I expect to complete processing the data and writing up the research in early 2011, but will be happy to give interested participants progressive information from time-to-time.

I would expect the dates for the interviews and focus groups for your congregation may be between _____ and _____.

Response

Please let me know by Friday ____ whether or not your church is willing and available to participate in the research. If you are willing, please sign the Church Permission Form (attached) and return it to me.

Further information

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the Baptist Union of Victoria, 1/1193 Toorak Rd Camberwell Victoria 3124, phone (03) 9880 6144 or email meewon.yang@buv.com.au.

You may also contact my supervisor Dr Ross Langmead at Whitley College, Parkville Victoria 3052, Phone (03) 9340 8021 or email rlangmead@whitley.unimelb.edu.au.

Questions regarding this project may also be directed to the MCD Administration, (03) 9853 3177. If you have any complaints or queries that I have not been able to answer to your satisfaction, you may contact the Liaison Officer, MCD Human Research and Ethics Committee: phone 03 9853 3177, e-mail admin@mcd.edu.au.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Meewon Yang

Appendix 2: Question Guide



Melbourne College of Divinity

Established by the Melbourne College of Divinity Act (Victoria) 1910.

www.mcd.edu.au CRICOS Code: 01037A

WAYS OF BEING A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH: an Evaluation of Multicultural Church Models in the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV) (Master of Theology research project - Explanatory Statement for churches)

QUESTION GUIDE

a. People

- What is the ethnic make-up of your congregation?
- Where do the attendees live in relation to the church?
- How long have most lived in Australia?

b. Worship style

- How does your multiculturalism affect your worship? E.g. songs, languages, prayers and other practices.
- What language(s) are used in worship, are there any other languages used? (What songs do you sing?)

c. Pastoral care model

- Who does the pastoral care and how is it done?
How people are included? How they ask for pastoral care?
How they receive pastoral care?
In what situations do people receive pastoral care?

d. Church life

- What are the regular activities in your church?
- What do the people (from other cultures) participate in in the church?

e. Decision-making process

- How are the decisions made in your church?
- Who makes the decisions?
- Are there tensions between different cultural ways of making decisions in your church?

f. Leadership

- How would you describe the leadership model of your church?

g. Mission statement/ vision

- In terms of multiculturalism, what do you think the vision of your church is? (How would you describe your church and its focus, values and vision? Have you got any statements of vision and goals that you can share with me.) How do you engage in multicultural ministry in your congregation?

h. Relationship with other churches

- In what ways is your church engaged in the wider church? E.g. with your denomination, with your ethnic group etc.
- Do you relate to other congregations? If so, how?

i. Future

- In terms of multiculturalism, what hopes do you have for the future of your church, and for the next generation of members?

Appendix 3: Question Guide in Russian

QUESTION GUIDE (ВОПРОСНИК)

A. Люди

- Из каких этнических групп состоит ваша церковь?
- Где проживают ваши члены церкви?
- Сколько лет прожили в Австралии большая часть ваших членов?

B. Стилль служений

- На каких языках проходят ваши служения. Используются ли другие языки?
- Какие песни вы поете?

C. Стилль пасторского попечения

- Каким образом осуществляется попечение о людях в вашей церкви?

D. Церковная жизнь

- Какие регулярные события происходят в вашей церкви?
- В каких мероприятиях участвуют люди из других культур в вашей церкви?

E. Процесс принятия решений

- Как принимаются решения в вашей церкви?
- Кто принимает решение?
- Есть ли трения между разными культурами в подходе к принятию решений?

F. Руководство

- Как бы вы охарактеризовали стилль руководства, осуществляемый руководством вашей церкви?

G. Миссия церкви/Видение

- Как ты думаешь, какое видение у твоей церкви? (Как бы ты описал свою церковь и ее фокус, ценности и видение? (Имеешь ли ты какие-нибудь предложения, в плане видения и целей церкви, с которыми ты хотел бы поделиться со мною).
- Как ты участвуешь в многонациональном служении в своей церкви?

H. Взаимоотношения с другими церквями

- Каким образом ваша церковь участвует в жизни других церквей?
- Имеет ли ваша церковь взаимоотношения с другими церквями?
Если да - каким образом?

I. Будущее

- В свете многонациональности какие надежды ты имеешь для будущего твоей церкви и для следующего поколения членов церкви?

Appendix 4: Question Guide in Chin

QUESTION GUIDE

a. People (Mipi)

- What is the ethnic make-up of your congregation?
- Aho miphun nih dah nan Khrihfabu hi an dirh?
- Where do the attendees live in relation to the church?
- Khrihfabu he pehtlai in biakinn i a rak i pum mi hi khuazei ka ah dah an um deuh hna?
- How long have most lived in Australia?
- Mi tamdeuh hi Australia ah kum zeizat dah an um cang hna?

b. Worship style (Thangthatnak umtuning)

- How does your multiculturalism affect your worship? E.g. songs, languages, prayers and other practices
- Miphun tampi cawhnak nih Pathian nan thangthatnak ah zeidah a danter? (Tachunhnak: Hla, holh, thlacam le other hman tawnmi)
- (What language(s) are used in worship, are there any other languages used?)
- Zei holh in dah Pathian nan thangthat, holh dang in tah nan hmang chih maw?
- (What songs do you sing?)
- Zei hla dah nan sak?

c. Pastoral care model (Pastor zohkhenhnak kong)

- Who does the pastoral care and how is it done?
- Pastor nih zeitindah a zohkhenh hna i zeitindah dah a tuan?
- How people are included?
- Mipi zeitindah telh an si?
- How they ask for pastoral care?
- Zeitindah pastor zohkhenhnak cu an hal?
- How they receive pastoral care?
- Zeitindah pastor zohkhenhnak cu an dawn?
- In what situations do people receive pastoral care?
- Zeibantuk caan ah khin dah mipi nih pastor zohkhenhnak an dawn?

d. Church life (Khrihfabu nunnak)

- What are the regular activities in your church?
Nan Khrihfabu nih a tuah tawnmi pawl zeidah an si?
- What do the people (from other cultures) participate in in the church?
Nun phung dang a si mi pawl tah nan khrihfabu ah an i tel ve maw?

- e. Decision-making process (Biakhiahning)**
- How are the decisions made in your church?
 - Nan khrihfabu ah zeitindah bia nan khiah?
 - Who makes the decisions?
 - Aho nih dah bia an khiah tawn?
 - Are there tensions between different cultural ways of making decisions in your church?
 - Nan khrihfabu chungah phun dang in khiah tawnmi biakhiahnak khah lo ruangah i hmuh thiam lonak a um maw?
- f. Leadership Hruaitu sinak kong**
- How would you describe the leadership model of your church?
 - Zeitindah na khrihfabu i hruaining na hrilh fiah lai?
- g. Mission statement/ vision Ram thar riantuannak caah biahren/ Chunmang**
- In terms of multiculturalism, what do you think the vision of your church is?
 - Miphun tampi cawhmi khrihfabu a si bantuk in nan khrihfabu i a chunmang hi zeitindah na ruah?
 - (How would you describe your church and its focus, values and vision? Na khrihfabu i a chunmang le a sining, a hmuhnak le a ngaihna he hlum mi hi zeitindah na hrilhfiah lai?)
 - Have you got any statements of vision and goals that you can share with me.) Khrihfabu nih a tinhmi le a chunmang pawl na neih mi pawl hi run ka chimh ve?
 - How do you engage in multicultural ministry in your congregation? Zetindah mipi sin ah nunphung zatlang tampi a si mi rian nan tuan?
- h. Relationship with other churches (Khrihfabu dang he i pehtleihnak**
- In what ways is your church engaged in the wider church? E.g. with your denomination, with your ethnic group etc.
 - Zeitindah khrihfabu dangdang he nan i pehtleih?Tachunhnak.Na Bu le miphun dang pawl hei tibantuk.
 - Do you relate to other congregations? If so, how? Bu dang he nan pehtleihnak maw? Na i pehtleih a si ahcun, zeitindah nan i pehtleih?
- i. Future Hmailei kong**
- In terms of multiculturalism, what hopes do you have for the future of your church, and for the next generation of members?
 - Miphun tampi cawhmi a si bantuk in, khrihfabu i a hmai lei kong le hmailei member hna caah zeibantuk saduhthahnak dah na ngei?

Appendix 5: Syndal Baptist Church Staff Team

SBC STAFF CARE AND REPORTING ³³³

The Leadership structure of SBC provides accountability and reporting structure for staff. Each ministry area has core teams to work with the Leader.

Senior Pastor: Bill Brown

Area Leaders who report directly to Senior Pastor –

Administration:	Angie Mok (a Chinese congregation pastoral member)
Creative Ministries:	Kerry Walmsley
Discipleship and Training/Education that Equips:	John Robinson
Life and Community:	Lyn Hunter
Ministries to Gen Y and later (i.e. from 0-Young Adults):	Adam Hince
Chinese and Multicultural Ministries:	Wai Kwong Sun

The Area Leaders/Pastoral Leadership Team is a Senior team of Pastors that are responsible for the ...

- Strategic Direction and Vision for the Church
- Day to day discerning and deciding (i.e. Operations)
- Leadership and care of staff and teams
- Pastoral Oversight of the Staff and Church

Other Staff who currently report to the Senior Pastor are *the Director of Karinya- Ruth Walker (3.5 days)* and *the Pastor for Community Care – Jen Farmer (4 days)*. Pastoral care and peer support is also available to these staff through their Core Groups and from the Pastor for Life and Community.

Current reporting and care structure at March 2011-

Administration:

- Angie Mok (full time)
- Kyra Burrows (Office Administration –full time)
- ??? (Office Admin/BIGCare Admin– 14 hours)
- Liz Bradshaw (Event Management – 17 hours)
- Ray Hodge (Facilities – 3 days)
- Miriam Levey (Café – 37 hour fortnight)
- Simon Jones and Ken Hoskin (ICT – volunteer))
- Flora Fung and Amanda Tang (Finance -volunteer)
- Trevor Greay (Keys - volunteer)
- Robyn Moresi (Storage –volunteer)

³³³ This document is issued by SBC, received from Bill Brown, 14/03/11.

Discipleship and Training/Education that Equips (Curriculum, Courses, Leadership Development, Resourcing): John Robinson (full time)

- Interns

Creative Ministries (Creative arts, Production): Kerry Walmsley (4 days)

- (Production – 2 days)

Life and Community (BIGCare-oversight and database, Training of carers, Care and especially for those on the fringe of the Church): Lyn Hunter (full time)

- (Congregational Pastor for 8.30 am and Seniors -2.5 days)
- (Congregational Pastor for 10.30 am and Mid-years -2.5 days)

Ministries to Gen Y and beyond (i.e.0-Young Adults): Adam Hince (full time)

- Fiona Brown (Youth –full time)
- Katie Brown (Children- 4 days)
- Karen Burrows (Families – 3days)
- Jason Brown (Intern: Youth, Creative Arts)
- Larissa Burrows (Intern: Youth, Schools, Childrens)

Multicultural: Wai Kwong Sun (4 days)

- Maranda Ng (Associate Pastor -Chinese Ministries – 4 days)
- Luan Le (Vietnamese - volunteer)

Appendix 6: Syndal Baptist Church's Vision and Mission

SBC VISION AND MISSION

Vision:

**To be a Church growing in the community,
reflecting, serving and transforming it
for the good of the world.**

Mission:

**Present Jesus,
Providing Nurture,
Promote Disciples.**

Appendix 7: Welcome into Membership Statement, Brunswick Baptist Church

WELCOME INTO MEMBERSHIP

(name,)

will you as members of the Brunswick Baptist Church
join with us in seeking to be open to the pain and promptings of the Spirit;
to the loving, suffering, redeeming God,
who meets us in the Crucified and Risen Jesus:

that we might share each other's laughter,
burdens, joys, endings and new beginnings;
that we might hope together,
struggle together, dream together,
that we might always seek to be
a welcoming, supportive community
in which everyone is given full justice, dignity and love?

And will you with all of us join hands with God
in God's mission for the world:
a mission of grace, forgiveness, justice,
freedom, peace, love and hope?

Response: I will

Laying on of hands

(name,)

we now welcome you into your new home,
into our church family, and into a life of ministry.
Take your place in this active community of
liberation and reconciliation.
Be accountable to the gospel in all that you do.
And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the peace of God, and the presence of the Spirit
go with you and be with you always.

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