

Religious Education Congress 2017
Fr. Anthony Gittins
The Future of the Global Church:
Building Intercultural Communities
Session 2-15

**THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL CHURCH:
BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES**

1. THE CHALLENGE

- *From a world church (scattered, ethnic) to a global church (gathered, interethnic)*
- *People are largely monocultural.*
- *The future church: 'intercultural' fusion or 'tribal'/ethnic fragmentation?*

2. A DISTINCTION

- *Between international and intercultural.*
- *Between multi-cultural and cross-cultural. (Diagram)*

3. SOME CHARACTERISTICS

- *There is no faith in the abstract; only lived, and therefore **culturally**.*
- *Intercultural living: faith lived by culturally different people, **together**.*
- *Not a problem but a challenge.*
- *Not 'natural' – but perhaps 'supernatural' (graced living).*
- *Impossible in an US/THEM world (Ephesians 2).*
- *Requires compromise, true dialogue, and a common **vision**.*

4. THE FUNDAMENTAL REASONS

- *We are called to build a HOME*
- *God created difference.*
- *To shift from a dialectical to an analogical approach.*
- *To live as a Christian community together rather than separately.*

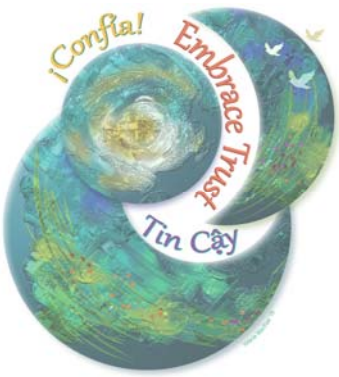
5. A VISUAL REPRESENTATION

- *To move from monocultural to intercultural.*
- *Individuals attempt the 'cross-cultural' challenge.*

6. THE COST: ARE WE WILLING TO PAY?

- *Some people prefer an 'ethnic' or 'tribal' church.*
- *Some fear they will lose their identity and cherished habits.*
- *Intercultural living requires the formation of a new habitus.*
- *The early church grew because Christians were willing to trust each other and God.*
- *Everyone can offer moral support; not everyone can change.*
- *Significant resistance, foot-dragging, or bad blood can destroy the project.*
- *The vision we seek, is **GOD'S VISION** for our church, not our own ideas or choices.*
- *This is a work of faith. Good will alone is insufficient. We are called to conversion.*

7. THE OUTCOME: FROM INVITATION TO RADICAL WELCOME (Diagram)



Jonathan Sacks: The Home We Build Together; The Dignity of Difference; To Heal a Broken World. (Amazon)
 Anthony Gittins: Living Mission Interculturally: Faith, Culture and the Renewal of Praxis. (Liturgical Press)

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MONO-CROSS-MULTI-INTERCULTURAL LIVING:

1. MONOCULTURAL LIVING

A

2. CROSS-CULTURAL LIVING

A

B

3. MULTICULTURAL LIVING

A	B
C	D

4. INTERCULTURAL LIVING

A	B
C	D

FROM INVITATION TO RADICAL WELCOME

	INVITATION	INCLUSION	RADICAL WELCOME
THE MESSAGE	"Come and join us, and share the riches of our cultural and religious tradition"	"Come and join our community and help us to diversify internally and internationally"	"Bring your cultural and religious values, your voice and yourself; help us to become an intercultural community"
THE PURPOSE	ASSIMILATION: We invite new people to become one of us as part of our community	INCORPORATION: Marginal "others" are welcome but the community's style and practices remain	INCARNATION: The community will be transformed by each person's labors and faith commitment
THE COST	Little cost to the community; its structures are set and newcomers incorporated into them. Resisters are marginalized or removed	Some cost to the community; it preaches inclusivity but does not practice power-analysis or self-analysis. Individuals sink or swim.	Significant cost to the community that seeks new ways of faith-filled living, including modification of prayer-styles and liturgical adaptation, power-sharing and mature compromise
THE OUTCOME	Encouraging numbers, but the community is very monocultural. Those who are marginalized or overlooked	High turnover of members. Whoever is not mainstream is muted or made to leave. Community remains largely monocultural, with few exceptions	The community evolves organically. Difference is dignified and valued. Authority does not dominate but respects all. There is a common spirit and missionary commitment!

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