

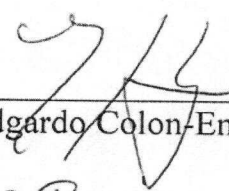
**Leading from the Edge:
Marginal Leadership at Cultural Crossroads**

By

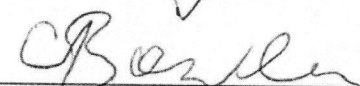
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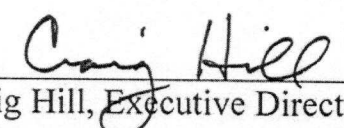
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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Ministry
in the Divinity School of Duke University

2016

Abstract

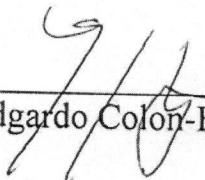
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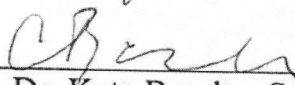
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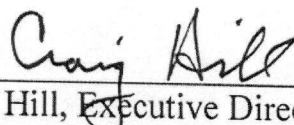
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Abstract

If a church reflects its larger community, it will have more dynamic interactions among different people. Current U.S. communities consist of very diverse people who have different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Since the mid 20th century, various immigrant communities who have dissimilar cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions have accelerated the need of change in American churches. The drastic cultural change has demanded churches to equip their lay and clergy leaders with multicultural competencies for effective ministries.

My thesis explores imaginative leadership in cultural crossroads. Emphasizing the leadership imagination of cross-cultural ministry, I approach it in biblical, theological, and missional perspectives. In this dynamic cultural milieu, the study topic may help the church renew its ecclesial purpose by seeing cross-cultural ministry as a creative opportunity to reach out to more diverse people of God. I begin with a conceptual framework for cross-cultural ministry and cultural intelligence. Then I explain why cross-cultural ministry is significant and how it enhances the spirit of Christ Jesus. As I develop the thesis, I discuss leadership challenge and development in the cross-cultural ministry context. This thesis may contribute to equipping lay and clergy leaders by overcoming the homogeneous ‘in-group’ mindset in the church.

The primary focus is on developing marginal leadership of church in the post-Christendom era. Church leaders must creatively hold the tension between the current church context and Christian faith resources and seek a hopeful resolution as a third way through integrative thought process. While conventional leadership emphasizes a better choice out of the given options, marginal leadership takes time for integrative thought process to seek a new direction for the future. Conventional leaders take the center with their power, status, and prestige, but marginal leaders position themselves on the edge. Leading from the edge is a distinctive cross-cultural leadership and is based on the servant leadership of Jesus Christ who put himself as

a servant for the marginalized. By serving and relating to others on the margin, this imaginative leadership may make appropriate changes desired in today's American churches.

In addition to academic research, I looked into the realities of cross-cultural leadership in the local churches through congregational studies. I speculated that church leadership involves both laity and clergy and that it can be enhanced. All Christians are called to serve the Lord according to their gifts, and it is crucial for lay and clergy persons to develop their leadership character and skills. In particular, as humans are contextualized with their own cultures, church leaders often confront great challenges in cross-cultural or multicultural situations. Through critical thoughts and imaginative leadership strategies, however, they can overcome intrinsic human prejudice and obstacles.

Through the thesis project, I have reached four significant conclusions. First, cultural intelligence is an essential leadership capacity for all church leaders. As the church consists of more diverse cultural people today, its leaders need to have cultural competencies. In particular, cross-cultural leaders must be equipped with cultural intelligence. Cross-cultural ministry is not a simple byproduct of social change, but a creative strategy to open a door to bring God's reconciliation among diverse people. Accordingly, church leaders are to be well prepared to effectively cope with the challenges of cultural interactions. Second, both lay and clergy leaders' imaginative leadership is crucial for leading the congregation. While conventional leadership puts an emphasis on selecting a better choice based on the principle of opportunity cost, imaginative leaders critically consider the present church situations and Christian faith values together in integrative thoughts and pursue a third way as the congregation's future hope. Third, cross-cultural leadership has a unique characteristic of leading from the edge and promotes God's justice and peaceable relationships among different people. By leading the congregation from the edge, church leaders may experience the heart of Christ Jesus who became the friend of the marginalized. Fourth, the 'homogeneous unit principle' theory has its limit for today's complex 'inter-group' community context. The church must be a welcoming and embracing faith

community for all people. Cross-cultural ministry may become an entrance door for a more peaceable and reconciling life among different people. By building solidarity with others, the church may experience a kingdom reality.

This thesis focuses on the mission of the church and marginal leadership of church leaders in ever-changing cultural crossroads. The church becomes a hope in the broken and apathetic world, and Christians are called to build relationships inside and beyond the church. It is significant for church leaders to be faithfully present on the margin and relate to diverse people. By consistently positioning themselves on the margin, they can build relationships with new and diverse people and shape a faithful life pattern for others.

Dedication

To my parents, Dr. and Mrs. Kangbok Lee
for their unceasing prayers and love.

&

To my wife, Aekyung “Kim” Lee
and our children, Jungwoo, Joanna, and James
for their patience, encouragement, and support.

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List of Abbreviations

SPRC – Staff Parish Relations Committee.....	2
CQ – Cultural Intelligence Quotient.....	4
UMC – United Methodist Church.....	7
HUP – Homogeneous Unit Principle.....	45
LGBTQ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning.....	52

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The small rural town of Culver, Indiana is surrounded by cornfields and hilly grounds and consists of a dominant Caucasian population like many rural areas in the U.S. However, several blocks away from downtown Culver, there is a global community of high school students who daily experience cultural dynamics and learn to live together among different cultural and national students. Through the vision and strenuous efforts of faculty and executive administrators, Culver Academies has enriched cultural awareness and educated its students as cultural diversity advocates. Thanks to the school's intentional and creative leadership, students grow and cultivate their understanding of life together among diverse students.

“As realtors always emphasize location, church leaders need to always develop their leadership.” One of my ministry mentors has often reminded me of the importance of leadership in ministry. Church leadership is a crucial matter for pastors and lay leaders to effectively and faithfully carry out God's mission in the world, making disciples of Christ Jesus. As an Asian American immigrant clergy who has served local churches in the United Methodist Church under cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment, I have strived to discover and develop a particular leadership style in my cross-cultural context.

This thesis aims to help local churches and their leaders develop imaginative leadership in cultural crossroads. With the developments of multimedia, social network, and global economy, the world has become a village. Global village is no longer a term for social studies but is today's reality. Globalization has impacted American lifestyles not only in larger cities and their suburbs, but also in small rural towns. It is no longer a surprise to find Chinese, Mexican, or Thai restaurants in small towns, to encounter Spanish speaking people in rural areas, or to live with immigrant neighbors in local communities.

The local churches are no exception from this global trend. Many churches include at least a few ethnic minorities as staff or members, and more churches seek diversity and initiate

multicultural ministries to reach out to different ethnic people in their surrounding communities. Openness towards diversity, inclusiveness of ethnic minority members and staff, and decentralization of traditional structure are prominent evidences of this global era in the contemporary Christian churches, while many churches still keep the ‘homogeneous unit principle’¹ as their evangelical strategy.

How do church leaders enable a local church to become a welcoming community in which diversity and solidarity are valued and embraced among different cultural people? The cross-cultural ministry requires intentional efforts and integrative thought process for church leaders to accomplish the church’s mission, that is, following Jesus Christ and making disciples of *all nations* (Matthew 28:19). The cross-cultural ministry may accompany inevitable tension and discomfort among different people as Christians cross their familiar cultural boundaries and enter a new and unknown societal and cultural world. Accordingly, it is church leaders’ task to guide Christian believers to be equipped with cultural competence, to embrace and accept different people, and to cultivate their communal grounds with them.

In the first chapter, I will introduce the conceptual framework for the cross-cultural ministry and deal with its challenges and distinctive characteristics of leadership. In the second chapter, I will analyze the cross-cultural ministry from biblical, theological, and missional standpoints. The third chapter will explore congregational studies through in-depth interviews with five local United Methodist pastors and SPRC (Staff Parish Relations Committee) chairpersons or lay leaders in North and South Carolina. In the fourth chapter, I will discuss imaginative leadership in cultural crossroads and suggest a few practical ways for church leaders to develop their leadership. As a conclusion in the fifth chapter, I will advocate and emphasize leadership practice as a faithful life pattern for others.

¹ I will deal with the homogeneous unit principle theory in chapter 2 from a critical standpoint, while it has been adopted by many churches as an efficient and effective evangelical strategy.

For the purpose of helping church leaders understand and reflect on theological and ecclesial meanings of cross-cultural ministry, I will begin this chapter with a conceptual framework such as cultural intelligence, cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment, and leadership relevance to culture. Then I will discuss cross-cultural leadership from my own ministerial experience as an Asian immigrant. I will also explore the leadership characteristics, pitfalls, and paradoxes of the cross-cultural ministry.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

a. Cultural Intelligence

While the United States of America is an immigrant country with diverse national people, Western European Americans have been a dominant group of the visible and leading culture. While the early American history includes unique cultures of Native Americans and African Americans, under the nation's motto, 'out of many, one,' cultural assimilation based on the dominant Western European culture has been emphasized. Even though Western Europeans had different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, they also had many characteristics in common, in particular, racial similarity (Caucasian), geographical closeness (Western Europe), major language (English), and religious tradition (Christianity).

As cultural assimilation was initiated by the early Western European immigrants based on their philosophical and political worldview, other cultural minorities were coerced to drop their identities and be absorbed into the primary cultural groups. In particular, cultural assimilation was embedded in white supremacy in its early stage. Accordingly, Native Americans and African Americans were completely neglected and excluded in this process of assimilation while Irish, Italian, and Jewish groups were slowly recognized by the mainstream. Until the mid 20th century, racial discrimination has been one of the greatest social barriers in the U.S.

However, since the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the immigration trend has drastically diversified. While Western Europeans' immigration gradually became static, Africans, Asians, and Latinos have become the major influx of immigration population into the U.S. The

shift of immigration pattern has made American societies and churches fluctuate with cultural diversity and unfamiliarity.² These new immigrant groups have different cultural, religious, geographical, and linguistic backgrounds from the earlier Western European immigrants, and they do not have much commonality by themselves. Accordingly, the new immigrant groups have brought different cultural aspects to the U.S. Until the mid 20th century, immigrants were imagined to melt together and assimilate into a gigantic cultural melting pot. However, the contemporary America consists of very diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic people. They seem to be mix-mingled together but still carry on their own distinctive tastes like a huge cultural salad bowl. In other words, if assimilation to one primary cultural group was emphasized in the melting pot symbol in the past, today's diverse groups and individuals keep their identities and are mingled with one another as meaningful components in the symbol of a cultural salad bowl. In this complex mixture, cultural intelligence becomes an important leadership quality to sensitively recognize different values, worldviews, and patterns in active cultural dynamics.

Christopher Earley and Soon Ang define cultural intelligence as “a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts.”³ It is a human capacity to be aware of differences in cultural attitudes and behaviors among diverse people and to analyze why each cultural person may think and act in different ways. In order to adeptly recognize and embrace difference for coexistence, cultural intelligence becomes an important quality in leadership. In the business world, major global corporations consider CQ (cultural intelligence quotient) a crucial component to maximize the effectiveness of managerial leaders and employees in the global market system. On an individual level, along with IQ (intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional intelligence quotient), a person's CQ is a significant competence to understand and deal with complex relationships with other people.

² Ted Cantle expresses this phenomenon as ‘super diversity’: “The extent of population movement is such that all Western economies are now characterised by some degree of ‘super’ or ‘hyper’ diversity” in *Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.

³ Christopher Earley and Soon Ang, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 58.

Cultural intelligence begins with a thoughtful observation in cross-cultural or multicultural church contexts. As church leaders encounter different cultures, they tend to evaluate other people's cultural values, worldviews, and patterns from their own perspectives. Rather than impetuously guiding people to respect or ignore differences, church leaders need to carefully observe and critically think about other people's different values and behaviors without preconceived opinions. Soong-Chan Rah argues that cultural intelligence requires "knowledge about our own cultural framework" and "a willingness to go to another place and to reflect upon your own culture and to see the culture of others from a new angle."⁴ In order to develop cultural intelligence, church leaders must have a clear understanding of their own culture and practice to see other cultures from a different perspective.

Through my cross-cultural experiences and studies, I see a cultural boundary from a different viewpoint. I have learned that many people perceive it as the dividing line that distinguishes their identities from those of others. Based on a cultural boundary, people simply divide different groups of people and categorize 'we' and 'others' according to their values, worldviews, and patterns. However, the cultural boundary or border is not necessarily a line that distinguishes different identities as shown in figure 1 among A, B, and C groups or individuals. Rather, it can be understood as a 'shared space'⁵ where people may have a common room for encountering, conversing, and learning among different groups or individuals in figure 2. If people see the boundary line in figure 1 with an imaginary magnifying glass, they may expand the line and find a possible space in figure 2. Although cultural boundaries seemingly look like a dividing line between A and B, or between A and C, or between B and C in figure 1, in reality they become communal spaces for A, B, and C as shown in figure 2. Through these boundaries,

⁴ Soong-Chan Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), 84.

⁵ Lucia Ann McSpadden claims that "human boundaries are not sharp, thin lines but rather relational spaces and patterned places where differences and commonalities are negotiated" in *Meeting God at the Boundaries: Cross-Cultural – Cross-Racial Clergy Appointments* (Nashville: GBHEM of the United Methodist Church, 2003), 5.

that is, communal rooms for different cultural groups and individuals, people may experience other cultural values, worldviews, and patterns, grow and adapt their cross-cultural identities, and develop and enrich their leadership with active engagements. From a different perspective, church leaders may learn that cultural boundary is not a dividing line to separate us from others, but a communal space to meet and engage with others.

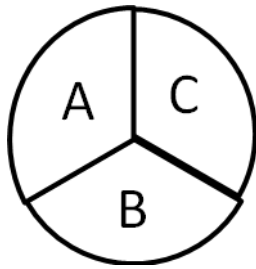


Figure 1. Boundaries as Lines

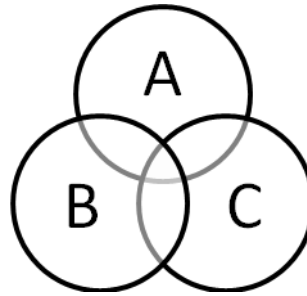


Figure 2. Boundaries as Spaces

Cultural intelligence may also help people reduce misunderstandings, fears, and anxieties through the process of cultural interactions. Crossing a cultural border is always challenging and risk-taking because it may bring tension, conflict, and division among different groups and individuals. According to Earley and Ang, however, cultural intelligence may provide tools for people with “cognitive, or specific knowledge that people are able to gain and comprehend about a new culture based on various types of cues provided; motivational, or one’s propensity and commitment to act on the cognitive facet as well as persevere [in] acquiring knowledge and understanding of a new culture and overcome stumbling blocks or failure; and behavioral, or the capability of a person to enact his or her desired and intended actions to a given cultural situation.”⁶ Critical thoughts and balanced actions through cultural intelligence may assist church leaders to overcome misunderstanding and biased judgment among diverse church members. Cultural intelligence can help church leaders improve their cultural competencies as they serve and lead more diverse people in cultural crossroads.

⁶ Earley and Ang, 91.

b. Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointment

Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment is a distinctive ministry of the United Methodist Church (afterward, UMC) based on its open itineracy: “Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age.”⁷

Under the appointment system of open itineracy, cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry becomes a ministry opportunity for solidarity, ethnic diversity, and cultural inclusiveness in prayerful “consideration of the gifts and evidence of God’s grace.”⁸ *The Book of Discipline* clarifies the definition and meaningful value of cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry:

Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are made *as a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity* in the church and in its leadership. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations in which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson’s own racial/ethnic and cultural background.⁹

“As a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity,” the UMC supports and practices cross-cultural ministry. While it is risk-taking, cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry practices the affirmation of faith with the spirit of inclusiveness and racial justice in God’s grace and diverse gifts.

In order to effectively support cross-cultural ministry, “annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. When such appointments are made, Bishops, cabinets, and boards of ordained ministry shall provide specific training for the clergy persons so appointed and for their congregations.”¹⁰ This intentional effort of training clergy and congregations is essential for fruitful outcomes from the cross-cultural ministry. Above all, in the process of appointments, Bishop and cabinets need to prayerfully consider the spiritual gifts and qualities of pastors and local congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. Through various interviews with pastors and local church leaders in

⁷ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: the UM Publishing House, 2012), 337.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 338.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 338.

the UMC, Lucia Ann McSpadden suggests clergy and congregational qualities and warning signs for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments:

	Clergy Qualities	Congregational Qualities
Desired Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Deep spiritual strength *Clear sense of call and commitment to ministry *Strong sense of self *Positivity, not anger *Flexibility; willingness to change; can work outside of his or her comfort zone *Willingness to try to understand congregation's worldview, values, and culture *Ability and eagerness to care for, love, and pastor the people irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, or status *Ability and eagerness to develop authentic relationships *Sense of humor; does not take self too seriously *Prior, positive cross-cultural, cross-racial experience *Willingness and proactiveness in increasing competence in language skills *Development of an effective support network *Understanding of the annual conference leadership as resources for support and skills *Respect for difference *Patience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Openness to cross-cultural – cross-racial appointment *Strong, positive leadership intentional about setting a positive atmosphere *Proactive staff-parish relations committee with history of taking a positive and active role *Congregation with a history of supporting its pastors *Empathetic and caring leadership *Leadership with spiritual depth; a community of faith searching for how best to be the church *Leadership open to concrete suggestions for developing relationships between pastor and members, understanding that such relationships are important for the health of the church *Congregation willing to raise questions: What is the community environment like? What level of hostility can be expected in the community? Are the congregation's leaders able to monitor these realities and to reflect on them?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Rigidity culturally and theologically *Unwillingness to listen, grow, and change *Judgmentalism *Anger about or high suspicion of other ethnic groups *Steep learning curve relative to cultural issues *Difficult family issues *Cross-culturally – cross-racially inexperienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Financially troubled church, especially if it involves mutual blaming *Intense power struggles *Openly hostile members, who have a history of attacking pastors, even regarding issues that have little if anything to do with race, ethnicity, or culture *Demands pastor to provide care but does not reciprocate

Warning Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *New immigrant with little if any exposure to U.S. culture and society even if adept in the English language *Secretiveness; not forthcoming about own life, situation, way of thinking and of doing theology *Significant language issues and a defensiveness about this *Clergy from other denominations unfamiliar with United Methodist polity, processes, and assumptions *Clergy coming from non-English language congregations *Person who has not shown skills and willingness regarding building own support network, or has little if any experience doing this *Clergy family experience sense of isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Unwillingness to change, grow, and “do things differently” *Surrounding community that is hostile to people of color *Staff-parish relations committee and congregational leaders that have “no clue” about racial, ethnic, and cultural realities in the United States
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Table 1. Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Leadership Qualities¹¹

Although the UMC leaders expect possible challenges and risks of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, they also affirm the opportunities of cross-cultural ministry and encourage the ministry of inclusiveness and reconciliation among different people. In fact, a ministry of racial and cultural inclusiveness has been a tradition from the early American Methodism. John Wigger shares a story of Richard Allen, who was born a slave and became the leading African American Methodist. Allen recalls that “the Methodists were the first people that brought glad tidings to the colored people. I feel thankful that ever I heard a Methodist preach. We are beholden to the Methodists, under God, for the light of the Gospel we enjoy; for all other denominations preached so high-flown that we were not able to comprehend their doctrine.”¹² At the same time, American Methodism also experienced its limitedness in the racial issue. According to Eric Lincoln, Richard Allen left his Methodist church and initiated the Free African Society because he and his black friends “[had been] pulled unceremoniously from their knees

¹¹ McSpadden, 130-133.

¹² John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 249.

while inadvertently praying in a segregated section of a gallery in St. George's Methodist Church."¹³ Nevertheless, the UMC has gradually endeavored to build solidarity and mutual acceptance among diverse Christians beyond their race, gender, culture, social status, and age.

Through her cross-cultural experience in China, Pearl S. Buck gives us an important insight for cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry: "By birth and ancestry I am an American; by choice and belief I am a Christian; but by the year of my life, by sympathy and feeling, I am Chinese. As a Chinese I say to you what many Chinese have said to me: 'Come to us no more in arrogance of spirit. Come to us as brothers and fellow men. Let us see in you how your religion works. Preach to us no more, but share with us that better and more abundant life which your Christ lived. Give us your best, or nothing.'"¹⁴ A fruitful cross-cultural ministry accompanies church leaders' humble spirit, openness toward others, and loving deeds in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry has been a bridge-building and reconciling ministry among different people of God.

c. Leadership and Culture

Leadership initiates a movement. Leaders bring changes to an organization and create a new culture in it. They often make a difference in successful or failing ways by leading and influencing other people. The influence of leadership is tremendous in many cases. However, the individual leaders may not be critically important in Christian leadership, while their leadership is crucial. As Christian leadership is based on 'followership' of Jesus Christ, the center of life, all Christian leaders are the followers of Christ's leadership. Accordingly, the main concern of Christian leadership is not about individual leaders, but about leadership derived from Jesus Christ.

¹³ Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), 65.

¹⁴ Requoted from Ernest Lyght, Glory and Jacob Dharmaraj, *Many Faces One Church: A Manual for Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 31.

Christian leadership is based on the servant leadership of Jesus Christ in Mark 10:43b-45 and John 13:12b-14. Jesus teaches Christian servanthood among his disciples: “But whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man *came not to be served but to serve*, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:43b-45). Jesus’ servant leadership provides a radical teaching on loving and serving others rather than controlling and overpowering them. John 13:12b-14 is a practice of Jesus’ servant leadership: “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” By washing his disciples’ feet, Jesus practiced his servant leadership and encouraged his followers to do the same thing. In the spirit of Jesus Christ, Christian leaders must compassionately love and serve others.

Church leadership depends on the callings and gifts of God who has given the gifts/talents to each person. Ephesians 4:11-12 explains diverse leadership gifts for building up the body of Christ: “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Church leadership is based on God-given gifts among Christians and includes both clergy and lay people. In particular, the UMC has “recognized that laypersons as well as ordained persons are gifted and called by God to lead the Church. The servant leadership of these persons is essential to the mission and ministry of congregations.”¹⁵ Therefore, leadership is the matter of both lay and clergy persons. They both serve and lead the church as a team for its mission and ministry as servant leaders. Rather than an individual charismatic clergy leadership, the cooperative leadership of clergy and lay leaders always works according to their spiritual gifts and callings. Their basic leadership is founded on their service for others. Servant leadership does not focus on individual leaders but emphasizes diverse gifts and callings of Jesus Christ among Christian believers.

¹⁵ *Discipline*, 97.

Why does culture matter for Christian leadership? As people experience God in their own contexts, Christian leaders are also influenced by their surrounding cultures. Leslie Newbigin offers a concise definition of culture as “the sum total of ways of living developed by a group of human beings and handed on from generation to generation.”¹⁶ In this definition, culture includes visible and invisible human behaviors and achievements, systems, values, customs, and ethics. People need to understand the importance of contextualization because they are greatly influenced by their cultural contexts. Church leaders need to carefully recognize their cultural confinement and its powerful influence in the ministry.

While recognizing the power of culture, Christian leaders are to overcome their cultural and contextual confinements and widen and deepen their understanding on potential transformation in Christ Jesus. Moreover, both lay and clergy leaders must equip themselves with inspired leadership and skills to deal with complex human contexts. Paul Hiebert emphasizes more studies on humanity:

It is increasingly clear that we must master the skill of human exegesis as well as biblical exegesis to meaningfully communicate the gospel in human contexts. We need to study the social, cultural, psychological, and ecological systems in which humans live in order to communicate the gospel in ways the people we serve understand and believe.¹⁷

In order to create and develop a new movement inside and beyond the church, Christian leaders must critically think more on humanity and cultural aspects of the surrounding communities. As church leaders study the Bible and understand their relationships with God in the text, they also need to explore mutual relationships with others in their context.

In this study on leadership and culture, I have two premises: First, every leader has one’s own perspective from his/her primary culture. No one can be free from his/her cultural values and moral ideology. Ethnocentric tendencies make Christian leaders slow to understand and embrace different cultures and people. Second, every culture constantly changes, and church leaders can

¹⁶ Leslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 159.

¹⁷ Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 12.

play an important role in cultural changes. In its dynamic interactions and changes, cultural phenomena seem to be very complicated. While people are naturally influenced by their culture, it is also true that people make an influence on their culture and change it. Through the Christian history, by the grace of God church leaders have initiated many movements and created new cultures so that they have significantly impacted on the existing cultures.

1.2 My Story to Our Story

I was born and grew up in one dominant cultural environment in South Korea and came to the U.S. as an adult. As I had not experienced cultural and racial diversity in Korea, crossing a cultural boundary became a big challenge to me. In the U.S., I was a total stranger and had to relearn everything from the basics. While I enjoyed new and diverse cultural experiences, I also perceived frustrations and often thought of uncertain future: “I feel like a child who lacks language, knowledge, and experience (when I tried to order food at a restaurant but did not know how to pronounce the menu),” “What am I doing here? To where do I belong? (when I attended my first annual conference and was surrounded with all ‘American’ pastors and lay delegates),” “Yes, I am an alien, not a citizen! (when I had to go through a long and costly immigration process),” “What can I do from the edge? (when I observed some social problems but did not know what to do),” “How many more mountains do I need to cross? (when I saw beautiful mountains in the Western North Carolina but felt that they are symbolic obstacles I have to overcome),” “Am I subject to be a secondary preacher? (when I struggled with my sermon preparation and found mistakes in my enunciation).” If you are a cross-cultural person, you might have similar soliloquies with mine.

Beyond burdens, fears, and frustrations, however, my cross-cultural experience has been a growth journey for me to expand and deepen my understanding on humanity (cultural awareness and human nature) and God (spiritual relationship with God and total dependence on grace). Crossing a cultural boundary has been not only a barrier but also an opportunity for me to rethink of solidarity, humility, and mutual acceptance. Through my crossing experience, I have

acquired a distinct leadership insight of ‘leading from the edge’ where I often find myself. It is based on servant leadership and creative imagination by being dislocated in my cross-cultural context.

Through my ministry, I have endeavored to develop imaginative leadership¹⁸ to embrace different people in the body of Christ Jesus. The vision of establishing a more peaceful Christian community among diverse people is a challenging goal, and it requires much patience, faith, and trust in God. Cultural difference, language barrier, generational gap, racial prejudice and misunderstanding, and insufficient financial and human resources are only visible obstacles for cross-cultural ministry. Nevertheless, God’s grace has made me serve the Lord in the world parish, participating in God’s greater mission in my local context. Endeavoring to become an effective leader and connecting diverse people through my cross-cultural ministry, my story may be resonant in other cross-cultural leaders’ stories and become a part of ‘our’ story.¹⁹

a. Marginal Leadership

In a cross-cultural ministry context, the clergy person may feel isolated from his/her own ethnic people and find a significant gap from the congregation because the dominant constituents of the congregation are different from his/her racial and cultural background. Human beings are instinctively ‘egocentric’ and ‘ethnocentric,’²⁰ and they tend to see things from their own viewpoints and understand certain incidents with their own moral values. As ethnocentrism is the “attitude that [a person’s] own culture is better and more civilized than other cultures,”²¹ misunderstanding, prejudice, and conflict can be ordinary expectations among different people. In my cross-cultural ministry, I have emphasized ‘openness’ to learn and engage with new cultural

¹⁸ While people tend to focus only on visible things and the present events, imaginative leaders try to understand what God is doing among the people and envision a new possibility in God’s grace through creative and critical thought process.

¹⁹ In the UMC, there are about 300 Korean American pastors who are under cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. If I extend to other ethnic groups, there are far more UM pastors who are in their cross-cultural contexts. As we share life stories together, my individual story may become a part of ‘our’ story.

²⁰ As God created humans in God’s image, human egocentric and ethnocentric nature is the result from human sins. See chapter 2.1.b. reconciliation for more discussion.

²¹ Hiebert, 195.

values and traditions. In most cases, my congregations have appreciated my open attitude to learn their ways of living. Openness toward other perspectives, values, and customs has helped me relate myself to others from a different perspective.

As I consider cultural boundaries as a shared space, I have tried to expand our communal space for learning and growing together between my congregation and myself. During the process, I have learned that a cross-cultural leader should not be located at the center. By positioning myself on the margin, I could see the needs of the marginalized, hear the voices of the little and weak, and have empathy with those who struggle on the edges. As an ordained clergy, I have pastoral privilege, authority, and power to lead the congregation, but often choose to be on the margin. Being a marginal²² leader is not about lack of leadership authority or confidence. Rather, it is to serve and lead people from the edge. Leading from the edge can be a courageous, radical, and imaginative leadership for church leaders to see things from the marginalized people's perspectives and to understand their needs.

The cross-cultural ministry has given me an insight of marginal leadership. I understand marginal leadership both as a leadership strategy of being on the margin in order to get a fresh perspective out of the center and as a leadership character of self-emptying for the sake of building solidarity with the marginalized. Marginal leadership can help church leaders grow their compassionate hearts for the powerless, forgotten, and lonely inside and outside the church on the margin. Church leaders may not necessarily be 'marginalized leaders' due to their vested rights but need to be 'marginal' to engage with those who are marginalized. In this sense, 'marginal leadership' is an ongoing process toward 'marginalized leadership' with which Jesus Christ fully emptied himself and became flesh.

²² 'Marginal' means being on the edge and being peripheral, not central. While 'marginalized' is always pejorative as the term refers to being excluded and pushed off the center, 'marginal' is not necessarily pejorative all the time. I use the term, 'marginal' to present an imaginative leadership in cross-cultural ministry.

Relating to the diverse people, observing possible opportunities in ministries, and engaging the gospel from the marginalized perspective, I have learned how to see the heart of God and have empathy with the people who are less visible and less influencing in the church. Cross-cultural experience has helped me see things from others' viewpoints so that I could broaden and deepen my understanding on humanity. In the cross-cultural ministry setting, lay leaders can also develop their marginal leadership by seeing things from different viewpoints and accepting differences without judgment. "Mutuality opens a dialogue. The emphasis is on authentic conversation between partners to arrive at a unanimous or a mutually agreeable consensus. It respects differences and works to identify underlying and unstated assumptions. It does not compel consent. It seeks breadth and diversity rather than focusing on a single context or location."²³ The insight of Lyght and Dharmaraj helps clergy and lay leaders grasp the importance of interactive conversations with open mind and humble spirit toward differences in the cross-cultural ministry setting. Through communal learning and practicing marginal leadership, both clergy and lay leaders can build up their comprehension over misunderstanding, solidarity over division, and peaceable relationship over conflict. Marginal leaders on the edge may develop imaginative leadership in cultural crossroads with their dislocated contexts, willingness to learn other cultures, and humble spirit as marginal persons.

b. The Pitfalls

As I recognize my ethnocentric nature, I can anticipate there might be ambiguity, tension, and misunderstanding in cross-cultural ministry. By diagnosing possible pitfalls of the cross-cultural ministry, church leaders can prepare their church to create a better environment for cultural diversity and unity. The early stage of cross-cultural ministry may cause confusion and conflict among church members who are accustomed to being a homogeneous faith community. Building relationships among diverse people who have different living standards is not easy, while church

²³ Lyght and Dharmaraj, 24

leadership carefully communicates with the congregation and cultivates the healthy soil of embracing diversity and learning from one another.

One of common pitfalls is impatience and apathy on difference. While people have more diverse cultural interactions in their communities, their interactions become more superficial without deeper relationships with others. The U.S. lifestyles of the 21st century are quite different from those of the previous generations. Until the pre-1970s when communal hobbies and shared values occupied more public discourse, people used to value one's integrity and put an emphasis on communal relationships. However, today's culture pays more attention to material abundance and visible success. Frequent mobility and individualized life patterns have also affected American relationships with others. As the "economy [is] a major source of social division in the United States,"²⁴ different social classes rarely encounter and relate to each other.

Rich and poor Americans have little personal contact with one another... The air people live high above the street in condominium buildings guarded by doormen and work in offices similarly elevated and guarded. The street people include not only the homeless but also the hard-pressed; they live in buildings that require them to walk in, walk up, and be wary. They also work exposed to the street, in construction, maintenance, and service jobs... Away from the big cities, even such passing encounters are rare, since many Americans live in class-segregated communities.²⁵

Duane Elmer points out the issue of individualism and impatience in the American culture.

"Individualism fosters an impatience with people and institutions: We can always join another church, find new friends or get another job. As long as we have options, we do not need to work at preserving our present relationships. At any sign of discomfort, we jettison them and start over with someone else."²⁶ As the cross-cultural ministry requires thoughtful patience and consideration toward others, the culture of impatience and apathy on difference becomes a fatal pitfall.

²⁴ Claude Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 161.

²⁵ Ibid., 138.

²⁶ Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 25.

According to Hiebert, there are three dimensions of pitfalls, that is, cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions, to be thoughtfully considered in cross-cultural ministry.²⁷ The cognitive dimension may cause misunderstanding, and it involves a lack of knowledge on other cultures; the affective dimension is deeply related to ethnocentrism, and its solution is empathy with others; and the evaluative dimension is judgment. In order to appreciate other cultures, people need to respect others' integrity. I admit that Hiebert's analysis is valid. At the same time, I am sure that those dimensions of pitfall can be overcome by intentional efforts and appropriate education toward diversity and unity. In this process of knowing and learning others, removing prejudice and ethnocentric arrogance, and appreciating and respecting one another, diverse people can develop their authentic relationships in the long-term period. An African proverb implies an answer for living together with different people: "We must go slowly to go far. If we want to go fast, we go alone; however, if we want to go far, we go together."²⁸

Another pitfall is the assumption that the cross-cultural ministry will cause more conflicts and problems. This kind of assumption may come from prejudice. I used to be confined in an ethnocentric prejudice that familiar cultures are better than those of new and unfamiliar ones. However, through my cross-cultural experience, I have learned that people make assumptions based on their previous knowledge and experience and that many of those assumptions are not real. Assumptions often mislead people not to welcome different people. When I had my first meeting with Staff Parish Relations Committee at a church, an SPRC member told me that her former pastor lacked communication skills. I did not understand why she said it to me. Without knowing me, she assumed that I would have communication problems because I was a foreigner. In fact, she was not happy to receive a pastor who had different cultural and racial background from her. However, she never complained about my communication skills. On the contrary, it

²⁷ Hiebert, 194-197.

²⁸ Quoted from Frank Eastham, "Relational Training for a Multicultural Church," *Multicultural Ministry Handbook*, eds., David Anderson and Margarita Cabellon (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 34.

was she who claimed my preaching as one of my strengths during the SPRC's clergy evaluation. If people are preoccupied with false assumptions, the cross-cultural ministry cannot be welcomed or embraced. Both clergy and lay leaders need to be aware of pitfalls so that they may help the congregation get out of their biased cultural boxes and envision a hope for solidarity and reconciliation among different people.

c. Paradox in Cross-Cultural Ministry

As a result of immigration pattern shift and globalization, cross-cultural experiences are more prevalent in the U.S. today. The American churches endeavor to create more opportunities to welcome and embrace different people and diversity through their ministries. However, out of abundant opportunities in diversity, people tend to be more indifferent to others and less involved with other cultures due to increased individualism and social negligence in today's lifestyle. Ted Cantle explains this phenomenon as the 'paradox of diversity' and finds the reason in the lack of engagement with others:

While it is clear that most people are now exposed to diversity in all aspects of their daily lives – either in our local communities, schools and workplaces, or indirectly through TV, social networks and other media – there appears to be something of a 'paradox of diversity.' The more diverse societies have become accustomed to it, the more they seem to retreat into their own identity, embrace identity politics and support separatist ideologies. This may, in part, be due to the lack of engagement with difference, a rather wary detachment that makes us more determined to cling to our own community's certainties.²⁹

For example, when I served a church in a small rural town, I actively engaged myself in various community events. I often took my children to different cultural events and learned local history and traditions. When I moved to a larger city, I thought I would enjoy more diverse cultural aspects and have more benefits of diversity. However, several years later, I learned that I had less engagement in local cultural events among the flood of diversity.

The paradox of diversity may explain today's church reality. While more churches are involved in multicultural or cross-cultural ministries to reach out to diverse people, there are still many churches that maintain more separatist attitudes and focus on a singular dominant cultural

²⁹ Cantle, 14.

unit as their evangelism strategy. In my previous church appointment, the church had a few ethnic minorities, and the church members welcomed them and took care of them with hospitality. However, the more they received ethnic people into their church, the members paid less attention to those who have different cultures. When new and diverse people grew more in the church, the existing congregation began to worry that they might lose their own traditions and that the newcomers might take ‘their church’ away.

Another paradox is leadership hubris. Once people cross a cultural border, they humbly learn and grow in the new culture. Through ardent learning experiences, cross-cultural leaders may become more confident in their ministry and begin to have their assertive leadership voice. However, cross-cultural leaders should not lose their sense of humility. The more they know a new culture and become effective leaders, they should be more humble because church leadership is to mirror the servant leadership of Jesus Christ. Keith Grint warns the leadership hubris for all leaders: “The hubris of leadership, of course, has always been regarded as a fatal weakness for many, but the point is to understand what it is about hubris that so undermines leaders.”³⁰ In particular, cross-cultural leaders need to be cautious not to be arrogant because their unique leadership is from the margin.

Another distinct cross-cultural paradox is the tension between the center and the margin. Having pastoral authority, a cross-cultural clergy leader is considered to be at the center. However, when the leader positions in the center, he/she begins to lose his/her own identity as a marginal leader. Standing in the center, the cross-cultural leader may lose the heart of Christ Jesus who was with the poor, oppressed, marginalized, and alien. In other words, if cross-cultural leaders lose their hearts for those who are foreign, powerless, and weak, they also lose the spirit of Christ Jesus. It is the same for lay leaders. They are to locate themselves on the margin and listen to diverse voices that cannot be heard in the center. Therefore, in the healthier tension

³⁰ Keith Grint, *Leadership Limits and Possibilities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 114.

between the center and the margin, church leaders – both clergy and lay – need to comprehend the paradox of cross-cultural leadership and lead the congregation from the edge.

Chapter 2. A Biblical Understanding of Cross-Cultural Leadership

‘Hybridity’ is a distinctive word that signifies multicultural contexts. A hybrid leader seeks to create a better desired outcome by adopting two or more different cultural components. In this chapter, I will look into the cross-cultural leadership through the lens of biblical imagination.

Cross-cultural leaders need to have sensitivity in interpreting their particular contexts and to be equipped with adaptive skills in their changing cultures. At the same time, they must deeply anchor their faith in God. Cross-cultural leaders are to help their congregation continually grow and become a healthier faith community by envisioning God’s kingdom community, challenging the church’s current cultural paradigm, and empowering diverse people of God to work together and embrace in mutual acceptance.

2.1 Biblical Concepts for Cross-Cultural Leadership

a. The Image of God

The Book of Genesis begins with the creation narrative. God creates various creatures in separate time and appreciates each creation’s value and goodness in Genesis 1. Through God’s creation process, I comprehend God’s intentional action of creation in which God gives specific focus on each creation per day and appreciates its own beauty and value with the repeated expression:

“God *saw that it was good*.” In God’s eyes, each creation is special, beautiful, and good. When God completes the creation, God finally sees the whole creation: “God *saw everything* that he had made, and *indeed, it was very good*” (Genesis 1:31). Each creation is meaningful and good, but God’s creation as a whole is indeed very good. This means that God sees and values diversity and harmony in the whole creation. Duane Elmer confirms that “diversity is rooted in the creative activity of God.”³¹ Elmer’s notion can be understood that diversity is not a byproduct of cultural change such as globalization, but essential and immanent in God’s creation. Genesis 1 is like a musical piece that uses an effect of ‘crescendo’: Each creation adds to one another, and the finale

³¹ Elmer, 23.

of God's creation becomes accentuated and magnified with its sublime beauty. Then it suddenly becomes silenced with God's rest.

The image of God is vividly described in Genesis 1:26: "Let *us* make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." By using the plural forms ("us" and "our") to designate God, the author might imply that God is the diverse and dynamic being as the triune God. In fact, God's trinity is crucial because it provides the foundation for unity and diversity of human beings: They are created in the image of God who is one living God and in whom there are three persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons are "distinct but inseparable."³² Furthermore, Nonna Harrison finds human equality and leadership in the equal and trusting relationship of the triune God:

Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal, all human persons made in their image are ultimately equal. The divine image confers dignity on each one... Yet there is also leadership in the Trinity. God the Father begets the Son and breathes forth the Holy Spirit. He gives each of them all that he is so that they are forever his equals.³³

Harrison's notion of equality and leadership initiative in the triune God is very important as it provides a foundational hope for human equality and unity among diverse people and gives an authentic example of Christian leadership grounded on God's equal and eternal relationship.

The image of God brings about several insights on human diversity and unity for harmonious living purpose in creation. First, it gives a hope for unity in different cultures and traditions. As human beings are created after God's image, everyone shares common roots in God's goodness. In accordance with different human contexts, people may have various lifestyles and take diverse values and viewpoints in their cultural, socioeconomic, or ethnic environments.

³² *Discipline*, 70.

³³ Nonna Verna Harrison, *God's Many-Splendored Image: Theological Anthropology for Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2010), 182.

However, their fundamental origin contains common sharing of God's image. As humans share the image of God, they can have communal relationships with each other. Due to the sin, however, God's goodness and righteousness are distorted in humanity, and people cannot fully reflect the image of God. Nevertheless, common sharing in God's image is still a hope for all people to recognize one another as part of God's creation and to seek unity over their differences.

Second, all humans are equal in the relationship with God. As all are created in the image of God, each person has beauty and dignity of God's likeness. Even though human sinfulness distorts the image of God, the spirit of God's creation acknowledges equality and values among diverse human beings regardless of their race, sexual orientation, religious belief, nationality, gender, and socioeconomic status. Human values and quality are found in the deep understanding of God's triune relationship. When people recognize their equal relationships with God, they begin to realize their responsibility for others in creation.

In particular, Christian communities share one baptism in the Lord. Through baptism, different people join one body in Christ Jesus by belonging to the same Lord, same Spirit, and same household of God. Baptism is a unique way of entering into relationships with God and other Christian believers. Theodore Runyon states that "as Jews were admitted into the original covenant by circumcision administered to children, so baptism, which replaces circumcision as the sign of the covenant, admits to the new covenant."³⁴ Baptism becomes a means of grace by which people can begin a new relationship with God. It is an active response to God's calling toward a new covenant to belong to God as well as to recover commonality with other Christians. In this sense, baptism is a new beginning for people to restore the image of God and to pursue unity and equality among diverse Christian believers.

By grace, God helps humans created in the image of God grow toward his likeness and develop responsible relations with others. It also involves human responsibility as stewards

³⁴ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 140.

toward other creatures in God's creation. The expression, "human dominion over other creatures" (Genesis 1:26), does not mean to oppress or exploit other creatures for the benefits of human beings. Rather, it requires human beings to become responsible stewards to sustain the beauty and goodness of God's creation. It is a stewardship calling for all human beings to nurture and work together in God's continued creation. In this sense, God's creation is not only an act but also a process. David Koyzis states that "the image of God is a grant of responsibility to all people – male and female, rich and poor, king and peasant – as stewards of the earth."³⁵ In fact, human responsibility goes beyond fellow human beings toward other creatures on earth as they deepen their relationships with God. The recognition of human dignity and responsibility toward other people and creatures helps Christians expand their relationships with others and work together for continuing God's creating works.

Third, all people are to live together in harmony and goodness in God's creation. Human beings are not only to preserve God's creation but also to recreate and renew it with their God-given creativity. As different people recognize the beauty of diversity and learn how to co-exist in harmony, they may begin to understand the heart of the Creator and fully grasp the joyful exclamation of God: "Indeed, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Duane Elmer boldly proclaims that the more people accept diversity and live together, the more they understand God's identity and become more like God:

Thus in the process of learning about other cultures, affirming our various ethnic heritages and honoring (if not celebrating) diversity, we enlarge our appreciation for God, who in authoring diversity was trying to tell us about himself. Perhaps we are most like God when we also look around and affirm as good peoples and traditions different from our own and diligently seek to appreciate the beauty God has chosen to express in others.³⁶

Beyond different culture, language, class, and system, all people are called to have mutual acceptance and embrace difference in peaceable relationships. Through accepting diversity and otherness, people finally come to fully appreciate the beauty of God's creation and the heart of

³⁵ David Koyzis, *We Answer to Another: Authority, Office, and the Image of God* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014) 22.

³⁶ Elmer, 24.

God. The image of God affirms the value and significance of human diversity and creative relationships among different people.

b. Reconciliation

Reconciliation begins with an acceptance of human sins. If there is no sin, there will be no need for repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. According to Paul Hiebert, “it is sin that divides and alienates us from one another. In the fall, humans were alienated from God (Gen. 3:8-10), men from women (Gen. 3:12, 16), brother from brother (Gen. 4:8, 23), and race from race (Gen. 11:9). Moreover, our common humanity extends beyond the fall. We are all sinners in need of redemption.”³⁷ By admitting their alienated state from God and others, people find a hope for healing and reconciliation. As people recognize their sinfulness, they learn that real reconciliation is available only through God’s grace. The fact that all people are sinners and need redemption by the grace of God becomes a common theological foundation. In other words, all people need to admit their sins and ask God’s forgiveness. This theological reality is for all people regardless of race, culture, and religion.

All humans are ‘egocentric’ beings. People unconsciously think and judge everything from their own points of view. Putting individual agendas and self-interest first causes misunderstanding, conflict, or power struggle among different people who have their own ‘egocentric’ viewpoints. This is an inevitable result from the fact that all humans have distorted God’s image with their sins. In order to recover God’s image, people are to accept Jesus Christ as their redeemer³⁸ and be transformed by the grace of Christ. Responding to the initiating God’s invitation, people can take a step to restore the image of God. One Sunday right after a worship service, I was approached by a young member who looked somewhat upset. “Pastor, how long do I need to repeat the prayer of confession in the worship?” said he. “I have not betrayed Jesus, nor killed him. I have not deceived others, nor done evil things against them this week. Why do I

³⁷ Hiebert, 189.

³⁸ As corrupted beings by sin, humans cannot save themselves but need the redemptive power of God.

need to ask God's forgiveness while I have not sinned?" I responded to him, "I know you are a good Christian and do not harm others. However, sin is not limited to personal mistakes or misdeeds. You might sin against God without knowing it. Moreover, sin is human condition. The prayer of confession is a communal repentance of human sins." Human sin is not only a personal issue but also a communal and social issue. Accordingly, reconciliation with others as well as God needs to be underscored in cross-cultural and multicultural ministry by being aware of privatization of faith.

One of the Christian practices to recover God's image in Jesus Christ is to recognize other people and accept them as our neighbors. Embracing others is a deeper theological reflection and practice to restore humanity as created beings with God's likeness. Charles Foster challenges us with his theological discourse of embracing diversity and other cultural and racial people. According to him, people cannot "live authentically without welcoming others – the other gender, other persons, or other cultures."³⁹ When people recognize, accept, and embrace others, they at last become fully human in the relationship with others and have authentic life quality that is given by God. Christian leaders need to help their church community embrace others and love strangers as their neighbors. Reconciliation with other persons, other cultures, other genders, and other classes is only possible when people confess their sins, ask forgiveness, and recover their damaged relationship with God. Restoring trust-relationship with God is the first condition toward reconciliation.

In regard to 'otherness,' Paul Hiebert even has a more radical thought based on his understanding of humanity in the Bible. He argues that there is no such concept of others in real humanity: "The Scriptures lead us to a startling conclusion: *at the deepest level of our identity as humans there are no others – there is only us*. As Christians we must begin by affirming our common humanity with all people. On the surface we are male and female; black, brown, and

³⁹ Charles Foster, *Leadership in Multicultural Congregations: Embracing Diversity* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1997), 1.

white; rich and poor; old and young; but beneath these differences we are one humanity. The oneness of humanity is declared in the creation account (Gen. 1:26) and affirmed by the universalism implicit in the Old Testament (Ps. 148:11-13; Isa. 45:22; Mic. 4:1-2).”⁴⁰ Hiebert’s radical understanding on humanity becomes a surprising hope for cross-cultural or multicultural ministry. Whether people think others as their ‘neighbors’ or ‘strangers,’ according to Hiebert, they are all ‘us’ in a deeper sense of humanity in the relationship with God. True reconciliation among different people is possible only when people comprehend true humanity in God’s creation and recover their estranged relationships with others.

The cross-cultural or multicultural ministry must be a ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18) in which God’s spirit works among different people through Jesus Christ. From the viewpoints of human egocentrism and racial inequality, reconciliation is never possible among different cultural and racial people because they are only considered strangers, foreigners, and even enemies who do not have relationships with one another. Therefore, by only worshipping God among different people in the cross-cultural or multicultural settings, people cannot fully experience reconciliation. We must resist an assumption that reconciliation can be accomplished by “white institutions *adding* or *including* persons of color but never transforming the central identity from white (and male) to a truly inclusive human identity.”⁴¹ Through consistent practices of embracing others based on atonement and forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus, God’s grace can move church leaders to decrease the gaps of exclusion and division among different people and bridge them together toward a united body of Christ. In this sense, reconciliation is “restoring wholeness not only to individuals but to communities. This will involve developing a

⁴⁰ Hiebert, 188.

⁴¹ Allan Boesak and Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 23.

more corporate sense of self, in which personal and social structures are interconnected for communal wholeness.”⁴²

Social holiness has been a theological emphasis in Methodism. Will Willimon sees a possible reconciliation through Wesleyan means of grace: “The waters of baptism, the imposition of hands upon the head, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, make us even more than human, or perhaps more accurately, truly human.”⁴³ As reconciliation is a theological process of restoring wholeness in the relationships with God and others, it may be experienced at the Holy Communion. “Everything and everyone is interconnected in an organic way: birds and fish, soil and air, black and white, gay and straight, rich and poor, male and female; and all the meals we eat at home – breakfast, lunch, supper – are derivative in some deep and powerful sense from the Lord’s Supper.”⁴⁴ When believers recover true union with Christ and others in the Holy Communion, they will experience reconciliation in the love of God through Jesus Christ.

2.2 Biblical Exemplars of Cross-Cultural Leadership

How to read and interpret the Word of God is a crucial issue for Christian believers. According to the readers’ standpoints, they develop their theological foundation of what they believe. I will analyze the leaderships of Moses and Paul with a cross-cultural viewpoint. How their cross-cultural experiences have formed and enriched their leadership is my primary focus in this biblical analysis. I aim to interact with the biblical text by having imaginative dialogues on Moses’ and Paul’s leadership.

a. Moses and Integration

I will explore how Moses discovers his authentic identity and leadership voice. To begin with, I pay attention to Moses’ triple cultural identities: Moses as a Jew, as an Egyptian, and as a Midianite. Moses’ cross-cultural identity is a key component for his leadership development. A

⁴² Sharon Thornton, *Broken Yet Beloved: A Pastoral Theology of the Cross* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2002), 148.

⁴³ William Willimon, *Calling & Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 45.

⁴⁴ Eugene Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 191.

biblical imagination guides me to understand how Moses grows from a ‘slow tongued’ ordinary person to an effective leader who shepherds his people into the Promised Land. The book of Exodus introduces Jacob’s descendents as a prolific group in the eyes of the Egyptians. The new Pharaoh, unaware of Joseph’s tremendous contribution to Egypt, becomes fearful of the Israelites who reside in Egypt. Out of ignorance and fear of different cultural and ethnic people, the Pharaoh commands the whole nation to oppress and persecute the Jews. Due to the lack of cooperation from the Hebrew midwives, however, Pharaoh fails to reduce the numbers of Jews. Then he officially orders a genocidal project:⁴⁵ “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live” (Exodus 1:22). Following this brutal command, Exodus does not provide any tragic details of the deaths among the Israelite boys. It seems to me that Pharaoh’s genocidal plan simply provides a background setting for Moses’ dual identity as a Jew and Egyptian.

Born to a Levite family, Moses is placed by the banks of the Nile and saved by Pharaoh’s daughter. She names him Moses, which means that “I drew him out of the water” (Exodus 2:10), and his name symbolizes his future mission as the liberating agent for God’s people who have been under oppression. The Scripture implies that Moses perceives himself as a Jew when he becomes an adult: “One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to *his people* [the Israelites] and *saw their forced labor*” (Exodus 2:11). While Moses grows up as an Egyptian prince, he identifies himself with the Israelites (“his people”) and has sympathy on their hardship (“saw their forced labor”). Although Exodus does not describe the conflicting identity of Moses, I imagine that Moses has experienced inner struggles relating to his dual identity.

Before his escape into the Midian desert, Moses experiences two events: One is his encounter with an Egyptian taskmaster striking a Hebrew, and the other is an observation of two Israelites fighting against each other. As a Jew, Moses begins to sense a deep moral responsibility

⁴⁵ Pharaoh’s genocidal project is not historically recorded except for the Bible. Moses’ story also does not appear in other historical documents.

against the oppression of the Jews by the Egyptians. Mosheh Lichtenstein describes Moses' nature to pursue justice as an activist who tries to fix the unjust problem:

[Moses] does not simply feel distress in the face of evil and injustice; he feels a need to respond immediately in an attempt to rectify the world. He doesn't simply bewail evil and injustice; he translates his feelings into actions. He is constitutionally unable to remain silent at such a time. Every fiber in his body rebels against what is happening. He strikes down the Egyptian; he rebukes his fellow Israelites. If there is justice, let it appear right now!⁴⁶

However, Moses realizes his limitation as the liberating agent when a Hebrew man argues with him: "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" (Exodus 2:14). While Moses tries to help an oppressed Jew, the Hebrew man identifies Moses with an Egyptian who is the enemy and oppressor over Israel. Even though Moses approaches the Hebrew man as a brother, he is not accepted. It is clear that Moses does not belong to the community of Jews yet and struggles with his dual identities.

Escaping from Egypt, Moses dwells in the Midian wilderness where he helps the daughters of the Midian priest, Jethro. In the beginning, the daughters of Jethro recognize Moses as an Egyptian: "*An Egyptian* helped us against the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock" (Exodus 2:19). We presumably admit that Moses certainly spoke the Egyptian language and wore Egyptian costume. Even though Moses kills an Egyptian taskmaster and runs away from Egypt, he does not have a Jewish identity yet. Rather, his escaping from Egypt is an act of running away from the people of Israel. What an irony it is! Lichtenstein points out Moses' inner rejection of his identity as a Jew through his running away from Egypt.⁴⁷ By leaving Egypt, paradoxically, Moses runs away from the suffering reality of the Israelites. Through the action of a physical leaving, Moses tries to emotionally sever his relationship with the Jewish community.

Another distinctive feature of Moses' Egyptian identity is the magical power that Moses uses in front of Pharaoh. Moses must understand the usefulness of magic from a perspective of Egyptian culture. To the Israelites, the magical signs are merely the signs of God's intervention,

⁴⁶ Mosheh Lichtenstein, *Moses: Envoy of God, Envoy of His People* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2008), 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

but to the Egyptians, magic is a useful tool to move the heart of Pharaoh. The book of Exodus describes the magical signs of Moses in chapters 7 to 12 to explain the avid responses of Pharaoh. Mordecai and Miriam Roshwald describe that “Moses, who must have known the Egyptian mentality from his years at the court, attacked the colossus in, so to speak, its Achilles’ heel. Acting the part of half-diviner, half-magician, he struck at the only vulnerable spot he knew of: the fears and the superstitions connected with the many natural disasters with which Egypt was afflicted and knew no way of controlling.”⁴⁸ Barbara Johnson also recognizes Moses’ approach to Pharaoh through his magical signs. Moses as an Egyptian knows that magic can be a great method to persuade Pharaoh:

Then what would it mean to see Moses as an Egyptian? One bone of connection would be the status of magic in the culture. Jewish tradition looks unfavorably on magic. It is thought to be a low form of religion. Yet the story of Moses is loaded with it. In Exodus, there is a battle of magics to make that point. In the battle between Moses’ magic and Egypt’s magicians, Moses wins when his serpent swallows up Egypt’s.⁴⁹

Moses’ Egyptian identity is as clear as his biological Jewish identity. In order to confront Pharaoh, Moses’ knowledge and experience with the Egyptian culture become a great help.

In Exodus 3 and 4, Moses and God have their lengthy arguments when God calls him as the liberating leader for Israel. Moses suspects that he may not be accepted by the Israelites: “But suppose they *do not believe me or listen to me*, but say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you’” (Exodus 4:1). Without confidence of his own identity as a Jew, Moses resists to accept God’s calling. After God shows some evidences of God’s power, Moses still makes an excuse: “O my Lord, I have *never been eloquent*, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am *slow of speech and slow of tongue* ... O my Lord, please *send someone else*” (Exodus 4:10-13). As a cross-cultural person who has left his own people and culture as an infant, Moses has neither Hebrew language proficiency nor solidarity with the Israelites. However,

⁴⁸ Mordecai and Miriam Roshwald, *Moses: Leader, Prophet, Man* (Cranbury, NJ: Thomas Yoseloff Publisher, 1969), 47.

⁴⁹ Barbara Johnson, *Moses and Multiculturalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 54-55.

careful readers easily recognize Moses' persuasive speech ability from his argument with God in Exodus 3 and 4. Even though he claims that he has "never been eloquent" and is "slow of speech and slow of tongue," Moses verifies himself as an eloquent speaker and adept negotiator in his argument with God. With his mention of "slow of speech and slow of tongue," I conjecture that Moses had Hebrew language barrier⁵⁰ as he grew up as an Egyptian.

God's calling and Moses' delayed obedience on Mount Horeb may be an expression of Moses' complicated inner state. The burning bush incident is the peak of Moses' identity tension as a Jew and an Egyptian. "But Moses said to God, '*Who am I* that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'" (Exodus 3:11). 'Who am I' is a crucial question that Moses had to ask for his identity as a Jew, not as an Egyptian. Moses asks the question when he is called from the God of Israel. 'Who am I' is a critical question for cross-cultural leaders as they confront their identity clash at crossing cultural borders. Moses as an adoptee of an Egyptian family must have struggled with his identity when he realized his Jewish identity. I imagine that Moses went through inner conflicts between Jewish and Egyptian identities. Even though he might have learned Hebrew language and history from his biological mother, he probably had an Egyptian accent in his Hebrew and could not fully understand his identity as a Jew. This is why he asks the question, "Who am I?" as a necessary process to become an integrative leader.

Moses' 'who am I' is also a genuine question of human reality. As an aged shepherd in the Midian wilderness, he constantly protests against God's calling. Once he was a prince of Egypt with the desire to control the nation, but now he is an ordinary person without power and authority. 'Who am I' is a satirical recognition of one's powerlessness. This is also a life quest that searches for Moses' maturing process, as he deepens the sense of God's calling and realizes God's ultimate plan for him and his people, the Israelites. "It is at Mount Sinai that Moses grows

⁵⁰ Leslie Newbiggin describes that "the most fundamental element in culture is language," in *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 185.

to his full stature, which transcends human proportions. It is at Mount Sinai that he becomes a prophet in the full sense of the word.”⁵¹

In the Old Testament tradition, God often acts directly in the life of God’s people. God expects the called people to willingly accept the calling. However, the called people sometimes do not accept God’s calling at first. They show a certain pattern of reluctance: “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy” (Jeremiah 1:6); “But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family” (Judges 6:15). Jeremiah and Gideon are also reluctant to act on God’s calling. However, there is a clear difference between Moses and these biblical characters who have been called out. While Moses has an identity question as a cross-cultural leader, they have no doubt about their identity as Jews. Accordingly, Moses’ reluctance seems to be different from that of other called servants. “His words may indicate a sense of doubt about his self-identity. Who indeed was he?... He had to know who he himself was before he could accept the responsibility confronting him.”⁵²

Moses faces a cultural dilemma as he did not have solidarity with the people of Israel. As he grew up as an Egyptian, he always used Egyptian as the primary language. Not only his language but also his costume and behavioral attitude were those of the Egyptians. Therefore, Moses must have a question on how to deal with his credentials among the Israelites. The Roshwalds ask important questions about the effect of Moses’ cultural dilemma: “Will [Moses’] people listen to him? Will he find a language that will spell authority, confidence, and obedience? Will he win the masses, stupefied by years of bondage, to his side and stir them to decision and to action? Will he overcome the opposition of the cynical and the incredulous? And then, it must be remembered that Moses was more Egyptian than Hebrew, at least in the eyes of the Hebrews.”⁵³

After a long argument with God, Moses returns to Egypt with his family, obeying God’s calling. While they come back to Egypt, his Midian wife, Zipporah, circumcises their son: “But

⁵¹ Mordecai and Miriam Roshwald, 105.

⁵² Dorothy Zeligs, *Moses: A Psychodynamic Study* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1986), 63.

⁵³ Mordecai and Miriam Roshwald, 60.

Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' feet with it" (Exodus 4: 25). This episode seems to be a strange anecdote, but it is a symbolic emphasis on the restoration of Moses' identity as a Jew. The circumcision of Moses' son implies that Moses has begun to restore his true Jewish identity. Lichtenstein characterizes the circumcision as a conversion experience for Moses to come back to God of his ancestors:

Prior to [Moses'] return to Egypt, however, comes the incident of his son's circumcision. This takes place on the way, at the inn where he is to spend the night. In light of what we have already explained, we should understand the urgency of having to circumcise his son on the road as part of the process of [Moses'] return to his people. In a sense, it parallels that role of circumcision in conversion.⁵⁴

In the Midian wilderness, Moses' personality takes on another cultural layer. After running away from the power and presence of Pharaoh, Moses dwells in the land of Midian for a long time. In the Midian desert, Moses rethinks his identity as a Jew and an Egyptian and deepens the meaning of his life journey. Eventually Moses receives a calling from God for the salvation of Israel at Mount Horeb. The life in Midian must have been a time of reflection and inner growth for Moses to nurture himself to become an integrative cross-cultural leader. In Midian, Moses encounters God and matures to lead the Israelites, not with his own leadership skills and power but with God's presence and authority. As he recognizes God as the God of his ancestors, Moses recovers a true Jewish identity.

In addition to personal growth and maturity, Moses' life in the Midian wilderness proves to be an asset while he guides the Israelites through the area. As he has spent many years as a shepherd in Midian, Moses must know the desert areas from corner to corner. Moses chooses a seemingly strange route for the Israelites toward the Promised Land – a route not easily understood by modern Christians because it is not a direct way to the land of Canaan. The Bible explains the direct reason as a military and political strategy, that is, the danger of encountering the Philistines: "When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer; for God thought, 'If the people face war, they may change

⁵⁴ Lichtenstein, 34.

their minds and return to Egypt.’ So God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea” (Exodus 13:17-18a).

“The mountain of God, Horeb” (Exodus 3:1) is another significant reason for Moses to steer the people of Israel into the wilderness. Moses first encounters God in the burning bush on Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai) and later receives God’s Ten Commandments there as well (Exodus 34:2). On Mount Horeb, the Israelites establish trust-relationship with God and renew their covenant relationship with God. Through the wilderness journey, Moses’ cross-cultural experience as an Egyptian and a Midianite eventually helps him grow and become an integrative Jewish leader.

Moses’ Midian experience also plays an important role for him to become an effective leader. He marries a Midianite wife, Zipporah, and has two sons. While Moses liberates the Israelites out of Egypt and leads them in the wilderness, his father-in-law, Jethro, looks after his wife and children. “After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro took her back, along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (“for he said, ‘I have been an alien in a foreign land’”), and the name of the other, Eliezer (“for he said, ‘The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh’”) (Exodus 18:2-4). His sons’ names imply Moses’ inner state: The first son’s name describes Moses’ loneliness as a stranger in the foreign land of Midian, while the second son’s name stands for the joy of being redeemed by God. The wilderness of Midian helps Moses rethink his identity as a Jew and Egyptian. In addition, it becomes a time of healing and renewal for Moses to clarify his identity and calling from the Lord.

To define Moses as a Midianite, I have noted the relationship between Moses and Jethro. Jethro is not only Moses’ father-in-law, but a spiritual director and leadership coach for him. Jethro’s influence is tremendous in Moses’ wilderness leadership. James Nohnberg describes

Jethro as the refuge for Moses from the danger of Pharaoh.⁵⁵ Jethro does not only provide him with physical safety but also with emotional security. Moses becomes a shepherd in Midian and finds inner peace from political conflict in Egypt. In particular, Jethro gives Moses the essential advice for his leadership development. Following Jethro's leadership coaching, Moses elects leaders and provides them with power and authority (Exodus 18:17-24). As Moses listens to Jethro, he obediently develops a leadership team: "So Moses *listened to* his father-in-law and *did all that he had said*" (Exodus 18:24). Lichtenstein recognizes that it is Moses' intentional effort to follow the advice of Jethro and to develop his leadership. "[Moses'] choice of Midian as his new home was no accident, and his long stay there was not simply because it was the first place he came to when he fled from Egypt. In fact, it is not that Midian fascinated him, but rather it was [Jethro], the priest and leader of Midian, whom he sought."⁵⁶ In this sense, Jethro's exemplary leadership model was another reason for Moses to lead the Israelites through the Midian wilderness.

As a cross-cultural leader, Moses' initial anxiety and doubt do not come from his appearance in front of Pharaoh but come from the fear of standing before his own people, the Israelites. Moses seems to have completely forgotten God's promise: "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12) and "they will listen to your voice" (Exodus 3:18). It is very interesting for me to observe Moses' relationship with the Israelites. In the beginning, Moses does not speak at all to the people of Israel. Rather, he totally relies on Aaron to communicate with the Israelites. As a cross-cultural person, Moses might be aware of his limited Hebrew proficiency. "Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. *Aaron spoke all the words* that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and performed the signs in the sight of the people. *The people believed*; and when they heard that the Lord had given heed to the Israelites and that he had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped" (Exodus 4:29-31). In the beginning process of liberating works,

⁵⁵ James Nohnberg, *Like Unto Moses: The Constituting of an Interruption* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 153.

⁵⁶ Lichtenstein, 19.

the names of Moses and Aaron are equally shown together: “After *Moses and Aaron* went to Pharaoh” (Exodus 5:1), “*Moses and Aaron*, why are you taking the people away from their work?” (Exodus 5:4), “The Lord said to *Moses and Aaron*,” (Exodus 7:8), “The Lord said to *Moses*, ‘Say to *Aaron*,’” (Exodus 7:19), “*Moses and Aaron* did just as the Lord commanded” (Exodus 7:20), and “The Lord said to *Moses and Aaron* in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:1).

Cross-cultural leaders often have mixed emotions about their identity. Duality of his cross-cultural identity might push Moses to the corner of lacking his confidence in front of the Israelites. “Moses, as we assume, was biologically a Hebrew but culturally, to a large extent, Egyptian, and spiritually, in conflicting between those two.”⁵⁷ Nohnberg points out Moses’ identity dilemma as a ‘Hebrew-Egyptian’ or an ‘Egyptian-Hebrew.’ As a cross-cultural person, Moses is fated to confront his dual identity:

The birth story is otherwise largely determined by its mediation of the Hebrew / Egyptian polarity found in the child’s dual extraction: Moses is alternatively and alternately Moshe. In Hebrew, he is drawn out – of Egypt. In Egyptian, he is born of – the Hebrews. Moses’ singularity is his duality, a Hebrew Egyptian and an Egyptian Hebrew.⁵⁸

If I draw a chart of Moses’ triple identity, it may represent three separate segments of cultural conflict. Moses struggles with his different identities in front of his people. The two main conflicting components are the identities as a Jew and an Egyptian. I divide Moses’ conflicting identities with three parts in figure 3.

⁵⁷ Zeligs, 65.

⁵⁸ Nohnberg, 135.

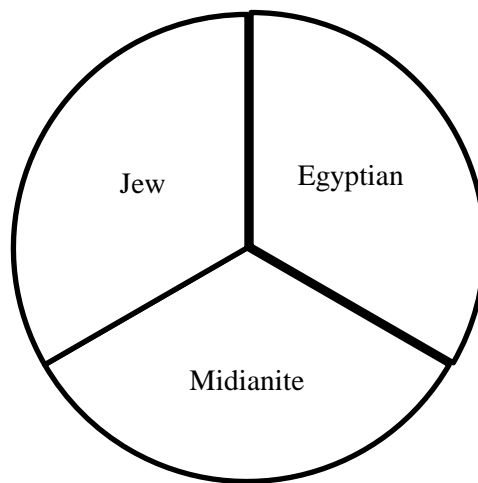


Figure 3. Moses' Separate Cross-Cultural Identities

In figure 3, Moses' immanent cultural identities are consciously or unconsciously conflicting and confronting against each other in tension. In this state, Moses considers the other culture a barrier to overcome or defeat. In other words, Moses' cultural diversity brings conflicting dilemma rather than integrative synergy. Many cross-cultural leaders often experience inner struggling with their different cultural identities as shown in figure 3.

Then how does Moses solve his cross-cultural conflict? John Lederach provides us with a clue from a new understanding of culture: "Culture is rooted in social knowledge and represents a vast resource, a rich seedbed for producing a multitude of approaches and models in dealing with conflict. If approached as a seedbed, culture can be excited, probed, and fed."⁵⁹ Out of Egypt, Moses begins to discover his cross-cultural identity as an asset for the Israelites. He absorbs knowledge, wisdom, and disciplines from his cross-cultural experiences and begins to understand culture as a 'seedbed' that can produce new subcultures or open a new possibility in different cultures. Instead of separating his cultural identities, Moses learns to integrate his cultural identity as a Jew, Egyptian and Midianite. As shown in figure 4, Moses develops an encompassing

⁵⁹ John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 120.

identity from all aspects of his cross-cultural experiences. In the core, he has a Jewish identity but accepts his Egyptian and Midianite identities as well. Through crossing cultural boundaries, Moses becomes an integrative leader to shepherd the Israelites through the wilderness journey. As a cross-cultural leader, his Egyptian and Midian cultural aspects become useful leadership reservoirs for Moses to become an effective cross-cultural leader for the Israelites.

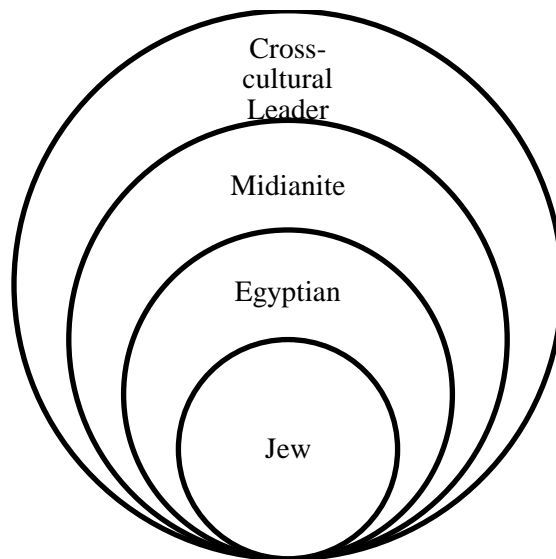


Figure 4. Moses' Integrated Cross-Cultural Identity

Through the wilderness journey with the Israelites, Moses develops his own leadership character which is based on his unique cross-cultural experience. Out of the dynamic interactions among the Jewish, Egyptian, and Midianite cultures, Moses creates a more imaginative leadership that integrates three different cultural components together. While he deeply anchors his identity as a Jew, Moses utilizes and integrates his Egyptian and Midianite cultural aspects for more effective leadership.

While Moses and the Israelites continue their journey in the wilderness, they begin to develop their relationships. The more they become close to one another, the more Moses discovers a strong leadership voice: “*Moses said to the people*” (Exodus 13:3); “Then the Lord

said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry out to me? *Tell the Israelites to go forward*’ (Exodus 14:15).

Moses’ leadership voice is finally heard and strengthened as he deepens his relationships with the Israelites. Moses’ leadership is based on his relationships with the people. “About six hundred thousand men besides children” (Exodus 12:37) journey with Moses and develop their relationships together. Moreover, “a mixed crowd” (Exodus 12:38) also leaves Egypt with them. “A mixed crowd” implies that the whole group of exodus includes diverse people who have different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They might be related to the Israelites with intermarriages or friendships. They might be some native Egyptians or other ethnic groups of slaves who were under the oppression from the Pharaoh. The important notification is that Moses has led a multicultural people. Moses’ cross-cultural identity as a Jew, Egyptian, and Midianite and his integrative leadership help him effectively relate and develop his relationships with those multicultural people.

b. Paul and Hybridity

Paul’s ‘hybrid leadership’⁶⁰ stems from a cross-cultural perspective. Paul grasps the particular circumstance of the Jewish Diaspora and the Gentiles from his cross-cultural background and builds up a new Christian community with the concepts of God’s household and the body of Christ. In the biblical tradition, God’s household has meant the Israelites whose ancestors made holy covenant with God. In other words, God’s household was limited to the chosen people of Israel. It was an ethnical, religious, and cultural group of the Jews, but Paul expands its meaning and opens a door for the Gentiles to be part of it. Through his missional and evangelical travels, Paul encounters diverse people in different regions. At first, Paul delivers the good news of Jesus Christ mainly to the Jewish Diaspora in synagogues and gradually expands his mission field to the Gentiles. As Paul states that he is called to “be a minister of Christ Jesus *to the Gentiles* in the

⁶⁰ George Barna defines leadership as “motivating, mobilizing, resourcing, and directing people to pursue a shared vision that produces positive transformation” in *Master Leaders: Revealing Conversations with 30 Leadership Greats* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 12. Here I use a term of hybrid leadership with which a leader has two or more different cultural components in his/her leadership from a cross-cultural context.

priestly service of the gospel of God” (Romans 15:16), Paul dedicates himself to become a cross-cultural missionary for the Gentiles.

Paul critically considers the contexts of the mission fields in the first century. With the influences of Greco-Roman culture and philosophy, many Gentiles in Asia Minor and Europe take pluralistic religious attitude, while the Jewish Diaspora keep their covenant as the chosen people. Through his bicultural background,⁶¹ Paul understands *both* the Gentiles *and* the Jewish Diaspora contexts and embraces them together. According to Eckhard Schnabel, Paul’s family maintained conservative ‘Hebrew’ traditions while living in the Greek Diaspora city of Tarsus, and Paul understood both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures. Due to his bicultural and at least bilingual capacity, Paul could function comfortably, without consciously ‘crossing over’ into one or the other culture, both in Jewish culture and in Greco-Roman culture.⁶² Paul’s bicultural background helps him comprehend the contexts of Gentiles in Asia and Europe, while Peter and other church leaders in Jerusalem might have lack of knowledge beyond the Jewish culture. I can infer that Paul’s bicultural background must be fertile ground for cultivating his cultural intelligence. Paul’s hybrid leadership is based on his cultural competence as a cross-cultural person.

Paul’s hybrid leadership is apparent in the letter to the church in Corinth. Paul explains how he adjusts and deals with two different cultures. In the letter, Apostle Paul practices an evangelical strategy for his missional purpose:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, *in order to win* Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) *so that I might win* those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) *so that I might win* those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, *so that I might win* the weak. I have *become all things to all people*, that I *might by all means save*

⁶¹ Bart Ehrman indicates that Paul’s bicultural background is apparent. However, he points out it is Luke’s opinion that Paul was from Tarsus: “Luke also claims that Paul was originally from the city of Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 22:3). Again, this is something that Paul himself never says a word about” in *Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene: The Followers of Jesus in History and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107.

⁶² Eckhard Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 329-330.

some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, *so that I may share* in its blessings” (1 Corinthians 9:20-23).

Paul’s phrases of “in order to win,” “so that I might win,” and “so that I may share” indicate his missional and evangelical strategy of hybridity. It is apparent that Paul’s purpose is to evangelize *both* the Jewish Diaspora *and* the Gentiles. He approaches them with different cultural methods to share the good news of Christ Jesus. Paul’s imaginative leadership skill for evangelizing ‘all people’ is a distinctive leadership competence based on his cultural hybridity.

Paul’s cross-cultural experience makes him thoughtfully aware of the cultural aspects as he preaches and teaches the Word of God to the Gentiles. In order to bring both the Jewish Diaspora and the Gentiles to the gospel of Christ Jesus, Paul carefully considers his audience. “Certainly he adapts his missionary sermons to the possibilities of comprehension of pagans, taking into account their religious and educational traditions. He evidently does not use quotations from Israel’s Scriptures or reviews of Israel’s history. He elaborates more vigorously on the nature of the God whom he proclaims.”⁶³ Paul’s adaptive preaching according to different audiences becomes an evidence of his effectiveness in hybrid leadership.

Acts 11:19-21 describes that the Antioch church consists of diverse ethnic and cultural people. It is the first heterogeneous congregation where the Jews and the Gentiles experience Christian solidarity and support the Jerusalem church with their generosity. Different from the Jewish religion, diverse people of Jews and Gentiles worshipped together and lived a radical life in the name of Jesus Christ. That is the reason why the members of Antioch church are called ‘Christians’ for the first time. Moreover, Antioch church forms a ‘team leadership’ model for today’s churches. There are prophets and teachers who have worked together as a ministry team. “Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul”

⁶³ Ibid., 397.

(Acts 13:1). It is striking for me to notice that the Antioch church leaders have very diverse social, racial, and cultural backgrounds and work together based on their spiritual gifts.

Even though the Gentiles were embraced into the fellowship of God's household in the Antioch church, subtle tension still existed between the Jews and the Gentiles. For example, in Galatians 2:11-14, Cephas (Peter) comes to Antioch and joins the Gentiles for eating with them. Eating food with the Gentiles was not a controversial issue in the multiethnic church of Antioch. However, when several representatives from Jerusalem church came to Antioch, Cephas withdraws and takes a separatist attitude against the Gentiles. Criticizing Peter's hypocritical behavior, Paul consistently affirms his ministry toward the Gentiles. To Paul, the Gentiles are the same heirs of God's household with the Jews. He announces that "you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). Paul reinterprets the household of God not with biological or ethnic privilege of Israel, but with the grace of Jesus Christ who has reconciled different people in the love of God. By the love of God in Jesus Christ, Paul confirms that the Gentiles also belong to the household of God.

Paul's distinctive leadership is deeply related to his hybridity. Paul used to see and understand everything with a conservative Jewish perspective. After encountering the Spirit of Jesus Christ, he begins to open his mind for the Gentiles. From his hybrid cultural experience, Paul takes an inclusive evangelical strategy of 'both A and B' as he reaches out to the diverse communities of the Jewish Diaspora and the Gentiles for the gospel of Jesus Christ. His flexible evangelical attitude and strategies toward diverse people are quite different from those of the early Christian leaders in Jerusalem who have focused on the evangelism for the Jews only. Paul's hybrid leadership based on his cross-cultural experience is magnified with his team leadership among diverse people to meet the needs of the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

2.3 A Missionary Scriptural Imagination

While I grew up in South Korea, I witnessed the church's evangelical movement and numerical growth. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Korean churches rapidly grew their membership and

sent many missionaries to other countries, including South Asia, Middle East, Africa, China and Russia. In order to reach out to the people of each tribe and nation, the Korean missionaries targeted particular mission fields based on the ‘Homogeneous Unit Principle Theory.’⁶⁴ The missionaries had special trainings for a local language and culture according to their mission field. The church leaders also studied their local communities with both demographic research and on-site surveys in order to specify and meet their missional needs. The missional and evangelical strategies based on the HUP produced fruitful harvest in the Korean church. However, they have also brought serious side effects such as excessive competition for numerical growth without cooperative spirit among local churches. In the U.S., many churches develop evangelical strategies based on the HUP theory as well. Is the HUP theory an effective and healthy missional model in multicultural and multiethnic context? What are its weaknesses for the mission of the church?

a. Beyond the Homogeneous Unit Principle

As I mentioned in Paul’s hybridity, the church in Antioch has a significant meaning because the disciples in Antioch were first called ‘Christians’ (Acts 11:26). Moreover, the church has consisted of heterogeneous groups of people:

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they *spoke the word to no one except Jews*. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, *spoke to the Hellenists also*, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. *The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers* and turned to the Lord. (Acts 11:19-21)

In Acts 7 and 8, Stephen is persecuted by the Jewish religious leaders, and his martyrdom becomes the beginning of persecution against Hellenist Christian believers, that is, Greek speaking Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. They are escaped from Jerusalem and scattered beyond Judea. Some of them travel even to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Even though they can speak

⁶⁴ Bruce Fong explains that the Homogeneous Unit Principle theory “describes the world as a ‘vast mosaic’ with each piece a homogeneous unit defined by its linguistic, ethnic, economic or other unique characteristic. It states that, ‘People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers,’” in *Racial Equality in the Church* (New York: University Press of America, 1996), xix. HUP is firstly articulated by a missiologist, Donald McGavran in 1971.

Greek, they mostly proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ only to the Jewish Diaspora in different regions because they are Jews and understand the Jewish culture and religion. However, some of them begin to share the gospel to the Hellenist pagans in Antioch. Surprisingly, many of them accept the Gospel and become the believers of Christ Jesus. Luke confesses that it has happened with the hand of the Lord. Reaching out to the people beyond the Jewish community *brings more people* to the church, and it is *the work of the Holy Spirit* in the early Christian history. In Antioch church, the Gentiles become Christians with other Jewish believers without circumcision and without following Jewish traditions. This particular missional experience becomes an example of the HUP.

The HUP theory emphasizes effectiveness in evangelism for missional creativity. “The theological option of a choice is clearly acknowledged by the HUP theory. To select it or some form of a heterogeneous option is in itself amoral. The question is not a matter of correctness but one of effectiveness and efficiency.”⁶⁵ The HUP theory provides a pragmatic church growth and evangelistic strategy to successfully reach out to the unchurched people. As I discussed earlier, human beings are ethnocentric, and it is more efficient for church people to invite those who have common backgrounds “without crossing racial, linguistic, and class barriers.”⁶⁶ The HUP theory seems to have its evangelical value and missional effectiveness. However, there are still some questions on the HUP theory as the missional and evangelical strategy for today’s church in multicultural contexts.

First, how does the HUP theory reflect on the possibility of transformation? “The HUP theory is emphatic about its perspective of mankind seen as a mosaic. And each part of the mosaic must be targeted for the Gospel. There will be no melting of all pieces into one. Rather,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁶⁶ Gary McIntosh and Alan McMahan, *Being the Church in a Multi-Ethnic Community: Why It Matters and How It Works* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2012), 107-108. McIntosh and McMahan explain that Donald McGavran emphasized the HUP as a creative principle for evangelism. As a missionary in India, McGavran taught people that they could be Christians “without changing family of origin, ethnic identity, or clan.”

‘... the red will remain red, the white will remain white, the purple will remain purple. But in each of the thousands of ethnic units *societies of the redeemed will multiply.*’⁶⁷ The HUP theory recognizes the uniqueness of each human unit as a distinctively created being. In fact, every church has characteristics of both homogeneity (unity) and heterogeneity (diversity). However, it seems to overlook the dynamics of interactions among different human units in Christ Jesus. While the HUP theory is a creative model for evangelical and missional entrance, it does not fully explain the fellowship among different Christian units.

Moreover, the HUP theory does not project a possibility of transformation and new creation with the power of the Holy Spirit. The HUP premises that human units are like distinctive mosaics such as skin color and sexual orientation, but they may not remain the same. I have a white member who has four children. Through adoption, her Asian daughter has a new identity. Even though she looks Asian with a dark skin, she belongs to her American family. The HUP also limits the meaning of ‘the redeemed’ to the converted from non-Christians to Christianity. However, when people truly experience the love of Christ Jesus in a much deeper level, their life can be totally transformed. The HUP theory does not recognize the quality change in human units because it focuses on the early stage of evangelical practicality without crossing one’s cultural, racial, and social boundaries.

Second, is the HUP theory really an efficient missional strategy in a multicultural context? The HUP theory points out the possible failure of evangelistic movement of a heterogeneous group option to become a more diverse congregation because “few non-Christians from outside the congregation are likely to be attracted to such a heterogeneous community.”⁶⁸ In this statement, I recognize the common assumption of human ethnocentrism. Even though the HUP theory “acknowledges that the unity of the Church is taught [in Galatians 3:28] but perceives it as

⁶⁷ Fong, 37.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 33.

an ideal, not real in this life.”⁶⁹ However, Mark DeYmaz claims that the multiethnic church which is a heterogeneous congregation is a ‘biblical mandate.’⁷⁰ Rather than seeing the HUP theory and the multiethnic ministry from a conflicting viewpoint, church leaders need to embrace both homogeneous and heterogeneous models together and create a new missional way which has more holistic understanding on the church’s mission and the works of the Holy Spirit.

While many churches seek diversity and inclusiveness in cultural crossroads, most of them still remain homogeneous churches⁷¹ with similar racial and socioeconomic members. Is it not possible for them to embody Christian solidarity with different people? The experience of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-12 teaches today’s churches that the presence of the Holy Spirit always connects and unites different people. Solidarity is “the starting place where people make a commitment and come together. It is where we learn ‘who is with me’ and ‘where do I cast my lot’ with others for mutual advocacy on behalf of justice and hope for healing.”⁷² By standing together with others, church leaders can help their church cultivate intimacy and trust-relationships among different people.

Many Christians often claim that “everyone is welcomed in my church” and that “we are a welcoming people.” The motto of the UMC also emphasizes ‘openness’ toward diverse people. However, welcoming others is not easy, and building relationships among different people is even harder. Charles Foster analyzes why visitors feel that they are not welcomed in the church. He discovers at least two reasons: “First, the explicit and implicit messages of welcome may contradict each other....[Second], the congregation may greet visitors but not include them.”⁷³ I agree that Foster’s analysis is valid and helpful for church leaders to revisit their welcoming and hospitality ministries. If greeters, ushers, and pastors officially welcome visitors, but church

⁶⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁰ Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 40.

⁷¹ Usually a congregation is identified as a multicultural or multiethnic church if a dominant racial and cultural group is less than 80% of the whole congregation.

⁷² Thornton, 128.

⁷³ Foster, 56-57.

members do not care or use only ‘inside language’ for themselves, it is true that the church still excludes visitors. As long as church people say to newcomers, “you would be welcomed and embraced if you do what we do,” the church does not welcome nor embrace them.

Even in multicultural congregations, church members tend to be simply satisfied with the fact that they include diverse people in the church. Christians often think that it is enough for them to worship God among diverse people. Having some ethnic persons in their church, many Christians feel that they fulfill the commandment of Christ Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. However, if there are no deeper connections or interacting relationships among them, Christians may not experience solidarity. Frank Eastham criticizes lukewarm gathering among diverse people in the church communities without building relationships:

Being *close* to people from other cultures is *not enough*. In a world that is increasingly diverse, we can sometimes mislead ourselves to believe that just because we live, shop, attend school or even church with people from different backgrounds, we are ministers of reconciliation. This, however, is not true.⁷⁴

Eastham’s insight inspires us to move toward building deeper relationships and developing intentional engagements with others. Christians are not only to acknowledge or understand the needs of solidarity with others but also to act out what they know and believe in daily lives.

Welcoming strangers and making them neighbors may bring some challenges such as uneasiness, tension, and conflict to a Christian community. However, building relationships with different people is not a problem but an opportunity for the church to embody the reality of Christ’s love and presence. Accepting others opens a new possibility that Christians may experience the grace of God. Joerg Rieger shares his deeper insight on ‘loving neighbor as yourself’:

An alternative way of interpreting Jesus’ commandment to love one’s neighbor as oneself, a way deeply rooted in the logic of the Old Testament, grows out of understanding that the neighbor is a part of oneself: ‘Love your neighbor as *being part of yourself*.’ In other words, the self is not fully human without others. Here the self and others enter into a relationship that becomes mutual. In the relation to the neighbor the self is challenged, transformed, and opened up.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Eastham, 41.

⁷⁵ Joerg Rieger, *God and the Excluded: Visions and Blind Spots in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 191-192.

When a Christian community builds solidarity among different people, the people in it may experience the love of Christ and be transformed as the disciples of Christ by acting the Word of God. Solidarity is to listen to and learn from each other, break down the walls between them, and stand together side by side in mutual support among diverse individuals and groups.

Establishing solidarity in the church requires intentional efforts for church leaders to teach and promote the spirit of Christ's inclusive love. Solidarity among diverse people in a Christian community is not an accidental byproduct of ministry, but an outcome of intentional practice for God's mission. Some evangelists believe that the more they have converting Christians, they will automatically solve the problems of racism and division. However, without intentional education and constant practice of embracing others, they cannot accomplish solidarity in the diverse Christian community.

As Robert Wilken states that "life directed toward God is always social,"⁷⁶ church's mission for solidarity in divisive and estranged relationships is an imperative task. The racial issue between black and white has profound historical background. Although there has been great progress to remove visible and intentional racial discrimination, it is significant for Christians to notice 'white privilege' among different races. The critical remarks of Allan Boesak and Curtiss DeYoung on white privilege are very meaningful in order to build a new relationship among church communities:

Persons of color often live and work in a society dominated by whites and white cultural ways, so they know much about whites. Few whites have a deep knowledge of other cultures or have experience that creates an understanding of racism and prejudice. Most do not know the ways of African American, ethnic immigrant, or Native American churches (except for some stereotypes). One of the challenges for white congregations attempting to become diverse is that they do not know how to create healing communities for people of color. Therefore, people of color can experience unintentional slights and racism due to ignorance and white privilege in congregations becoming 'reconciled' and multicultural.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 207.

⁷⁷ Boesak and DeYoung, 88.

Leslie Picca points out ‘colorblindness’ because “whiteness is invisible, expected, and the norm”⁷⁸ in the U.S. This implies that every church community needs to be aware of racial issues and have intentional education and dialogues among diverse members. Michael Emerson and Christian Smith even diagnose the U.S. as a racialized society which is “a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships”⁷⁹ and warn Christian communities that “racial division, hostility, and inequality are the result of sin.”⁸⁰

Gender is another sensitive issue inside the church. If we consider radical relationships of Jesus with women in the gospels, it is surprising to see that women are still excluded and limited from today’s church leadership. Women played significant roles in Jesus’ ministry. For example, they were women who discovered the empty tomb (Matthew 28:1) and witnessed the resurrection of Jesus at first (Matthew 28:8-9). Nevertheless, women have been treated as sinners and inferior beings in the Christian history due to the misinterpretation of several biblical texts such as Genesis 3:6 (“...she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.”) and Ephesians 5:22-24 (“...For the husband is the head of the wife... so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands”). Moreover, God’s paternity has been misunderstood as masculine nature, and the distorted understanding on the theology of God has pushed women to the margin in the church and made them less visible and excluded from church leadership. Gender issues are still an important matter for women’s rights and equal opportunities in church leadership.

Lay and clergy solidarity also needs to be highlighted. According to 1 Peter 2:9a, every Christian believer is called to a holy living as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,

⁷⁸ Leslie Picca, “Race and Social Context: Language, ‘Colorblindness,’ and Intergroup Contact” in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times*, eds., Dennis Doyle, Timothy Furry, and Pascal Bazzell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 122.

⁷⁹ Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

God's own people." There is no division of ordained or lay among Christians, and all believers are anointed by the Spirit of God to do the ministry of God according to their gifts. In the book of Acts and the Pauline letters, we discover that Paul always makes a leadership team and works together. Even Jesus calls twelve persons who do not have theological education or religious training and makes them his disciples. In Mark 6:7, Jesus sends them with authority to villages for God's ministry. In particular, lay leadership has been a distinguished characteristic of American Methodism. "Methodism could not have grown in numbers and expanded geographically apart from lay preachers...It was lay preachers who first introduced the Wesleyan message of God's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace to vast areas of the United States."⁸¹ Doing God's mission is the task of the entire church regardless of ordination status. All Christian believers need to undertake the mission of God with their spiritual gifts and to actively participate in building Christian solidarity as royal priests.

In addition, solidarity among citizens and aliens (status issue), different age groups (generational gap issue), haves and have-nots (economic and class issue), and heterosexuals and LGBTQ (sexual orientation issue) must be theologically dealt with in the church. Despite the fact that some Christians may feel discomfort with solidarity among different cultural groups, church leaders need to ask right questions rather than finding easy answers. The theological discourse for Christian solidarity will guide a church community to a deeper level of maturity beyond the HUP strategy.

b. Cross-Bearing Community

In order to renew the church's identity today, let me begin with two premises: first, the church stands firm in the gospel of Jesus Christ (missional foundation); second, the church reflects its larger community (missional imagination). Accepting these two conditions, the role of church leaders is to creatively interpret the surrounding context based on the teachings and life of Jesus Christ. Jack Barentsen claims that "leaders are artists of identity. Leaders exercise their influence

⁸¹ Lovett Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 61.

by directing the social identification of group members, so they create and present a vision of social identity as a compelling cognitive alternative to the status quo.”⁸²

As an alternative missional model, I would like to present the cross-bearing community. The cross of Jesus is the symbol of love, sacrifice, forgiveness, reconciliation, and resurrection, but “Christ, not the cross, is the Savior.”⁸³ ‘Cross-bearing’ is a faithful commitment of disciples not to conform to the world but to participate in the suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ, carrying their own cross. According to Miroslav Volf, Jesus’ suffering represents the sufferings of the marginalized: “The sufferings of Christ on the cross are not just his sufferings; they are ‘the sufferings of the poor and weak, which Jesus shares in his own body and in his own soul, in solidarity with them.’”⁸⁴ In this sense, ‘cross-bearing’ is to seek peace and reconciliation with the people on the edge as well as God. By taking up the cross of Christ Jesus and standing for the marginalized, ‘church goers’ can grow and become disciples who are reconciled with God and others.

Today’s drastic change and frequent mobility isolate and disconnect Christian believers from their common grounds, and diverse people and cultural dynamics bring different values and identities in multicultural communities. As the body of Christ, churches have more diverse members who have estranged and broken relationships. The cross of Jesus can connect them to the love of God and heal them by renewing their Christian identity as forgiven and reconciled people. Church is a living community in which Christian believers realize their identity as a relational and interwoven organic body by reflecting the triune God. Efrain Agosto claims that the cross is an effective formational tool for a Christian community, serving “as a potent symbol

⁸² Jack Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission: A Social Identity Perspective on Local Leadership Development in Corinth and Ephesus* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 56.

⁸³ Stephen Finlan, *Options on Atonement in Christian Thought* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007), 86.

⁸⁴ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Explorations of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 22.

for community formation.”⁸⁵ As the cross stands for both suffering and glory of Christ Jesus, cross-bearing disciples may recognize each other’s pain, failure, and dejection in an organic community in which Christ’s love is filled among diverse people of God.

What are some characteristics of the cross-bearing community as a new identity of the 21st century church? First, bearing the cross is a living Christian vocation. To be the church is to carry out the mission of Christ Jesus who commands his disciples to “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow [Jesus]” (Matthew 16:24b). Deanna Thompson says that Christian vocation is to “join with those who suffer, those who are broken, those who are in pain.”⁸⁶ The cross-bearing community reminds disciples of intentional openness toward different cultures and people. Bearing the cross of Jesus is to open a new relationship with God and others. As Christians bear their cross, they may renew their life vocation to transform the world’s brokenness and division with the love of God. Cross-bearing is for disciples to die with Christ Jesus in order to enliven others in sacrificial obedience.

Second, the church as a cross-bearing community emphasizes mutual acceptance and interdependence. A cross-bearing church needs to equally and peaceably embrace one another. Regardless of one’s gender, race, socioeconomic status, and nationality, the church needs to recognize people’s identity as God’s co-heirs who are one and equal parts of the body of Christ Jesus. From my perspective of Korean culture in which community was always prior to individuals, I have sensed that many Americans prefer an ‘independent’ and ‘private’ lifestyle. They cherish their own private space and respect other persons’ freedom as well. However, Christian theology teaches us a new lifestyle of ‘interdependence.’ Christians work together in partnership and rely on each other in mutual trust. A Chinese character for human (人), which ‘looks like two sticks leaning on each other to sustain a balance,’ well stands for Christian interdependency. Paul’s proclamation on “the debt to love” (Romans 13:8) needs to be revalued

⁸⁵ Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2005), 105.

⁸⁶ Deanna Thompson, *Crossing the Divide: Luther, Feminism, and the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 160.

and reemphasized in the spirit of interdependence in the cross-bearing community. Even Jesus was dependent on his friends for his daily bread and place to live, and we also need to be interdependent and sustain our life together in mutual trust-relationships.

Third, the synthesis of '*both A and B*' is a distinctive characteristic of the cross-bearing community. God's grace and salvation include all people of God in '*both A and B*': Both the haves and have-nots, both the educated and less educated, both the old and young, both white and black, both red and yellow, both men and women, both hetero and gay, both powerful and powerless, both citizens and aliens, and so on. When the missional principle of '*both A and B*' is cherished, people begin to build relationships and develop a new community. For instance, many Christians tend to assume that social justice and reconciliation belong to liberal churches and that pneumatological movement and evangelism belong to conservative churches. However, 'either A or B' mindset cannot build a true community. The cross-bearing community is a hybrid community in which the beauty of '*both A and B*' without exclusion grows missional imagination centered on Christ who mediated between God and humans. "The greatest contribution anyone can make to the building up of the Church is to acquire the mind of Christ."⁸⁷ In order to mirror the mind of Christ, church leaders need to be aware of a danger that many multicultural congregations might be established on 'the white privilege.' The '*both A and B*' church community promotes not only inclusiveness attitude but also reconciling spirit among diverse members. As the church means 'called out,' church leaders need to build a new community beyond familiarity, kinship relationship, and power oriented exclusion. The cross-bearing community is to embody the mind and spirit of Christ Jesus.

⁸⁷ S.T. Kimbrough, ed., *Orthodox and Wesleyan Ecclesiology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 264.

Chapter 3. Congregational Studies

3.1 Theoretical Framework

a. Selection of Cases

For congregational studies to learn more from both clergy and lay leadership in cross-cultural contexts, I selected five United Methodist churches in North and South Carolina and interviewed the pastors and lay leaders of those churches. As the cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are based on the UMC's open itineracy, I chose the interviewees within the UM congregations. I also confined the study cases in North and South Carolinas with two reasons: One was a practical reason of proximity. I live in North Carolina, and it was manageable for me to travel and have one-on-one interviews with the local church leaders. The other was a theological and cultural reason. The issues of racism, cultural diversity, and gender are still problematic in the South Eastern regions of the U.S. By selecting five churches and interviewing their clergy and lay leaders, I wanted to know how those issues are handled in the local churches.

In order to have a balance of ethnic and cultural diversity in my congregational studies, I selected two Caucasian pastors (a female and a male), two African American pastors (a female and a male), and an Asian pastor (a female): A female Caucasian pastor works for Spanish speaking ministry in a large Caucasian congregation as a deacon; a male Caucasian pastor serves an African American congregation with another appointment at a Caucasian congregation (two point charge); a female African American pastor is the senior pastor of a Caucasian congregation; a male African American pastor serves a Caucasian congregation with another appointment at an African American congregation (two point charge); and a female Asian pastor serves a Caucasian congregation as an associate pastor. Three churches are located in suburban areas, and two churches are in rural areas. They are two large membership congregations, one medium size church, and two small membership churches. Two pastors are associate pastors (two female pastors), and three pastors are senior/solo pastors (one female and two male pastors). Two pastors

have served under cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment for more than ten years, and three pastors have less than five years of experience. Five lay leaders are Staff Parish Relations Committee chairpersons or members of each church. All of them have been in their churches more than ten years and have deep understandings on their church contexts.

b. Method

‘Relationship’ was the key word in my congregational studies. My local church ministry has provided me with an insight on the significance of ‘relationship-building.’ In the process of developing the cross-cultural leadership, I wondered how cross-cultural leaders have developed their relationships with God and others. Therefore, I met and interviewed them in a one-on-one basis and listened to their stories, building my relationships with them. This on-site interview was an effective method to understand cross-cultural leaders’ relationship-building. I spent on average one and a half hours with each clergy and lay leader at a separate time.

All the interviews were done in the church facilities – mostly at pastor’s offices for clergy and at church parlors or meeting rooms for lay leaders – and it gave me opportunities to look around their church facilities and bulletin boards. By looking around the church facilities, I could imagine the churches’ weekday or weekend activities and worship styles. I also tried to observe visual arts, pictures, or church mottos/vision statements on diversity and inclusiveness on their bulletin boards. The whole interview process was recorded with a voice recorder with the interviewees’ permission.

My primary topics were cultural awareness and intelligence, leadership characteristics of cross-cultural ministry, challenges and hopes of their ministries, future vision of the church, and pastoral leadership networking. In order to have effective conversations and interviews, I prepared a questionnaire in advance, but our interviews were not limited to it. In addition, I asked of their cross-cultural leadership development methods, mentorship and leadership training opportunities, intentional efforts for reconciliation, and supports from the annual conference or district office.

3.2 Practicalities

a. On-Site Interviews

As I learned that leaders are to seek right questions rather than giving right answers, I endeavored to create appropriate questions in order to have a better grasp on the cross-cultural ministry in North and South Carolina of the UMC. Basically I asked the same questions to the clergy and lay interviewees about the value and significance of the cross-cultural ministry and cultural diversity. According to their leadership roles and contexts, I slightly altered questions for lay leaders and pastors. For example, the questions in parentheses were asked to the lay leaders. The fifteen interview questions are as follows:

1. Could you share a brief story of your spiritual journey?
2. Why is the cross-cultural ministry meaningful in your journey? (Why is the cross-cultural ministry meaningful for your church?)
3. What are theological values of the cross-cultural ministry? Does your congregation fully accept and support you as their pastor? (Does your congregation fully accept and support your pastor?)
4. What are your leadership strengths? (What are your pastor's leadership strengths?)
5. What are your weaknesses? (What are your pastor's weaknesses in leadership?)
6. What do you see as obstacles or barriers for cross-cultural ministry in your church?
7. What kind of intentional efforts have you made to overcome those barriers or obstacles? (What kind of intentional efforts have your pastor and church leadership team made to overcome those barriers or obstacles?)
8. What does it mean for you to be 'black' or 'white' or 'Asian' in your congregation? (What does it mean for your pastor to be 'black' or 'white' or 'Asian' in your church? Does his/her racial difference matter in your church?)
9. Do you think you have full authority as the pastor, regardless of your race and gender? (Does your church give full authority to your pastor, regardless of his/her race and gender?)

10. What kind of worship style do you have at your church? Does it reflect on your cultural aspects or your distinctive style? (Does your worship reflect on your pastor's cultural aspects or style?)
11. What kind of changes do you want to see at your church in the future?
12. Do you have any cross-cultural leadership network? (Does your pastor have a cross-cultural leadership network?)
13. Has your district or conference provided a training session before or after you came to this church? (Has your district or conference provided a training session for your church members as you received a pastor who has different ethnic and cultural background from your congregation?)
14. What kind of support have you received from the annual conference or district office?
15. What is a surprise about the 'white' or 'black' or 'Latino' congregation? Have you discovered any surprises? (What is a surprise about your 'white' or 'black' or 'Asian' pastor?)

During the interview, I engaged the interviewees with a game. I showed them ten index cards with the inventory list of cross-cultural competencies shown in table 2. Then I asked them to choose three top priorities that their churches most needed in order to have better cultural awareness and acceptance. Interestingly, no church clergy and lay leaders chose the same three cards.

Cross-Cultural Competencies	
Communication skills	Tolerance for ambiguity
Empathy	Flexibility
Ability to succeed in multiple and diverse environments	Ability to adopt a dual focus: focus on both task and relationship

Tolerance for different styles and cultures	Positive attitude to learning
Cultural knowledge	Open-mindedness

Table 2. Inventory of Cross-Cultural Competencies⁸⁸

Through the interview sessions, I discovered that each clergy and lay leader has different spiritual gifts and strengths. Interestingly, there were different perspectives on the same issue between clergy and lay leaders. As United Methodists, they shared a common missional vision for reaching out to more diverse cultural people but shared different opinions on how to embrace and include others in their churches.

3.3 Analysis of Congregational Studies

a. Realities

Through the in-depth interview sessions, I recognized the current state of cross-cultural ministry, heard concerns and hope for diversity and unity, and perceived the passionate hearts for solidarity and reconciliation among lay and clergy leaders. I would like to present some common issues that all five churches' clergy and lay leaders shared, and add a few specific concerns from the particular cases. First, lay leaders and clergy have different perspectives on the cross-cultural ministry. While the interviewees have shared their positive experiences of their cross-cultural ministries, I have also realized that clergy and lay have different expectations. Surprisingly enough, both lay and clergy have affirmed their positive relational experiences with their cross-cultural pastors and congregations. Despite their racial and cultural differences, they have not found any serious obstacles or barriers for cross-cultural ministry in their contexts. In every church, only a few church members have opposed the cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment or left the church due to the same reason. "When I, a black and female pastor, came to this church

⁸⁸Earley and Ang, 264.

(a white congregation), two couples decided to leave the church. But one couple came back in the following year, and they are very active now,” said a black female senior pastor. Most church members have carefully welcomed their pastor who has a different racial and cultural background from them. As they built up their personal relationships, according to the lay interviewees, different race or culture did not matter at all. A lay leader mentioned that “there were some tension in the beginning, but it turned out to be nothing.” The greatest benefit of the cross-cultural ministry was that the church could really focus on the spiritual matter beyond cultural and racial differences. An Asian pastor said, “I came to the church not as an ethnic pastor but a Christian pastor. I am just a spiritual leader for my people.” I have learned that both clergy and lay leaders considered cultural and racial issues a human thing and that those issues could be overcome by the grace of Christ Jesus.

However, I also sensed that lay and clergy leaders had different focuses on cross-cultural ministry. While clergy leaders had more pastoral passion for theological and ecclesial values of the cross-cultural ministry, lay leaders wanted to minimize the problematic issues in their churches. In other words, clergy emphasized vision for diversity focused on different gifts and ethnicity, and lay leaders showed passion for church’s unity based on commonality. While a pastor said, “I want to help my congregation make a difference and be changed from the past,” a lay leader of the church said to me, “I think that the best way of change is one on one basis. It must take time in order to bring changes. Otherwise, people will be confused!” This difference has caused different strategies for developing cultural diversity and unity in their church. For example, in regard to ‘change’ issues in their church, the clergy envisioned a broader and radical cultural transformation, while the lay leader preferred gradual and evolutionary changes. The different perspective between them might be related to the denomination’s appointment system in which a pastor usually stays at the current appointment only for certain years.

Second, both clergy and lay leaders did not have appropriate access to resources for cross-cultural ministry. Even though the *Discipline* clearly describes “cross-racial and cross-

cultural appointments” and “the specific training”⁸⁹ for the spirit of inclusiveness, only two out of five churches had an official training session at the district level. In fact, the lay leaders did not know if their pastor had any network connection with other pastors who are also in the cross-cultural ministry. In terms of informational knowledge and network on cross-cultural ministry, both clergy and lay leaders did not have enough access to them. Lack of financial resources was one of the reasons that the pastors could not participate in the workshop or conference for cross-racial or cross-cultural ministry in the General Conference level. There are available scholarships and grants for ethnic minority leaders and congregations in the UMC and outside the denomination, but many church leaders have not utilized those resources for their leadership development.

Third, most churches are at their infant stage in cultural diversity and inclusiveness. On the individual level, the whole interviewee group was very open-minded and passionate about the cross-cultural ministry. When I asked them of their intentional efforts in the church level, however, most of them could not clearly articulate what they have done or plan to do for advocating diversity and inclusiveness. I agree that individual interactions and personal conversations are the most effective way for church leaders to influence the whole congregation. At the same time, church leaders need to initiate communal movements for cultural and racial diversity and unity beyond individual levels. I perceived that the interviewed churches are still in the early state for advocating and embracing different racial and cultural people. Church leaders must consistently develop and promote cultural diversity and inclusiveness. Moreover, they need to work harder to go beyond inclusiveness toward reconciliation. As the UMC has an itinerant system, the ministry of reconciliation which takes much longer time with systematic and political efforts, must be encouraged by the leaders of the annual conference and the General Conference as well as by the local church leaders.

⁸⁹ *Discipline*, 338.

Fourth, the church leaders need to develop more creative imagination and practice cultural celebrations in the local churches and communities. Several pastors and lay leaders have shared some creative ideas such as multicultural or interracial community services for Lenten season, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas; community gardens for local residents; intercultural food fellowship; adopting creative arts in worship service and various prayer services in different traditions; bilingual worship services; inviting missionaries and listening to other cultural stories, and including ethnic minority members in the worship services. The more we create new opportunities, the more people may be exposed to cultural diversity and become acceptable. In order to practice diverse cultural diversity and missional imagination, network development among those cross-cultural churches and leaders is indispensable.

Fifth, our fear of racial and cultural differences may not be real. Most of the interviewees have told me that they have not experienced much surprise from the cross-cultural ministry. They witnessed that some members had assumed that a different cultural and racial pastor or ethnic members would bring more confusions and conflicts. Surprisingly enough, however, both lay and clergy interviewees told me that cultural difference did not really matter in their churches. A lay leader talked about fear: “When we received the first female African American senior pastor in our church (white congregation), there were some people who believed that a woman should not be the head pastor. I talked to my pastor. ‘Don’t be afraid of silence, gap, and vacant space. Be more attentive at listening to God, and everything will be fine.’ When we let fear go away, we could trust more on God.” In fact, people often have ‘assumed fear’ of the cross-cultural ministry because they simply do not know other cultures and races. In each church, I heard that a few members have left the church because they did not like the possible changes with a cross-cultural leader. ‘Cultural ignorance’ and ‘assumed fear’ may be the enemies in dealing with various issues in the cross-cultural ministry. As the church leaders witnessed, however, the fear from unknown or unfamiliar cultures may not be real or can be overcome by intentional leadership efforts.

In addition, there were a few more concerns from different cross-cultural contexts: A pastor was financially subsidized by the district mission funds in regard to her pastoral compensation. The pastor said, “the whole congregation may not fully support the cross-cultural ministry here because they don’t have any financial responsibilities.” A female pastor shared her deep concern on the gender issue at a local church. She mentioned, “my gender is already controversial in the South even before I am recognized as an ethnic minority.” Another pastor mentioned of a stereotype as she ministers to those who have not met many ethnic minorities. “People often ask me where I am from even though I grew up here in this country.” Another pastor shared his hardship to officiate at his first funeral service in the cross-cultural setting. “I attended several black church funeral services to learn how they do funerals.”

b. Foundation for Cross-Cultural Leadership

During the interview process with clergy and lay leaders, I thought of my first cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment. In retrospect, it was like I had jumped into the river of cross-cultural ministry without knowing how to swim. I thought it would be enough for me to love and serve the people of God with my good work ethic and dedicated faith, as I had a theological education and a pastoral heart. Somehow, I trusted that God would help me with God’s abundant grace, and yes, I have survived and witnessed the overflowing grace of God in my ministry. At the same time, however, I have realized how it would be dangerous for me to jump into God’s ministry without adept leadership skills and critical strategies. The ministry is not an issue of personal survival but a crucial matter for saving others’ lives in the worldly cultural flood. Ronald Heifetz emphasizes a critical issue of strategic thinking on crossing cultural boundaries. He says that “leadership requires asking the critical question, who should play a part in the deliberations, and in what sequence?”⁹⁰ In order to produce a fruitful harvest in cross-cultural ministry, church leaders need to ask critical questions and make plausible strategic plans. I would like to discuss

⁹⁰ Ronald Heifetz, “Operating Across Boundaries,” in *Crossing the Divide: Intergroup Leadership in a World of Difference*, ed., Todd Pittinsky (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 133.

the foundation for imaginative leadership in the cross-cultural ministry based on the congregational studies.

a) Strengthen Inner Being (Ephesians 3:16-17)

Serving the people of God in a cross-cultural context is a risk-taking ministry because it is a road less taken by other Christian leaders. It is also a joyful adventure in which people may encounter a new culture, discover unfamiliar lifestyles, and comprehend a bigger picture of humanity and God. At the same time, cross-cultural leaders may become humbled with their ignorance of other cultures and more dependent on God's grace. In this exploring process, church leaders will need imaginative leadership that has flexible negotiation skills and open-minded attitude toward new and unfamiliar cultural expectations. It may require that cross-cultural leaders be positioned on the margin. Meeting others at a cultural crossroad may make cross-cultural leaders confused with their own identity as well. As a proactive strategy, cross-cultural leaders may want to develop a 'universal' identity that is transcendent beyond their own specific cultural contexts. Seeking a transcendent identity will be a useful strategic method for cross-cultural leaders to shape a more mature Christian community beyond the existing cultural division and conflict.

However, when a cross-cultural leader loves and serves people in an unfamiliar context, he/she needs to be anchored in his/her own specific identity. "Being strengthened in your inner being" (Ephesians 3:16) is a crucial foundation for imaginative leadership in the cross-cultural ministry. 'Inner being' is one's authenticity and integrity through Jesus Christ's dwelling. When Christ abides in us, we are empowered and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. In order to build up authentic relationships with other people, a cross-cultural leader must clearly identify who he/she is in the 'relationship'⁹¹ with Christ. Without the leader's truthful identity in the relationship with God, he/she cannot have an authentic leadership voice. In this sense, the leader's assertive voice is heard only when the leader affirms his/her 'inner being' in the grace of God. In the cross-

⁹¹ Richard Heitzenrater understands the grace of God as a relational concept. According to him, grace is "God's relationship with us, his activity in our lives, grounded in his loving attributes directed toward us" in *Orthodox and Wesleyan Ecclesiology*, ed., Kimbrough, 125.

cultural ministry, it is crucial for a church leader to listen to others and respect their opinions. Above all, affirming the leader's authentic identity in Christ Jesus is a necessary process to find an assertive voice for leading others who are confused and lost in the pluralistic world. During the interview sessions, all five clergy leaders have confirmed that authentic identification of 'who I am in Christ' is the anchor for their cross-cultural ministries. An African American pastor clearly articulated his identity: "We are to appreciate where we are from. But I am an African American. I will be always black! Wherever I am, I am me. While I serve a white congregation, I am still black. At the same time, whatever differences we have between my congregation and me, we are bound by fundamental unity in Christ."

b) Do Not Give Up (Galatians 6:9)

As church leaders continue to serve the Lord, there are moments of burn-out, disappointment, and frustration. Today's ministry condition is complex and requires many responsibilities for church leaders inside and outside the church. Most pastors are asked to do many different pastoral duties as generalists. One of the interviewees criticized the contradicting requirement of the church with an oxymoron: "My church looks for a 30 year old pastor who has 30 years of ministry experience." In particular, cross-cultural ministry brings about more stress, burdens, and responsibilities because cross-cultural leaders are often asked to be excellent at both relationship-building and pastoral tasks. It is the same for lay leaders to deal with sensitive issues in cross-cultural contexts. As a rule, it is the SPRC chairperson who has to mediate a controversial issue between clergy and the congregation, both supporting the pastor and listening to the congregation.

Leadership competence of 'either relationship or task' does not work in the cross-cultural context. Both building close relationships and exceeding at pastoral tasks are essential to build a healthy cross-cultural church. Therefore, cross-cultural leaders are usually exposed to be overworking. They have to keep their pastoral hearts for diversity, solidarity, and reconciliation among different people while they practice ordinary pastoral ministry such as visitation, counseling, and leading Bible study and worship services. During the interviews, several pastors

and lay leaders have emphasized the importance of pastoral care in cross-cultural ministry. A pastor pointed out the importance of pastoral heart for his congregation: “People don’t care what I preach or speak until they know that I care for them. I am not trying to change people, but trying to share my heart with them.” When a pastor truly reflects on his/her pastoral heart for the people through his/her sermon, visitation, and general ministry duties, the congregants see the heart of the pastor and accept him/her as their spiritual leader beyond the differences of race, culture, or gender. While there are many demanding responsibilities and obstacles in ministry, cross-cultural leaders should not lose their hearts. Another pastor said, “yes, it did not take long for me to see the difference! While I acknowledge the racial difference, it cannot be a stumbling block. I am the pastor of this church. I am less conscious about my race as I know them more. I’m just their pastor and I want to become a community pastor as well.” Another pastor said, “I passionately use diverse artistic designs in the worship service to express God’s diversity, hoping that people see God’s greatness beyond our culture and tradition.” A lay leader said, “I have taught a Sunday school class for racial reconciliation and embracing others as a diversity advocate in my church. Although there are differences, I believe people are same when it gets down to it.” Another lay leader said, “I am actively involved in district and conference missions to witness the love of God to different people. As we work hard in a local church, at the same time, we need to envision universal church where all are united beyond our cultures, races, classes, and denominations.” All the interviewees emphasized the importance of not losing their hearts for cross-cultural ministry out of its demanding and challenging circumstances. “So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9)

c) Work as a Team (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Church leaders who are in a cross-cultural context are always tempted to be alone or work hard by themselves because there are not many cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments in North and South Carolina. However, cross-cultural ministry is gradually increasing and cannot be accomplished only by a solo leader. During the congregational studies, one of the lay leaders

mentioned of his pastor's capability of working as a team: "If my pastor has a new idea, she always asks me as a sounding board about the idea." Before the pastor initiates a new idea or program, she asks a few leadership team members about its values and feasible steps to develop her idea. When a cross-cultural leader does not know a different culture, he/she needs to work together as a team with those who know the culture better and sustain the process with dedication for the church's mission.

One of the crucial leadership competencies is to enlist new people and develop their leadership in the cross-cultural ministry. Through open conversations with diverse people, the pastoral leader needs to share a vision of God and increase the shared vision among the core group and the whole congregation. "Getting lay people involved is a key. Lay people must experience it. It is detrimental if ministry is clergy driven. It should be lay driven. In order to have continuity, we have to not just involve but elevate lay leadership," said a pastor. Once the clergy leader develops the critical mass of a working team for the shared vision, the church ministries will be more effective and efficient. Building a work team is a significant process for cross-cultural church leadership.

Establishing or participating in a network among cross-cultural leaders is another very important way to effectively serve diverse people of God. Even an excellent leader cannot hold all the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of various people. Through networking with other professionals and leaders in different fields, a cross-cultural leadership team may enlarge its resource pool. Through the congregational studies, I have learned that both clergy and lay leaders rarely have a cross-cultural network beyond their local church, district, or annual conference boundaries. In fact, cross-cultural ministry has been in the UMC for a long time, and diverse resources are available through various channels. By developing a network, cross-cultural leaders may share information and develop their strategic plans according to their concrete contexts. No one should work as a heroic maverick in the cross-cultural ministry. Working as a team is essential.

d) New Creation Is Everything (Galatians 6:15)

Bruce Fong summarizes the early church history and explains its distinctive character. It is the capacity of the church to invite diverse people and include them into the body of Christ:

“Christianity began as a new citizenship that bound all men and women together as one. It accepted anyone from any nationality or any status in life and gave them equality ‘in Christ.’

While the world assumed the distinction of Jew and Gentile, Christianity showed the world what the love of God could do in uniting all people together into one body.”⁹² The church leaders help believers have a new identity in Christ Jesus. The new identity is not a nominal meaning but has a transformational power as it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Fong reminds us of an important fact in Christian movements that “in Christ’s church Jews do not become Gentiles nor do Gentiles become Jews. Instead both Gentiles and Jews become believers, Christians, which is a new creation.”⁹³ In our cross-cultural experiences, we do not give up or over-emphasize our own racial and cultural identity. Rather, we gather together and renew our common mission and goal as the church community beyond our cultural differences.

While Christians have their own cultural particularities, church leaders are to find common vision in Christ Jesus and to imagine a new identity for the congregation. During the interview, a clergy remembered his first cross-cultural ministry: “Everyday I prayed to God on my new appointment. ‘Lord, are these your hands, or is this a strange thought from my District Superintendent?’ Then, I began to sense confidence that my cross-cultural appointment can be a sign of the kingdom that is multifaceted. I believe that more hands-on missions and activities among diverse people will help us understand one another and grow together for new creation. In fact, it’s been a journey of learning and growing. I’m still learning, and it will be a maturing experience for my congregation and myself.” When people recognize their new identity, they can comprehend what God calls them to be and do. In order to accomplish God’s ministry in a cross-

⁹² Fong, 63.

⁹³ Ibid., 78.

cultural context, church leaders need to creatively claim their identity as the body of Christ in whom the people are united and transformed beyond their different classes, races, and cultures. In order to creatively imagine God's works in the world, clergy and lay leaders are to focus on God's new creation.

Chapter 4. Leading from the Edge

4.1 Imaginative Leadership at Cultural Crossroads

Christian leadership is based on Jesus' leadership model. In the gospels, Jesus often positions himself on the margin and leads ordinary people by serving and caring for them. Jesus penetrates the hierarchical and central religious leadership structure, creatively challenges and breaks it down, and opens a new possibility of servant leadership. The ministries of Jesus in different villages, streets, and lakeshores give Christian leaders an inspiration to come out of the center and lead God's people from the edge.

Through my cross-cultural ministry, I have realized the importance of critical questions on what the church does. In order to envision a more diverse and embracing community of faith, church leaders need to thoughtfully ask what is going on beneath the church's current ministries. In an established church context, the church members often tend to have their own ways to do their ministries for a long period of time. Before making radical changes, church leaders – both clergy and lay leaders as a team – need to carefully observe how ministries work, analyze who are involved and excluded, evaluate what outcomes they produce, and deepen inspiring conversations with the people. Creatively holding both ministerial tasks and trust-relationships, the church leaders must consider how they serve and lead the church community.

In this process of leading and serving the church community, church leaders are to develop their imaginative leadership. Imaginative leadership is not a revolutionary method that creates a new culture and transforms the people of God with a mystical power. Rather, it is a reflective capability with which church leaders encourage the church community to seek more meaningful relationships with Jesus Christ and find effective ways to do God's ministry by listening and understanding diverse people of God on the margin. Imaginative leadership requires a critical thought process to discover possibilities in God's creation and to foster God-given creativities among God's people. Through imaginative leadership, church leaders may seek a

possibility beyond preoccupied assumptions on different cultures and people, empower the whole congregation to embrace one another, and build a welcoming community in which divisive people may become a cross-bearing embodiment in the love of God as a new identity.

Jolanda Jetten and Frank Mols characterize imaginative leadership as the ability of identifying a conflict and moving the people toward a hopeful solution: “Our analysis shows that exceptional leadership is characterized by imaginative leadership – the leader’s ability to redefine the nature of a conflict and to persuade the group of the feasibility of a brighter future.”⁹⁴

Imaginative leadership in a church context is to face a problem squarely and lead the church community toward a future hope. In other words, imaginative leadership holds the tension of the present reality and future hope together and creatively⁹⁵ motivates Christian believers to move toward a positive future with feasible steps.

a. Shifting Viewpoints through Creative Distancing

As I discussed earlier, humans see all things through their subjective personal and cultural lenses. Even though people observe the same thing or event, they may differently perceive and react to it from their unique perspective. A homogeneous group of people may have similar perspectives on an affair, but there are still individual differences. Accordingly, a cross-cultural or multicultural congregation may have more complicated and various opinions on a certain incident. For example, if an ethnic minority group joins a homogeneous church, the existing members may feel uncomfortable to embrace them into a deeper fellowship due to their differences. If there is a conflicting issue in a multicultural congregation, the members tend to interpret it with their own perspectives. The different perception and reactions may bring about a larger conflict, and it may result in division among them. In other words, different viewpoints may cause diverse understandings and interpretations, and they may shift a small dissension into a divisive conflict.

⁹⁴ Jetten and Mols, “Imaginative Leadership,” *Crossing the Divide*, ed., Pittinsky, 68

⁹⁵ Robert Greenleaf emphasizes the creativity of leadership, saying “Leaders, therefore, must be more creative than most; and creativity is largely discovery, a push into the uncharted and the unknown” in *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002), 36.

How does the leadership team deal with dissimilar opinions and persuade various people to seek a peaceable resolution in cultural crossroads? It is the imaginative leaders' task to intentionally endeavor to produce a harmonious outcome in a given context.

In order to overcome an unnecessary conflict or misunderstanding in cross-cultural ministry, church leaders need to put an emphasis on intentional awareness, intentional observation and listening, intentional education for diversity, intentional welcoming and embracing, intentional understanding, intentional inclusiveness, and intentional efforts for solidarity. With the grace of God, the intentional growth in Christ Jesus may decrease human inclination of self-centeredness. Earley and Ang claim that “intentionality is a potent and necessary force in cross-cultural training, not only for the individual but also for the organization.”⁹⁶ However, intentionality cannot make drastic changes in a short period of time for life paradigm, structure, culture, and system of a church and its members. Along with persistent intentionality, imaginative leadership needs to help the church members see a ministry from a different viewpoint from the past. Shifting a viewpoint with intentional purpose can be a feasible way of change for an individual and a church community.

While changing a paradigm is never easy, shifting a viewpoint can be simply practiced by creative distancing. If I see a small object at a close distance, I can see it fully. If it is a larger object, I may see only part of it at a short distance. However, if I step back and view the larger object from a distance, I can see not only the object in its entirety but the other items that surround it. Distancing can allow us to see varying aspects of an object or a situation. In most cases, the church leadership team members – both clergy and lay – are often too close to the center of the church to hear the small voices or see small things on the margin. Therefore, creative distancing may become a spiritual discipline for church leaders to see the church and its ministries from diverse viewpoints.

⁹⁶ Earley and Ang, 261.

Giovanni Pernigotto understands distance from the viewpoint of relationship and thoughtfully describes a possible hazard of distancing:

A distance in a relation is not an evil in itself, and in fact it could be very positive depending on the way one considers it. It happens, though, that one can feel distance as a barrier; or one can think that it would be too small (where the other is thought of as a threat); or still, because of the distance, one cannot even see the other's face, as in a grey fog or in a dark night. Thus, we can locate the beginning of evil, in this case what we are labeling 'exclusion,' in an emotional and/or cognitive misunderstanding of the relation with the other or with ourselves.⁹⁷

According to Pernigotto, distance is not an evil, but it can be misunderstood as a negative impact such as 'barrier or exclusion.' That is why church leaders must use distancing in creative ways.

Through creative distancing in the church, the leaders may see their ministries with a more objective⁹⁸ and compassionate⁹⁹ viewpoint. If a church leader has creative distancing from his/her own culture, class, race, and gender, he/she may begin to see things from another person's perspective. Once people become more familiar with changing their viewpoints, they may recognize that difference is a by-product of distancing in this practice. Then difference may be admitted, embraced, and even welcomed.

Shifting a viewpoint through creative distancing is a very helpful practice in the cross-cultural ministry. When people change their viewpoint and see things from another person's perspective, they may better understand each other's standpoint. Difference comes from various viewpoints, and it is often considered a problem rather than an opportunity. If people change a viewpoint and see a difference as an opportunity, a possibility, or a gift, they can celebrate each other's difference and appreciate one another among different people. Accepting a difference is to open a new door for understanding other cultures, races, perspectives, and life values.

The practice of embracing others is not easy – especially given the human proclivity to exclude, dominate, differentiate, and oppress people who are considered to be other and to privilege and give preference to ourselves. It begins with discerning difference as a possibility – a gift – rather than a problem. It continues with the recognition that our lives and our cultures are inextricably

⁹⁷ Giovanni Pernigotto, "The Church: A Place of Exclusion or an Intercultural Community?" in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion*, 46.

⁹⁸ Having a ministry coach or mentor can be a great benefit because the coach or mentor may keep 'appropriate distance' from the ministry context and provide 'objective' opinions.

⁹⁹ The heart of a church leader is to have 'compassion' for the needy, weak, and small as Jesus had compassion as he saw the crowd in Mark 6:34.

intertwined and interdependent – even though when examined discreetly they often seem to be studies in contrast. It requires the affirmation of cultural ‘others’ on their own terms and, at the same time, an affirmation of our own cultural embeddedness as a primary resource to the depths of our own identities. This requires that members of each racial and cultural group grant the others ‘sufficient respect’ to listen and trust enough to challenge and critique.¹⁰⁰

Charles Foster develops his ideas of ‘interdependence’ and ‘respecting others’ by seeing the ‘difference as a possibility.’ Seeing the difference as a possibility or a gift¹⁰¹ is the shift of a viewpoint from seeing it as a problem or a negative sign. A small change of a viewpoint may invite Christians to the further steps of ‘embracing others’ which is a much greater and tougher change. It begins with a small shift of a viewpoint from mine to yours or another’s. The more we see things from different viewpoints, the more we can accept difference as a growing process. Imaginative leadership is not to make a great change but to shift a little viewpoint through creative distancing so that church people may be more willing to accept and respect others’ differences. In other words, imaginative leadership does not begin with a revolutionary change but with an intentional evolutionary change with manageable practices.

b. Seeking a Third Way

Modern people have been trained to select a better choice not only for schools, houses, and job careers but also for human relationships. Accordingly, effective leaders seem to have a capability of choosing a better choice from the given options. Based on the ‘either A or B’ paradigm, many church leaders may find comfort in choosing more benefits than opportunity costs. However, imaginative leaders seek ‘a third way’ which is not a choice of ‘either A or B,’ but an alternative resolution from the creative tension of ‘both A and B.’ Imaginative leaders patiently hold the tension between the present conflicting condition and a hopeful future and pursue an integral way beyond a simple choice from ‘either A or B.’ They also seek various ways to motivate people to focus on future purpose and move toward it.

¹⁰⁰ Foster, 47.

¹⁰¹ It does not happen that all differences are good and celebrated as a potential or gift. Church leaders must recognize that some differences are the result of the sin and are needed to be healed and transformed.

Roger Martin develops a significant leadership formula to hold both opposing ideas to find a more creative and superior solution. He calls this process ‘integrative thinking’ and defines it as follows:

The ability to face constructively the tension of opposing ideas and, instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas but is superior to each.¹⁰²

Adopting the integrative thinking process, I want to delve deeper into imaginative leadership in cross-cultural ministry. At cultural crossroads, the present tension and conflicting issues are apparent among different cultures and people. Many church leaders try to find a better choice in conflicting contexts, but Martin insists that “the most creative, productive stance is one that sees opposing models as learning opportunities to be appreciated, welcomed, and understood.”¹⁰³ In a cross-cultural ministry context, church leaders often confront opposing opinions and consider them as an obstacle or a problem. This attitude discourages the church leaders from confronting those opposing ideas or models. By shifting the viewpoint, they may see the opposing ideas and models as a learning opportunity to seek a third way solution. As James Hunter emphasizes, imaginative church leaders need to wait and spend “a season to learn how to engage the world in public differently and better”¹⁰⁴ rather than choosing an impetuous choice from the given options. Pursuing a third way takes more time and requires more critical thoughts and patience than selecting an option on the complicated issues. Nevertheless, through this integrative thought process, imaginative leaders may develop their capability to understand different perspectives and to negotiate the opposing ideas with a creative alternative.

¹⁰² Roger Martin, *The Opposable Mind: How Successful Leaders Win Through Integrative Thinking* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007), 15.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 124.

¹⁰⁴ James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 281.

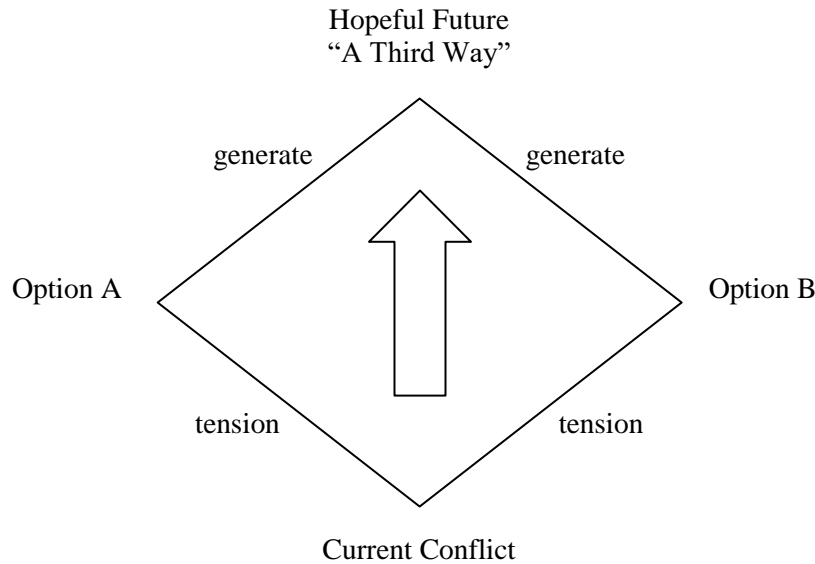


Figure 5. Integrative Thought Process Model A

Suppose that there is a conflict among different people in a cross-cultural church as shown in figure 5. There seems to be possible option A and option B in order to solve the current conflict. The leaders may want to choose either option A or B because they do not want to have a conflicting situation in their church. In this case, however, if the leaders choose option A, they may dissatisfy those who stand for option B, and vice versa. Rather than choosing a better option, imaginative leaders think harder in the constructive tension between option A and option B. The integral thought process may be a painstaking time for the church leaders to deeply think, attentively listen to different opinions, and patiently pray and keep the tension between the two options. From this opposable relationship, imaginative leaders do not choose an option but generate a creative third way which is a more hopeful resolution for the church's future. By creating a third way, imaginative leaders motivate and move the congregation toward a future hope rather than putting them into a winner or loser position.

While Martin claims that “we were born with an *opposable mind*,”¹⁰⁵ he also emphasizes that it must be developed and trained in order to be effectively used. As cultural competencies are

¹⁰⁵ Martin, 7.

learned and improved with intentional efforts, the opposable mind also needs to be cultivated. While introducing several marks of excellent ministry, Jackson Carroll explains ‘adaptation’ with a similar concept of Martin’s integrative thinking: “Adaptation is not the same as accommodation... Rather it involves holding in creative tension the challenges of the present situation *and* the goods of the Christian faith, both Scripture and tradition.”¹⁰⁶ In a cross-cultural ministry, adaptation becomes an important practice for imaginative leadership. Church leaders need to encourage diverse cultural people to learn from each other and respect other cultures. At the same time, they need to carefully and courageously point out any unethical and unjust elements while embracing other cultures. In the adaptation process, imaginative leaders must rediscover the values of Christian faith such as Scripture and tradition in a specific cultural context, and emphasize transcendent values of Christ Jesus for all people. Through the imaginative dialogue between the challenges of the present context and the Christian resources, church leaders may help the congregation see a hopeful future as a third way as shown in figure 6.

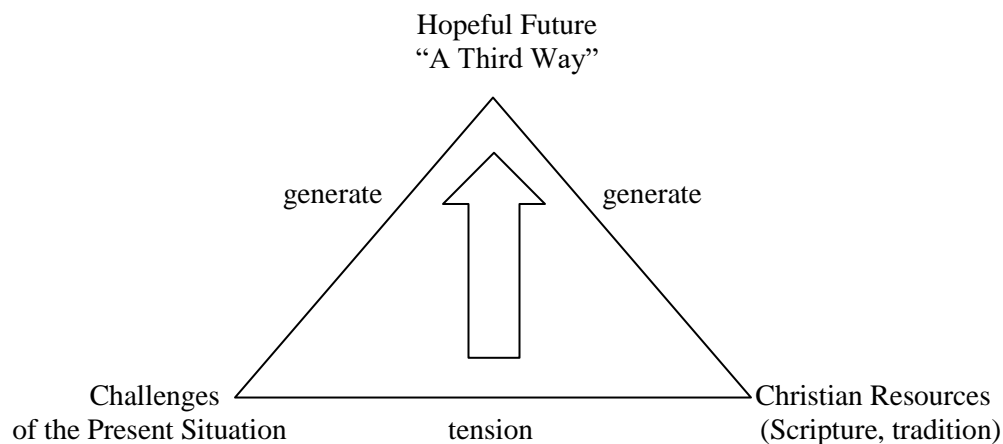


Figure 6. Integrative Thought Process Model B

¹⁰⁶ Jackson Carroll, *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 208.

Seeking a third way is like a marinating process. When meat or fish or fruit appropriately soaks in a source for a certain period of time, it adds a new flavor or becomes a new creation. Imaginative leaders must *take time* to think, listen, converse, reflect, and pray until their adaptation or integrative thoughts are fully marinated in the faith of Jesus Christ. When I asked a critical question on a ministry practice in a church, a friendly long-time church member responded to me without hesitance, “we have always done it this way.” Imaginative leadership lovingly begins to appreciate a church’s tradition and history, boldly challenges the congregation with critical questions, patiently invites them to seek a third way, and faithfully move the church toward a future hope.

Samuel Wells’ concept of ‘accepting,’ ‘blocking,’ and ‘overaccepting’ is a valid example for discovering a third way. In order to develop relationships and continue to have interactions with others, according to Wells, people are to be ‘accepting’ rather than ‘blocking.’ However, people cannot accept every offer because there are bad offers as well as good offers. Wells encourages people to use the ‘overaccepting’ strategy as a third way. According to him, ‘overaccepting’ is “accepting in the light of a larger story.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, people may accept an offer and think how to use it in a faithful way or consider what the gift may become in the kingdom of God. ‘Overaccepting’ is a creative third way beyond accepting or blocking in order to “imitate the manner of God’s reign.”¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Lovett Weems seeks a third alternative, underlining the role of the church leaders not in resolving the tension but in faithful waiting for God’s new creation:

Leaders in the Wesleyan spirit neither fear nor glamorize tension. They understand that tension is the natural arena for leadership. The task of leaders is not to resolve the tension through victory for one side or through compromise. Leaders see the tension interspersed throughout with the presence and wisdom of God, just waiting for God’s new creation to emerge. Often a third alternative becomes the ‘new thing’ God is doing in our midst.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Samuel Wells, *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2004), 131.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁰⁹ Weems, 92.

Seeking a third way always leads a congregation toward a future oriented direction in the faith of God. Imaginative leadership creates a dynamic movement through constant thought process as well as constructive dialogues with diverse people. In this painstaking process, imaginative leaders need to deepen their trust-relationships with God and others.

c. Expanding Shared Space

As I explained a ‘cultural boundary’ in chapter 1, I do not see the boundary a divisive line or differentiating limit from different cultural groups or individuals in figure 1. Rather, I consider it a shared space or a common room among diverse people and cultures as shown in figure 2.

Understanding a cultural boundary as the ‘shared space’ or ‘relational space,’ imaginative leaders are to expand the shared space with active conversations and learning experiences, encountering more diverse people face to face in the ‘vulnerable’ space.¹¹⁰

Earley and Ang suggest two cross-cultural training methods: One is the “sponge training method,” and the other is the “hands-on training method.”¹¹¹ The sponge training method is a traditional way of learning knowledge through educational events such as lectures or study workshops. It is very effective if church leaders want to acquire knowledge about other cultures in a focused time limit. The hands-on training method is to learn other cultures through hands-on experiences at sites, focusing on actions through missional projects, role-plays, or travels in different places. In order to expand a shared space among church leaders, both hands-on learning and sponge training methods are necessary.

Increasing the shared space is to develop relationships with different people and cultures. Through hands-on ministry experience, church leaders may meet and work with diverse people. They may go through some mistakes, failures, and successes while they interact with others. Imaginative leaders thoughtfully observe those interwoven relationships with others and

¹¹⁰ In order to meet non-church people, church leaders need to be outside the church or in the periphery which can be a vulnerable place.

¹¹¹ Earley and Ang, 260-261.

intentionally build ‘interdependent’¹¹² relationships with them. The more they relate to others, the more they can expand their shared space and come to build solidarity with others. When they expand the shared space, the obstacles of cross-cultural ministries such as prejudice, judgment, and fear will be decreased.

Imaginative leaders create a common ground with various people and strengthen their relationships with them. In order to lead people toward an encompassing purpose of future hope, church leaders need to broaden and deepen their relationships in the shared space. One of the great imaginative leadership examples is found in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. The black church leaders invited white intellectuals and church leaders to see overarching human rights and equality for the next generation of black and white children so that they could enlarge their shared space. Imaginative leaders’ concern on expanding a shared space is the issue of both width and depth of the shared space. The more people cultivate a deeper and wider shared space, the less they will experience prejudice and fear from differences. At the same time, imaginative leaders do not see a shared space as the space of competition or power struggle among different groups. Rather, they consider it a co-existing space in which different people may keep the dynamic tension and interwoven interdependence.

While imaginative leaders expand a shared space with others, they also need to be aware of their responsibilities and limitations. Expanding the common space demands church leaders to have more responsibilities to respect and honor different cultures as they build up interactive relationships with others. At the same time, they need to recognize their limitations with their integrity and accountability. Nevertheless, the practice of expanding a shared space will provide imaginative leaders with a unique leadership experience as well as with an ‘outside the box’ viewpoint. Therefore, it enables them to discover a possibility for creatively enhanced solidarity among different people in the shared space.

¹¹² In our hands-on ministries, we must be intentional not to build ‘dependent’ relationships with those who receive help or benefits. Rather, we need to develop ‘interdependent’ relationships with them so that our ministries become beneficial for both parties and seek solidarity among those who serve and are served.

4.2 Imaginative Leadership with Hybridity

a. Risk-Taking and Tilting

The ways of God's love toward human beings – God's covenant relationship with ever-failing Israelites, radical advent and redemption through Jesus Christ, and sending of the Holy Spirit – are exceedingly risk-taking. Accordingly, following Christ Jesus, not being conformed to the ways of the world, is necessarily risk-taking. As Gerard Mannion clearly points out the essential nature of Christian task, those who claim the name of Christians must be “risk-takers”:

Those who self-identify as the followers, in particular, of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, are called to be risk takers by his teachings in so many ways. One of the most profound and existentially transformative ways is in the manner of which they related to and coexist with one another and with others in the society around them – Christ called his followers to such a risk-oriented way of being and loving from the very outset. Christians, then, have no option but to be ecclesial risk takers if they are to follow the gospel.¹¹³

Moreover, becoming a church leader who has responsibilities to serve and lead other Christians as clergy and laity takes much higher risks. There are at least two fundamental leadership risks. First, church leadership is based on ‘relationship,’ and “commitment to relationship always entails risk.”¹¹⁴ Church leaders’ relationship begins with God who has initiated the covenant relationship. Through God’s entrusted relationship with human beings, God takes a risk to call them to be partners in ministry and heirs of the kingdom of God. While people fail to love and trust God, God still remains faithful. The primary goal of church leaders is to be faithful to God in their relationship. The other relationship is toward other Christians. Becoming a Christian leader is to step into a new relationship with others by serving them with the love of Christ. This relationship with others becomes a real challenge for many church leaders because it is a risk-taking adventure to love and trust others. In reality, many church leaders fail to sustain their healthy relationships with various reasons such as stress, burnout, or burden from their leadership.

¹¹³ Gerard Mannion, “Response: Ecclesiology and the Humility of God: Embracing the Risk of Loving the World,” *Ecclesiology and Exclusion*, 37.

¹¹⁴ Lederach, 163.

Second, church leaders take tremendous responsibilities to lead other Christians toward the unknown future. Leaders' risk is to let others walk with them together while the future is insecure. Even in times of uncertainty, leaders need to have an assertive voice and lead their followers by their examples. The assertive voice and exemplary life come from leaders' integrity and compassionate love for others. The pressure that leaders perceive is quite burdensome, and the responsibility for others is always risk-taking. Greenleaf well describes the risk of leadership:

But the leader needs more than inspiration. A leader ventures to say, 'I will go; come with me!' A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success. A leader says, 'I will go; follow me!' while knowing that the path is uncertain, even dangerous.¹¹⁵

At the same time, Christian leadership is based on the faith that God is the ultimate guide in life's journey. That is why church leaders can humbly lead the congregation toward an uncertain future. In the risk-taking adventure of leading others into the unknown future, church leaders must deepen their trust-relationships with God and keep their humble spirit as their leadership authority is from God's grace.

Due to the character of the risk-taking Christian journey, church leaders may think that only radical changes can revitalize the church's mission today. It is true that the worldly culture is deeply rooted even inside the church. Different from the expectations of church leaders, however, change in the church begins with small shifts and twists, and it usually takes a long time. Imaginative leaders must recognize both risk-taking character of church ministry and strategic skills of tilting and twisting. Soong-Chan Rah points out the possible compromises and twists in ministry and leadership journey: "It is far more likely that we will wind through numerous twists and turns, even traveling through numerous places where unexpected and unintended negative consequences will occur."¹¹⁶

In order to create a small shift in cultural crossroads, church leaders need to pay attention to people, the followers, and their stories and traditions. The primary concern of a leadership team

¹¹⁵ Greenleaf, 29.

¹¹⁶ Rah, 190.

is not about programs or activities, but people. Imaginative leaders are to contemplate the needs of the people and have compassionate hearts for them as Jesus Christ had the same heart as their shepherd: “When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). Imaginative leadership is to tilt toward the followers in cross-cultural ministry. Church leaders need to take more time and listen to the followers’ stories, agonies, and problems with ‘pastoral’¹¹⁷ hearts. During an envisioning process, church leaders may be tempted to focus on their own agendas or desires rather than seeing and listening to people with their compassionate hearts. A tilt is a small shift, but its result can be much greater. By tilting more toward the followers, imaginative leaders may truly understand what God wants them to do in God’s ministry. In particular, church leaders must be more inclined to tilt toward the weak, needy, powerless, and lost in the congregation and the local community. Tilting toward those who are vulnerable, have-nots, and ethnic minorities, imaginative leaders may bring a spiritual renewal of the church and encourage people to move toward reconciliation among divided people.

b. Setting Apart and Bridging

Building bridges and friendships among diverse people must be emphasized in ministry. In particular, relationship building is a significant task for cross-cultural church leaders. Leaders bridge different people to one another and develop their relationships by sharing, supporting, and uplifting. Through relationship building and bridging, Christian leaders may expand their relationships even beyond the church boundary. One of the church’s important missions is to make disciples and send them out to witness the light of Christ to the world.

Interestingly, Jesus’ relationship building is quite odd from our standard. He does not relate himself to the powerful or haves. Rather, Jesus builds relationships with the powerless and outcast. David Ford indicates the friend relationship of Jesus with the tax collectors and sinners.

¹¹⁷ Whether they are clergy or lay, all are called to ‘minister’ to one another. In today’s church, ‘a royal priesthood’ of God’s people in 1 Peter 2:9 needs to be renewed and underscored.

Once Christians are called to be friends of Jesus Christ, they are also obliged to make friendships with those whom Jesus has become a friend.¹¹⁸ Jesus' relationship model with tax collectors, prostitutes, and outcasts, implies that Christian leaders are also to build friendships with those who are neglected and marginalized in our society. It is a risk-taking and radical leadership calling for lay and clergy leaders. James Hunter clarifies this leadership character: "There is no true leadership without putting at risk one's time, wealth, reputation, and position. In a related way, the practice of leadership is selfless in character."¹¹⁹

In fact, before building relationships with others and connecting them to the love of God, Christian leaders must cultivate their intimate relationships with Jesus Christ. Setting time apart for the triune God is the foundation of all human relationships. In other words, before leading others, Christian leaders must be faithful followers of Christ Jesus. To become faithful disciples, people need disciplines. Samuel Wells describes that "discipline is that pattern of practices which strengthens the body so that it can withstand the power of those forces that refuse the sovereignty of Christ."¹²⁰ Being set apart from the world is not a condescending arrogance. Rather, it is a leadership discipline to develop an intimate relationship with God before coming out to the world and relating to others.

Cross-cultural ministry provides Christians leaders with opportunities to build relationships with different racial or cultural people. Beyond biased assumption, church leaders are to learn from each other¹²¹ and deepen their relationships, crossing the boundaries. Through my ministry, I have made many lay friends who have different life experiences. The more deepening my friendships with them, the more I could learn from them. For example, while teaching a Bible study, I have learned that many classmates endeavor to live the Word of God in their daily lives. Their strenuous Christian practices have challenged me to study harder and pray

¹¹⁸ David Ford, *The Future of Christian Theology* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 102.

¹¹⁹ Hunter, 260.

¹²⁰ Wells, 165.

¹²¹ One of the tasks for today's church leadership is to revisit the biblical relationship between lay and clergy and renew their leadership roles and partnership in ministry.

more to be a better pastor. Keith Grint defines this learning method as 'inverse learning.' He states that "I want to suggest further, and in an inversion of our common assumptions about this relationship, that it is followers who teach leadership to leaders."¹²² I agree with Grint because I have learned many things from my parishioners and even children as their pastor and leader while I have served them.

Bridging diverse people to meet one another in the shared space is a challenging task. Due to the worldly culture of consumerism and ethnocentrism, people tend to put their cultural values to a higher position than those of others. Nevertheless, imaginative leaders use the symbol of Christ's cross that has become a conduit of God's love in bridging different people together. On the cross, there are 'no enemies or others.' At the cross, there are transformation and redemption through repentance and atonement. By accepting the grace of Christ Jesus, people embrace one another and together become 'brothers and sisters' as God's beloved children. Through atonement and redemptive mission of Jesus Christ, the cross becomes a reconciling power of God. With the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, imaginative leaders are to bridge diverse people together and help them be transformed as a new creation.

c. Sustaining and Transforming

As humans are contextualized beings, they interact with their culture and are influenced by it. While they create and modify their culture, at the same time they become confined in it because culture is the 'collective sum'¹²³ through generations beyond personal values and experiences. Culture may prescribe people's behavioral codes in social relationships. However, culture is a product of human beings. Even though it is the accumulated and inherited sum through generations, the acting agency is a human being, not the culture. This means that people need to be proactive in initiating new creations and modifications of culture. Sherwood Lingenfelter points out the danger of culture power that confines humans: "Culture becomes a 'prison' to us

¹²² Grint, 102.

¹²³ See chapter 1 for definition of culture.

when we insist on employing its structure, order, meanings, and values to all of our life experiences.”¹²⁴ Therefore, church leaders need to seek transformational hope of God for a better reality as well as to critically observe the current cultural framework. In other words, they need to continually work for a new and better culture in and outside their church.

Moreover, imaginative leaders see a truth that culture cannot fully categorize humans who bear the unique image of God. Culture is a historically constructed paradigm for human behaviors and interrelationships in a society. Imaginative leaders challenge and improve culture and encourage other believers to get out of the cultural confinement, discovering God’s image in them. As important acting agents, humans are called to develop a new culture and transform the world. Transforming is a process for Christian believers to rediscover true humanity in God’s image, resisting a categorized identity by culture.

At the same time, imaginative leaders need to have continuous conversations about the church’s tradition and history to grasp the bigger picture that God has worked through the saints of the church. While church leaders radically transform the congregational culture, they also need to recognize evolutionary methods. Heifetz notes that successful changes in ministry are mostly built on the past: “Rarely does success seem to be the result of a zero-based, ahistorical, start-over approach, except perhaps as a deliberate exercise in strategic rethinking. Most radical revolutions fail, and those that succeed have more, rather than less, in common with their heritage.”¹²⁵ Cross-cultural and multicultural ministries are the ministries of diversity, solidarity, and reconciliation among different people, and cultural interactions are a crucial matter. If people remain in their own cultural confinement, it is not possible for them to expand shared spaces, learn from each other, and build solidarity. With the guidance of God’s grace, imaginative leaders must creatively balance both transformation and sustainability.

¹²⁴ Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 59.

¹²⁵ Heifetz, 129.

4.3 From Center to Edge

One of church's main concerns in this ever-changing cultural milieu is that Christian ideals and traditions are gradually receding in our communities. The rising generation may have little historical understanding on American Christianity and its traditions. In particular, more Americans are "largely distinguishable not by their lack of belief but by their rejection of organized religion."¹²⁶ That is to say, church is not at the center any more, and Christians no longer feel at home in the dominant culture. In this post-Christendom era, church leadership must shift its leadership focus from institutional maintenance to missional movements. The conventional leadership has positioned at the center based on status, prestige, power, and office in figure 7. However, imaginative leadership is different by locating the leaders in the periphery as shown in figure 8. Cross-cultural ministry requires church leaders to leave the center and move towards the margin,¹²⁷ engaging themselves with those who are marginalized. By practicing decentralized leadership, imaginative leaders work as a team among lay and clergy, seeking to be on the margin to experience the suffering Christ's wound, listening to the stories of the marginalized, and motivating Christian believers to embrace others. From the edge, imaginative church leaders serve the people of God, and by serving, they lead.

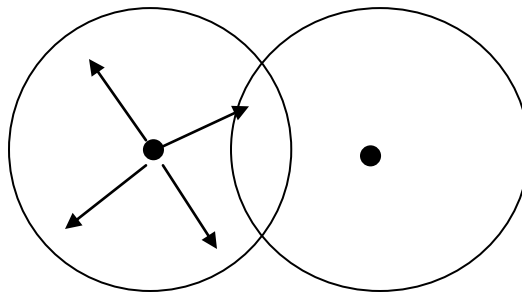


Figure 7. Conventional Leadership Position

¹²⁶ Fischer and Hout, 193.

¹²⁷ In my thesis, I use the word "margin" or "edge" not only as a bordering place of encounter among different people and cultures but also as marginal places of exclusion in which humility and marginalization may be experienced. See chapter 1.2.a for a definition of marginal leadership.

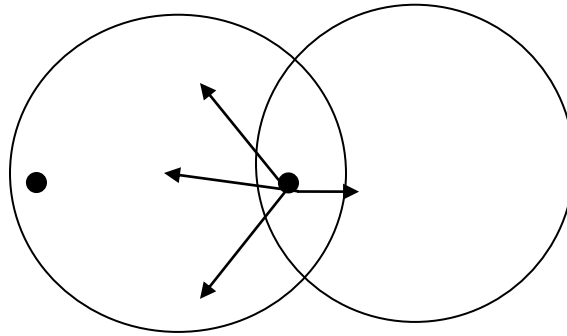


Figure 8. Marginal Leadership Position

a. Imaginative Leadership and Kingdom of God

Imaginative leaders seek and cultivate God's kingdom values as a missional movement in the waves of cultural change. By recognizing and celebrating diversity and unity, people can experience a foretaste of the kingdom on earth. God's kingdom is not here yet, but a heterogeneous Christian community may have the marks of God's kingdom such as peace, joy, equality, justice, harmony, and reconciliation among different people. Moreover, it may sustain the fullness of God as people treasure each other as bearers of God's image in mutual acceptance and solidarity. Accordingly people's difference is not a barrier but becomes a blessing in the church. Charles Foster assures that a kingdom community is not just a Christian ideal, but can be a reality when different people interact and embrace one another in a diverse Christian community: "In a multicultural church, the vision of a messianic banquet as portrayed in the Gospels is seen not so much as an eschatological hope but as an eschatological reality."¹²⁸

Cross-cultural leaders serve their congregation from the edge in which they meet and build relationships with diverse people, in particular, impoverished and excluded ones. As the margin is a place of service and humility, it is an opportunity for church leaders to practice the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ who became a servant leader for those who are marginalized and lost. In Luke 5:30-32, Jesus sees the needs of repentance, healing, and reconciliation among sinners. Cross-cultural ministry opens a door for church leaders to focus on kingdom values

¹²⁸ Foster, 46.

among diverse people on the margin. In a conversation with his disciples, Jesus clarifies the kingdom value that is contrasting from that of the world:

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10: 42b-45)

While the world's leaders locate themselves in the center and lead people with their power and status, Christian leaders must lead others by serving them from the edge. The church community needs to cultivate Christ's culture in which church leaders are servants for others. This radical teaching and example of Jesus Christ can be practiced in cultural boundaries. As Jesus Christ did, imaginative leaders are to make a difference in the church community and build a kingdom community of welcoming and embracing diverse people.

It is Christian leaders' task to help their church reflect on its larger community by welcoming diverse people into the fellowship of Christ. When a church finds different faces among its congregations, people may begin to appreciate God's creation and learn to involve others in Christian fellowship. Through the repeated process of welcoming and embracing different people in a church community, the church may bear the marks of God's kingdom. Paul Hiebert proclaims that "unity in the church that breaks down walls of ethnicity, gender, and class is a sign of the kingdom of God now invading the earth."¹²⁹ Imaginative leaders carefully create more opportunities to interact and work together among diverse people through hands-on ministries as well as learning experiences.

In the process of building a kingdom community, church leaders need to be more attentive to the little, weak, and neglected in the church because God's kingdom community belongs to them. Even though it is a tough task for Christian leaders to grow a sense of belonging among diverse people, the kingdom community requires communal works among different people, including those who are little, weak, and neglected. God's kingdom is not comprised of

¹²⁹ Hiebert, 193.

certain elite Christians or excellent working leaders, but belongs to ordinary people who respond to the call of God and practice Christian discipleship every day. God seeks for more people and more diverse people as described in Matthew 20:1-7. In this parable, God involves different people in God's works and provides them with lavish grace. The parable speaks to us that all Christians, no matter what differences are, belong to the community of God together. Likewise, imaginative leaders need to find more people with the heart of God, value each person in God's grace, and confirm a truth that all Christians live, serve, and work together for the kingdom of God.

While it does not have the wholeness or fullness of God, the church is still a hope for the world because it provides a foretaste of God's kingdom. Robert Wilken emphasizes the role of the church in the world. According to him, the glimpse of God's kingdom can be discovered in the church: "The greatest gift the church can give society is a glimpse, however fleeting, of another city, where the angels keep 'eternal festival' before the face of God."¹³⁰ Radical hospitality is a distinct mark in the church community. Jesus teaches a kingdom value to his disciples: "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind*" (Luke 14:12-13). This radical hospitality will be rarely experienced in the 'self-centered' society where the 'give and take' culture is prevalent and accepted. However, a church community can practice inclusiveness and equality for the marginalized and forgotten as it is a glimpse of God's kingdom.

b. Leading from the Edge

Leaving the center is always a challenge for Christian leaders because it makes them vulnerable out of their 'titled' office and authority as lay leader, pastor, council chair, or other ministry chairs. Imaginative leaders are not heroes who have power to save the church community but are

¹³⁰ Wilken, 210.

humble servants who listen to the people from the periphery. Sam Wells distinguishes the saint from the hero in church leadership:

The hero is always at the center of the story. By contrast, the saint is not necessarily a crucial character. The saint may be almost invisible, easily missed, quickly forgotten. The hero's story is always about the hero. The saint is always at the periphery of a story that is really about God.¹³¹

In this sense, leading from the edge is a humble servant leadership which is modeled by God through Jesus Christ. Sharon Thornton clearly explains why the edge is a critical place for church leaders to be located. It is a place where God enters into human life and exists with humans. According to her, "the periphery is the place of exile, confusion, and pain. The extreme periphery is the place of the cross. It is on the periphery that the full reality of God's indwelling is identified with human forsakenness. The periphery is where the identity of God and the identity of humankind are bound inseparably in the divine embrace of the cross."¹³² As Jesus Christ put himself on the edge, imaginative leaders must be on the margin as servant leaders.

Leading from the edge is effective when a leadership team works on trust-relationships. Accordingly, it is crucial for church leaders to make a team of clergy and lay, including people from the margin and sharing their perspectives and strategic steps to build a more embrative Christian community. In this process of working together, the key leader – senior pastor or lead pastor – needs to empower other leadership team members such as associate pastors, leadership staff, and lay leaders to creatively work together and share responsibilities for the church's ministries. Lingenfelter emphasizes the importance of faith and trust in the power releasing process:

*Releasing control then is a significant act of faith and trust, both in God and in the person(s) released. The leader who decides to relinquish power is placing trust in the empowered person and in God that the power given will be used to accomplish God's purpose. This is why power giving is an act of faith and grace; the outcome rests in the power and grace of God.*¹³³

¹³¹ Wells, 43.

¹³² Thornton, 160.

¹³³ Lingenfelter, 129.

By releasing leadership power to others, church leaders become more flexible to move to the edges. Leading from the edge, imaginative leaders set a servant leadership example for others by practicing humble service and sharing leadership responsibilities. By releasing leadership to others, imaginative leaders affirm the power of faith and grace in God.

Leading from the edge has significant theological meanings. On the margin, imaginative leaders can listen to the people whose voices are unheard and forgotten in a church community. Many times people think that God's vision comes from the great dreams of the leadership team. However, God's vision can be found through the unheard voices of an immature child who does not know the church policy, an old weary woman who has served meals for her church family without any leadership position, a new member who does not know the church history and tradition, a homebound member who has lost his/her connectedness to the church, and a young adult who has a dream for making a more diverse church that may reflect its community. With a sensitive listening heart for the little, unvoiced, and marginalized, church leaders may see God's vision on the margin where Jesus Christ engaged himself with others.

On the margin, imaginative leaders learn the heart of Jesus Christ who has served others as a servant leader. Katherine Scott points out the importance of decentralization in leadership position: "Being on the margin means having a changed perspective that comes from being dislocated from a position of centrality."¹³⁴ By being located at the edge, the church leaders can see all things differently with a 'shifted perspective' and interact with those who are on the margin. In particular, they may deeply sense the heart of Jesus who modeled a servant leadership on the margin. Bruce Nicholls calls attention to 'greater sensitivity' in cross-cultural ministry:

The call to greater sensitivity in cross-cultural communication is a call to patience in understanding, to a humble pilgrimage of discipleship and a call to loving engagement with people in the realities of their daily life. It is to have the mind of Christ who renounced his glory and status, identified with people in their humanity and became a suffering servant even unto death."¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Katherine Tyler Scott, *Transforming Leadership* (New York: Church Publishing, 2010), 48.

¹³⁵ Bruce Nicholls, *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InverVarsity Press, 1979), 10.

Being on the margin, church leaders may walk the humble steps of Jesus Christ who became a friend of the poor, excluded, and ignored. By entering the relationships with those who have been marginalized on the edge, church leaders may truly see the realities of their lives with the compassionate eyes of Jesus Christ.

At the same time, some practical benefits for church leaders can be found on the margin. In cross-cultural ministry, the edges often become the shared space where different people meet and get to know one another. Accordingly, the leaders may find missional and evangelical opportunities on the margin. In the dynamics of interacting with others, imaginative leaders creatively build relationships with them and introduce the love of Christ Jesus by their faithful presence on the margin. While many Christian leaders want to invite more people to a church community, they cannot have frequent encounters with community people unless locating themselves at the margin. From the edge, church leaders may discover a new possibility of evangelism and mission fields.

Another benefit of being on the margin is to relate to others on an interdependence principle. When a leader is positioned at the edge, he/she will realize that resources are scarce and limited there. When Jesus put himself on the margin, he had to rely on his friends for a living. Bruce Fong shares his insight on interdependent relationship between Jesus and his disciples: “[Jesus] was completely dependent on the finances of others to sustain His physical well-being. Jesus lived in their homes, used their boats and ate their food because He had none of His own.”¹³⁶ By relying on his disciples, Jesus built up trust-relationships with his disciples. Being at the edge helps church leaders learn a living pattern of interdependence and reciprocal cooperation. As they serve others with pastoral leadership supports, they also receive care and love from the congregation. On the margin, this interdependent lifestyle can be recognized and developed.

¹³⁶ Fong, 135.

Finally, being on the margin may help church leaders cultivate their marginal leadership. The margin is not a safe place but is full of challenges, dynamics, and opportunities among different people. Remaining in the center does not allow church leaders to see the perspectives of new believers, visitors, outsiders, strangers, and non-churched people. On the contrary, leading from the edge not only allows the church leaders to view different perspectives but also to see the daily lives of people, listen to their voices, and obtain a new insight as marginal leaders. From the edge, the church leaders can extend their relationships beyond the church, learn a Christian lifestyle of interdependence, and embrace other people. Marginal leadership is a servant leadership of Jesus as well as an imaginative leadership with integrative thinking process in cultural crossroads.

Leading from the edge is not a simple leadership choice of ‘either center or edge’ mindset. Rather, it is a renewal of Christian calling that a church leader is “a struggling sinner, like all Christians, in need of the grace of God.”¹³⁷ Church leaders are to move around their leadership places to be closer to God and God’s people in order to effectively serve and lead God’s people. While the worldly culture operates power-oriented leadership in the center, marginal leaders relate to God’s people and find missional opportunities on the margin.

¹³⁷ Willimon, 36.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Imaginative leaders faithfully practice their servant leadership as a life pattern. They consistently think, pray, meditate, and practice the mission of God through their integrative thoughts and faithful presence on the margin, encountering others and building their relationships together. In order to continually journey on the road that is risk-taking and less taken, imaginative leaders are to become more faithful followers of Jesus Christ. By renewing their followership of Jesus Christ, both clergy and lay leaders become more assertive leaders, serving others and making a difference in the world. David Ford claims that “the future health of Christian theology partly depends, therefore, on the discernment and dedication of creative organizers who shape the agendas and environments needed for high-quality face-to-face communication.”¹³⁸ In fact, as church’s missional practices depend on faithful obedience of Christ’s followers, intentional leadership development among clergy and laity is a crucial matter for the future of the church.

Through my leadership studies, I have learned that effective leadership is accomplished by leaders’ faithful presence and practice. In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus clarifies the church’s identity as “the salt and the light of the world” and commands Christian believers to “shine their light before others.” Faithful presence of church leaders is to be fully present in their ordinary places and practice daily and weekly tasks as well as emerging ministries. Physical presence among God’s people is essential for church leaders to build trust-relationships with them. “Your visit made my day!” This simple but heartfelt appreciation from a homebound member gave me an insight of the importance of faithful presence. Both clergy and lay leaders are asked to be faithful to their servant leadership practice. In particular, lay leaders’ faithful presence and practice must be recognized as they edify true servant leadership. Without compensation or formal leadership title, many lay leaders work hard to build the kingdom of God from the edges. James Hunter underscores the importance of ‘faithful presence’ among church leaders not only

¹³⁸ Ford, 98.

inside the church but also in the world: “Faithful presence in the world means that Christians are fully present and committed in their spheres of social influence, whatever they may: their families, neighborhoods, voluntary activities, and places of work.”¹³⁹

One step further, Stephen Finlan connects faithful practice to the Eternal: “Doing God’s will is the secret of eternal life. This bears repeating: a person becomes eternalized by identifying with the will of the Eternal. Permanence of personal existence and permanent reliability of character are destiny of all who identify with the purpose of God.”¹⁴⁰ While church leaders repeatedly locate themselves in their ordinary places and faithfully practice God’s missions both in times of failure and success, they may experience a glimpse of God’s kingdom. Christine Pohl finds the significance of practice in all human communities and clarifies that the purpose of Christian practice is to help others in the world:

Practices are at the heart of human communities; they are things ‘people do together over time to address fundamental human needs.’ Every community has practices that hold it together; for Christians, practices can also be understood as responses to the grace we have already experienced in Christ, in light of the word and work of God, and for the sake of one another and the world.¹⁴¹

When church leaders consistently position themselves on the margin and practice responsible discipleship in the world, their presence and practice will become a faithful life pattern for others.

By serving and leading from the edge, imaginative leaders shape their lives into a faithful pattern for others. Through crossing the boundaries and engaging with others, imaginative leaders courageously and repeatedly learn the way of Christ in order to serve and lead the people of God from the edge. Eventually their leadership becomes a life pattern as the church leaders consistently locate themselves on the margin, make a faithful presence to the lives of others, and seek a more welcoming and embracing community of faith in Jesus Christ. While building relationships with others on the edge, church leaders come to rely more on God’s grace. As

¹³⁹ Hunter, 247.

¹⁴⁰ Finlan, 129.

¹⁴¹ Christine Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 5.

church leaders embrace others on the margin and deepen their relationships with them, the leaders also develop trust-relationships with God.

I have closely looked into the cross-cultural ministry and its imaginative leadership. Despite its challenges and pitfalls, cross-cultural ministry is a creative ministry that expands a shared space among different cultural groups and enhances church leaders' cultural competencies. I have analyzed the cross-cultural leaderships of Moses and Paul in the Scripture. From an Egyptian palace to wilderness and from synagogues to market places, Moses and Paul grew their imaginative leadership and built their relationships with diverse people. Through the process of interacting with others, church leaders can help their congregation embrace one another and recognize a person's unique gifts in the image of God. Christians need to creatively build solidarity beyond their race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and culture in order for the church community to experience reconciliation among different people. Imaginative leadership is an indispensable element that church leaders must equip in order to envision a hopeful future of church in today's complicated cultural crossroads.

Imaginative leaders see their church from a different viewpoint through creative distancing. They engage with others and expand shared spaces. They are always embedded with a hybrid mindset which considers both risk-taking and tilting, setting apart and bridging, and transforming and sustaining. As church leaders focus on Christ's radical way of life, they do not simply choose a better choice out of the given options. Rather, imaginative leaders hold the tension in a conflicting situation and take an integrative thought process to seek a third way for a more hopeful future. Moreover, imaginative leaders promote God's kingdom values in order to shine the light of Christ in the world.

In particular, I have emphasized marginal leadership based on Jesus' servant leadership. As Jesus engaged with the marginalized and became their friend on the margin, imaginative leaders are to position themselves on the edge to meet diverse people and build trust-relationships with them. The margin is a vulnerable place of exclusion and ignorance against social minorities.

It is also a challenging place for church leaders to experience humility without authority. At the same time, however, the margin can be a hopeful place where church leaders truly meet Christ Jesus who has fully emptied himself for others and renew their missional calling from God. On the margin, church leaders can recognize the marginalized and forgotten and embrace them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Marginal leaders may reach out to diverse people in cultural crossroads and accept those who are excluded and neglected from the church. Focusing on missional movements, church leaders are to be faithfully present on the margin and become witnesses of the good news of Christ Jesus. They must lead from the edge.

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