A Perspective on Cultural Diversity in an Anglican Setting

Title:
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Abstract (summary):
This thesis discusses how an ethnically and racially diverse Anglican congregation practises worship in a multicultural setting. It uses three worshiping practices, (1) sharing meals, (2) singing during Sunday liturgy, and (3) exercising leadership, to discuss this phenomenon. The methodology adopted is a phenomenological approach using participant observation, a questionnaire, and two group interviews. An analysis of the interviews yields the participants' own meanings that complicate and sometimes even challenge two widely held assumptions about the Church and immigration: (1) the concept of multiculturalism is settled; and (2) ethnic and racial diversity are accepted as the norm in the Anglican parish. As a comprehensive analysis of the experience of a single parish, this study contributes to the conversation on multiculturalism in the Anglican Church and to future research on worshipping practices in similar Anglican parishes in Toronto and beyond. The discussion and larger study have implications for the Anglican Church in Canada and its policies of multiculturalism at a time when it is re-examining the impact of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity on its membership. Chapter 1 introduces the thesis. Chapter 2 explores the background and context of my engagement in ministry. I identify three areas, (1) the parish of Christ Church Scarborough Village, (2) the demographics of Toronto, and (3) Canadian multiculturalism, as important for the setting of the study. Chapter 3 outlines my theology of ministry and highlights the importance of hospitality as a core concept in my understanding of parish ministry. I also provide a review of the literature as I discuss some fundamental biblical, theological, and social science theories for the study. This chapter ends with theological, pastoral, and sociological assumptions operative in the study. Chapter 4 addresses the Action in Ministry and explains the qualitative research methodology employed in this work and lays out the process and procedure. Chapter 5 presents the collection of the data and analyses, providing a dialogue among the three worshipping practices and three cluster themes. Chapter 6 synthesizes the findings and offers evaluation and contributions of the study. Chapter 7 concludes with the contributions of the study. Also in this concluding chapter, I challenge the notion of a multicultural church and recommend the move from a multicultural church to a just multicultural church where welcoming differences is critical for the integration of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in a congregation with a long tradition of Anglicanism. I also share personal reflections and suggest areas for further research before summarizing and concluding the study.

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Cultural homogenization usually disregards local cultural perspectives. (Huang & Trauth 2006, 260.) From a cultural point of view, globalization is the process of increasing homogeneity of individual lifestyles within the organization. Not only societies or cultures in a specific region identify diversity but the mosaic of belief systems, human social structures, and strategies for adapting to situations in different parts of the world define cultural diversity. Many people with different demographics and socio-cultural characteristics argue that they do not only represent a homogenous group; they rather belong to different groups with different characteristics. Recognizing diversity - Social workers should recognize and respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the societies in which they practice, taking account of individual, family, group and community differences. These principles and duties are set out in the England context by its General Social Care Council (GSCC) Codes of Conduct, which all qualified social workers there must abide by, Social workers must: • Protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers • Support service users’ rights to control their lives and make informed choices. about the services they receive