THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL CHURCH: BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

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

2. A DISTINCTION
   - Between international and intercultural.
   - Between multi-cultural and cross-cultural. (Diagram)

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

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

5. A VISUAL REPRESENTATION
   - To move from monocultural to intercultural.
   - Individuals attempt the ‘cross-cultural’ challenge.

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

7. THE OUTCOME: FROM INVITATION TO RADICAL WELCOME (Diagram)
Jonathan Sacks: The Home We Build Together; The Dignity of Difference; To Heal a Broken World. (Amazon)

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