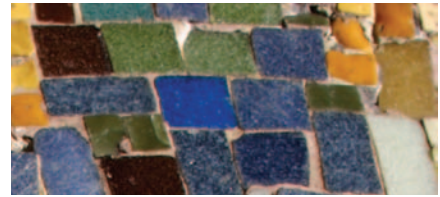
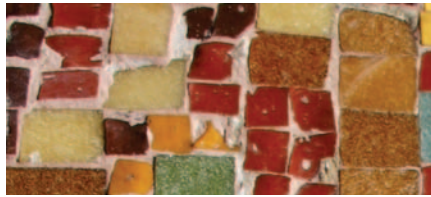


ONE BODY

God's Design for a Diverse Church by Zollie Smith



Evangelism is the central task of the Christian church. God's heartbeat has always been his unconditional love for souls—to the extent that he sent Jesus to die for all humanity (John 3:15,17). Peter states it clearly by proclaiming that the Lord is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

God intentionally sent his Son into the world to establish his church as the catalyst for reconciling lost, perishing souls to himself. For the church to become what God intended, we must follow his instructions. That is, the church must be intentional about demonstrat-

ing what God says it is—his body of ONE, bound together by love.

Through a harmonious and unified body, the world will know God sent Jesus. The Scriptures are clear that the born-again believer is a new creation. This new creation is one with God the Father and the Son, the Lord Jesus, having been reconciled to God as a new person. The nature of the believer is divine, the character of the believer is true righteousness and holiness, and the purpose of the believer is to be a dwelling place of God through the Spirit. Here there is “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision,

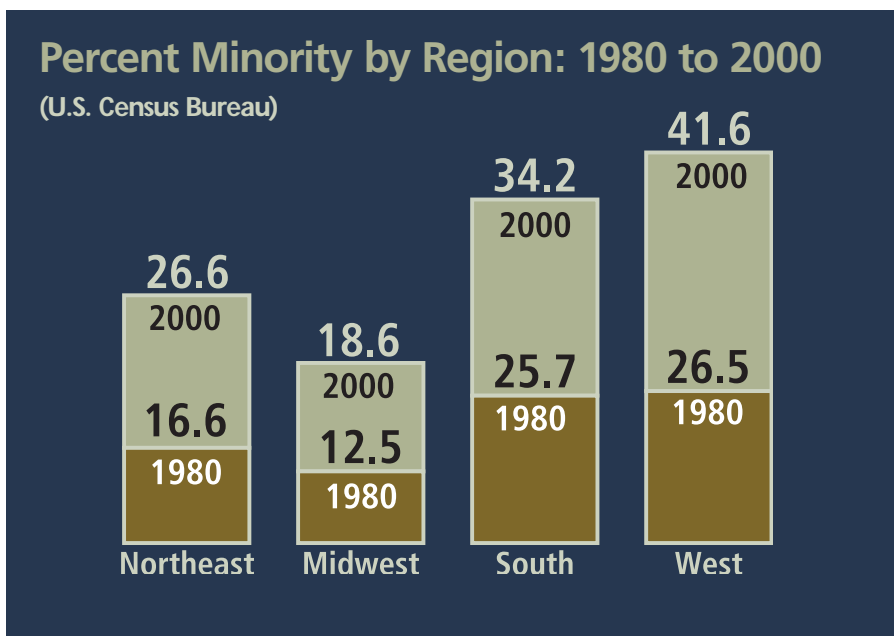
“Cross-cultural evangelism is no longer reserved for missionaries reaching the lost in some faraway land, but it is a necessary reality for most churches in North America.”

*—Dr. Mario Guerreiro,
AGTS Director of
Enrollment Management*

Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free”—because we are all one in Jesus Christ (Col. 3:11, KJV).

In the reality of the living Word of God, the church is made up of believers who are one in nature, character and purpose. Therefore, they are whole and have all things in common, regardless of their natural diversities.

In John 17:21-26, the theme of Jesus' prayer for the church is that his body of believers would be one even as he and the Father are one. This is the only prayer of Jesus that has not been fulfilled. Satan and his cohorts, as well as the selfishness of man, are fighting to prevent this from happening. When this prayer comes into





fruition, there will be a revival in America like none before.

Why? As the world witnesses diverse people groups loving and caring for one another, hurting hearts and souls will gravitate to the body of Christ where they too will become new creatures in Jesus. This bond of love will be the perfect standard of unity in the body of Christ. The fulfillment of Jesus' prayer of "oneness" for his church will be a demonstrative witness—causing the world to believe that God sent Jesus to redeem it.

Thus, achieving oneness in the church must be the intentional pursuit of every believer. What we possess differently does not make

us unique. What we have in common, the indwelling Holy Spirit, makes us uniquely one. Our diversities exist only in our giftedness

What we possess differently does not make us unique. What we have in common, the indwelling Holy Spirit, makes us uniquely one.

and administration of those gifts. We are one in our new nature, new character and new purpose. Where there is genuine oneness, there will be no prejudices of separation, jealousy, envy, pride or

schisms in the body, regardless of the skin pigmentation, language, nationality or gender. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a new race and should not be influenced by the social ills of a perverted world. The church is called to lead the world in this change.

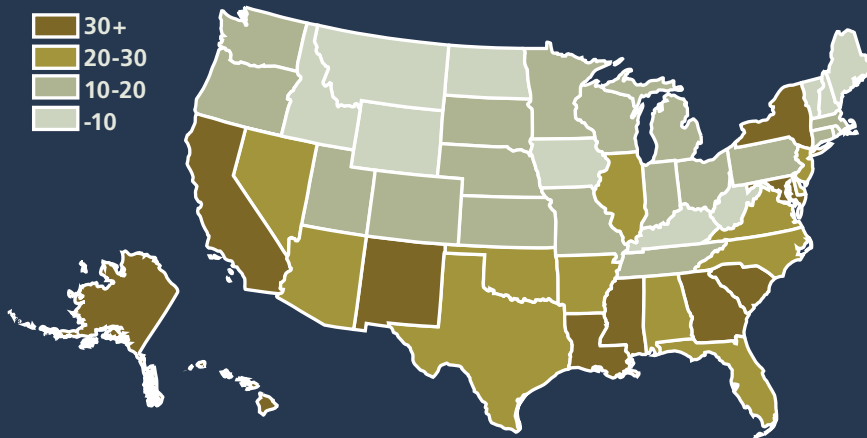
It is my prayer that God will answer Jesus' prayer so the greatest weapon of evangelism—the oneness of the believers—will be unleashed and that the world will know God sent Jesus to save every person.

Zollie Smith is a member of the AGTS Board of Directors, president of the AG Black Fellowship and an executive presbyter of the AG.



Percent Races Other than White by State: 2000

(U.S. Census Bureau)



"God's intent for believers is to live in community, despite the color of one's skin, cultural background or language used. To live as separate entities is to sever his body. Believers cannot fully appreciate the meaning and purpose of his body, unless they come together in community inspired by his Spirit. Without



such unity, the body of Christ is incomplete, unhealthy and less than God desires."

—Dr. Mario Guerreiro