

Living into the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm:
A Process of Conscientization and Discernment Toward
Just Intercultural Community for Christianity in the
Canadian Context

by

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Abstract

Canadian Christianity is moving into a new era described by David J Bosch as the emerging ecumenical paradigm, Bernard Lonergan as the possibility of many unique christianities, Karl Rahner as the third great epoch, Walbert Bühlmann as the Third Church, and Lamin Sanneh as a church no longer confined by western European cultural ways of thinking. This new context requires new tools for different ways of being Christian.

This study documents the development of The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning and the five-day *Engage Difference!* program as responses to the need to resource Canadian Christian communities to understand their cultures and contexts, and to develop local theologies, praxes, and pedagogies. *The Engage Difference!* approach draws on an emerging ecumenical consensus about the need for a new embrace of the diversity of the global Church. It provides visions of *Just Intercultural* community, Beloved Community, and Biblical Shalom as ways to embrace that diversity in Canada.

This thesis describes and explores cultural self-awareness and its role in relationship across cultural and other difference. It names barriers to intercultural ministry for Canadian churches including the Canadian peacemaker myth, the myth of the Ideal British Colony, and Canada's multiculturalism.

Strategies to counter these myths and provide tools for local theologies and praxes include intentional processes of conscientization shaped by the see-discern-act-celebrate hermeneutic circle, Ivan Illich's epimethean approach and convivial tools, poiesis or ministry as art, and pedagogies from non-western sources.

Using the Appreciative Inquiry "4-D" cycle, of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny and focus groups of program participants, resource people and facilitators, and institutional stakeholders the research tested the efficacy of those strategies, documented this Canadian ecumenical work as a resource for the wider Church, named the visions of *Just Intercultural* community that emerged, envisioned next steps for the program, and made recommendations to Canadian churches. This study describes ways the program is helping Canadian Christian communities discern God's vision for living into the "emerging ecumenical paradigm" and how the program is creating inspired spaces for visions of *Just Intercultural* community.

Dedicated to all who are “fighting for a world that must be the house of everyone.”¹

¹ Eduardo Galeano, “Vivir sin Miedo” (“Live Without Fear”), accessed April 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rygqfWagvhQ

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
CCC	The Canadian Council of Churches
CCFGM	Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries
CEARN	Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network
DUIM	Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry Program
FILL	Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning: A Reference Group of The Canadian Council of Churches
FIP	Church World Service Forum on International Personnel
FMM	Church World Service Forum on Mutuality in Mission
TRC	The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, THESIS STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

Introduction

“More and more, I'm growing keenly aware of the systemic ‘shutting out’ and devaluing of people with my cultural perspectives and economic position. The multifaceted mountain of stresses, vulnerabilities, and injustices this confers. I'm enraged and exhausted by it all. Longing to exhale.

As I search for positive, empowering ways to respond, my DUIM [Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program] experiences offer hopeful, comforting, inspiring glimpses of what can be: A circle of distinct voices, standing shoulder to shoulder – richer; stronger; wiser for weaving their experiences together in one collective song.

Niki Andre, Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning
DUIM Program Alumna Toronto 2015

In 2012 The Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries (CCFGM), founded in 1921 as the Canadian School of Missions, began a discernment and consultation process that led to a change of mandate. For the almost one-hundred years of the agency’s history the focus was on Canadian overseas mission and engagement. The new mandate is to resource ministry engaging across diversity within Canada. While this change of mandate was a response to the current context, its foundation lies in the agency’s many years of faithful response to the Canadian and global contexts and to innovations in pedagogy, missiology, justice, community, and ecumenism.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the churches in Canada find themselves in a new context. Churches increasingly are marginalized from the centre of power and influence in the culture as well as shrinking in numbers and resources. Globally, Christianity is less dominated by European Western Christianity. The Canadian churches are in a society that is both more diverse and recognizing the diversity that had long been present. The process of reconciliation with Canada’s Indigenous peoples challenge assumptions about the nature of the Canadian society. Voices from migrant and racialized populations and from diverse gender, sexual orientation and

identity, class, ableness, citizenship, education, urban-rural location, and other diversities challenge assumptions about Canada's culture.

In response, CCFGM became the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL), a reference group of The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) with a focus on intercultural ministry within Canada. The reference group's mandate is to be "an ecumenical Christian partnership through which Canadian churches work toward intercultural leadership development and ministry learning in Canada and globally."² At the core of this work is the development of *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry*, a 5-day intensive learning program offered across Canada. The agency's new terms of reference describe its raison d'être as, "The Christian Church's calling to Shalom, Peace, and Right Relationship requires cultural self-awareness as well as intentional understanding across cultures. The recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the apologies for the Indian Residential Schools are a reminder of this calling."³

Behind the development of the new agency and mandate, and more specifically the emergence of the new *Engage Difference!* program, is an assertion that Canadian churches are in a new context requiring new understanding and new tools to respond. That context and the tools offered are identified in the process of forming the reference group and launching *Engage Difference!* This thesis documents that process, the description of the context that emerged, the discernment of God's call in that context, and the tools offered in response. It describes the more complex understanding of "culture" that emerged through the development of the program, recognizing a multiplicity of intersecting differences encountered as people engage. It documents the impact of the program and identifies recommendations for future work. This thesis describes and explores assumptions about cultural self-awareness and its role in relationship across cultural and other differences. It names barriers to intercultural ministry for the Canadian churches, proposes

² Terms of Reference: Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL) A Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches. Adopted by the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches May 24, 2017, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/terms-of-reference>

³ Terms of Reference: Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL)

strategies to counter them, and tests the efficacy of those strategies. The research and recommendations deepen and enrich the work of FILL while documenting Canadian ecumenical work as a resource for the wider Church and envisioning next steps for FILL's work.

Thesis Statement

This thesis will argue that Canadian Christianity is in a new era requiring new responses that embrace the diversity of Canada and of the global Church. New tools are needed for discernment of local theologies, praxes, and pedagogies to respond to the many cultures in the Canadian contexts. It will demonstrate that through the *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry* program, Canadian Christian communities are acquiring these tools for living into the “emerging ecumenical paradigm” described by David J. Bosch and creating *Just Intercultural* communities.

Ministry Context

The History of the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning

A Canadian Expression of early 20th Century Ecumenical and Missiological Energy

A significant emphasis of FILL's intercultural ministry programs and other activities is the importance of an awareness of context. Part of that context is history. Cultures are shaped by and respond to a context and then carry that response through time. This can be a burden when the original reason for the shape of the culture no longer exists or is forgotten, but it also offers a pool of resources to draw on to understand and respond to the current context. FILL's current work and programs draw on and are shaped by the histories of Canada and of the Canadian churches. To understand the theology, pedagogy, and praxis of that work requires an understanding of the history of the institution spanning most of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Through that history one can see the development of the pedagogy, ecumenism, theology, understanding of justice, listening to those at the margins, and vision of Just Intercultural community that shapes the current work. Through much of the twentieth century, overseas mission and careful theological and cross-cultural preparation of missionaries were the Canadian denominations' way of responding to the recognition that there was an “other” in the

world. At the time, the other was the non-Christian and the non-Western Christian living outside what was perceived as the civilized world of Western Europe, the United States, and Canada. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the focus of mission was to change the other, through conversion to Christianity and to Western ways of thought, culture, and civilization. David J. Bosch describes this pre-World War I vision of the Church of Edinburgh 1910 as “conqueror of the world” as opposed to the later twentieth century “church in solidarity with the world.”⁴

In the history of the Canadian School of Missions, later known as the: Ecumenical Institute; Ecumenical Forum; Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries, and now the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning there occasionally was recognition that the other could be encountered in the Canadian context. At times, it also was contemplated that the focus for change might be on us and not the other. This was articulated clearly in the 1973 report, “An Affection for Diversity” which recommended that the agency, in addition to its world mission and missiology focus, “help end ethnocentric pride and narcissism, racial bigotry and monocultural blindness as well as being a centre for inter-faith encounter, study and reflection.”⁵ While this focus is named several times throughout its history, the energy, and resources available to the organization continued to make its primary focus world mission and training for denominational overseas personnel.

Today’s intercultural ministry programs are shaped by a century of the Canadian churches’ discernment of faithful engagement of the “other.” The Canadian School of Mission’s commitments to learning from context, learning in ecumenical settings, preparation to engage across cultural differences, learning and change from the margins and the marginalized, and learning deeply embedded in an ethos of providing a space for community shape today’s programs. The school’s history also was shaped by an evolving understanding of justice that now is manifested as a commitment to justice in the current work and programs. Significantly, the

⁴ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Missions: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 377.

⁵ Janet Somerville and Charles Hendry, *An Affection for Diversity: a report of a Consultation on Education Ecumenically for the Canadian Council of Churches* (Toronto: The Canadian Council of Churches, 1973)

history of the school includes regular attention to change in its context and processes of consultation and discernment that led to changes of focus and activity for FILL. The recent shift of the agency toward resourcing ministry across diversity within Canada resonates with this culture of adapting to changing contexts throughout the agency's history.

Early Years of the Canadian School of Missions: The Energy of Edinburgh 1910

The Canadian School of Missions came out of Canadian discussions on mission and mission training following the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 and the desire for a Canadian expression of the ecumenical and missiological energy of the time.⁶ In 1917, representatives from several Protestant mission boards and theological colleges of the University of Toronto began an extended conversation which resulted in the founding of the Canadian School of Missions. The opening worship for the newly founded School was held at Knox College Toronto in 1921. The original vision was for mission and evangelism to be the first initiative that would lead to a broader ecumenical movement. The founding denominations were Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian. The chief contributors were Canon S. Gould (Anglican), Rev. J.G. Brown (Baptist), Dr. James Endicott (Methodist), Dr. R.P. Mackay (Presbyterian), Chancellor Richard Bowles and Dean Edward Wallace (Victoria College), Professor F.H. Cosgrave (Trinity College) and Principal Alfred Gandier (Knox College). The only other existing Canadian ecumenical agency that predates this organization is the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC), established in 1918. An early champion of Canadian ecumenism, the Canadian School of Missions would uphold ecumenism as one of its primary characteristics through its history. This commitment lives on in and profoundly shapes FILL's current organization and programs.

The School's first director was Dr. J. Lovell Murray, a former missionary and participant in the Student Volunteer Movement. The School's first home was a desk in the corner of the office of

⁶ The history of FILL is documented at "The History of the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning" *Based on an address given by Teresa Burnett at the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the Canadian School of Missions/Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries*, accessed July 2019, www.interculturalleadership.ca/about/history

the Rev. H.C. Priest, Secretary of the Missionary Education Movement, in the old Confederation Life Building in Toronto. In 1928-1929, a campaign committee raised \$55,000 which was matched by the Rockefeller Foundation to purchase the School's first property at 97 St. George Street. The building, now part of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, still bears the stone inscription, "Canadian School of Mission." At the dedication of the building there were prayers "that the confines of knowledge may be ever enlarged and all good learning flourish and abound."⁷ This commitment to learning continues to be a core mandate of the organization.

In the 1930s, the School provided courses in mission for the Student Volunteer Movement and for student mission study groups of the arts and medical colleges. University and theological college professors volunteered as course instructors. Lectures offered during this time attracted prominent international church personalities such as John R. Mott and Kenneth Scott Latourette. Because of high interest in mission among lay and clergy the lectures were well-attended and covered in Toronto's daily newspapers. The School offered elective courses in missions as part of training for medical and education students. The School offered courses for missionaries on furlough, and a Missionary Orientation Course was established for mission personnel being sent by the denominations and mission agencies. The School also functioned as a social centre for returned missionaries. An emphasis on fostering intentional community runs through the School's history and is evident in FILL's emphases on learning in community and on building a network of intercultural ministry practitioners across Canada.

Dr. Murray retired in 1947. Dr. L.S. Albright, the School's next long-term director, cofounded the Toronto Institute of Linguistics with Dr. Eugene Nida of the American Bible Society. By the late 1960s the Institute had an annual registration of between eighty and one-hundred students from twenty-nine mission agencies and would become a separate institute.

⁷ *Service of Dedication of The Canadian School of Missions. 97 St. George Street, Toronto, Canada. Monday Afternoon, January Sixth Nineteen Hundred and Thirty at Three O'Clock.* The archives of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Middle of the Twentieth Century: The Emergence of an “Ecumenical Centre”

By the late 1950s the Canadian School of Missions had become an ecumenical centre. The building was a meeting hall and home for missionary groups and the home of WICC. The School hosted multiple lectures and events and housed a specialized missionary library. The School ran several programs including courses on Christian mission for university students, courses for missionaries on furlough, courses of the Toronto Institute of Linguistics, an expanded version of the Missionary Orientation Conference, and customized tutoring programs.

The 1960s would see one of the organization’s many moments of response to a changing context and discernment of a new focus. A recurring theme in the one-hundred-year life of the School is discernment of the context and reshaping structure, programs and even mandate in response. This tradition continues to be part of the organization’s ethos and made possible the shift to the current emphasis on Canadian intercultural ministry. In 1960, global ecumenism was changing, and a special conference was held to try to decide what the School’s focus should be in the future. One of the recommendations from the conference was that the Canadian School of Missions should join The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) in creating an ecumenical centre. In 1962, a by-law of CCC established an ecumenical centre, The Canadian School of Missions and Ecumenical Institute, which operated as an arms-length agency under the aegis of CCC.⁸ The new organization continued to carry on the programs of the Canadian School of Missions but added to its mandate other study interests and activities of ecumenism. At the time the common ground that brought the two institutions together was that, “the School [of Missions] attended to mission in unity and the [Canadian] Council [of Churches] to unity in mission.”⁹ These similar but different approaches remain a source of potential tension and engagement in FILL’s relationship with the rest of the CCC today.

⁸ *Canadian Council of Churches record of proceedings: 14th meeting Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Toronto, ON. Nov 5th-8th, 1962.*

⁹ *The Order for Service for the Inauguration of the Canadian School of Missions and Ecumenical Institute and the Installation as Director of the Reverend Canon H.L. Puxley, M.A., D.D., D.C.L., eight o’clock in the evening on Friday, the eighteenth of October Nineteen hundred and sixty three in Knox College Chapel, Toronto.*

As it negotiated this new relationship with CCC, The Canadian School of Missions was in, as it found itself many times over its history, the centre of conversations about the Canadian context and role of the Canadian churches. CCC was in a crisis that challenged its mission, relevance, and activities and called into question its existence. In an emerging post-colonial world, Canadians were rejecting many of nation's "colonial" institutions including the large national centralized churches that made up CCC. Canada's major Protestant churches were no longer seen as providing a moral vision for Canadian society.¹⁰

The new institute was born out of a commitment to ecumenism and a need to study, understand, and encourage the emerging Canadian and Global ecumenism in a changing context. The School appointed Canon H.L. James Puxley, Secretary to the CCC's Departments of Overseas Missions and Evangelism its new director. Dr. Katharine Hockin, who was to become one of Canada's leading missiologists and ecumenists, was appointed the first Dean of Studies. The institute organized several courses in Ecumenics that attracted both Protestant and, in a significant development in Canadian ecumenism in the wake of the second Vatican Council, Catholic students. Shaped by engaging the global Church, the work of the School in this and the decades that followed would increasingly focus on issues of justice in both global engagement and in encounters between cultures. This shift in focus would lay important groundwork for the focus on justice in relationships of today's Just Intercultural ministry programs.

Notable during this time was a program of women's Bible studies organized by Dr. Katherine Hockin. Many women of this generation reflect on the importance of these studies in their formation and in finding a voice. During an era when women remained marginalized in society and the church, including church leadership and theologian roles, these study groups were particularly empowering of women who were beginning to gain confidence in lending their voices and interpretation to the Christian faith in Canada. This creation of space for marginalized

¹⁰ Daniel C. Goodwin, "The Canadian Council of Churches: its founding vision and early years, 1944-1964." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 147-173.

groups grounds the agency's current work, which recognizes the gifts that come from empowering marginalized voices.

The 1960s were a time of change and this organization was not immune as it cast about to understand and respond to its context. In 1965, it reorganized again and renamed itself the Ecumenical Institute of Canada, offering programs under four major headings: Academic, Consultative, Research, and Reference. In the late 1960s, the Institute took on several special research projects such as the "Sexuality and Family Life Study", a national conference on the meaning of "Ecumenical," a joint study with Roman Catholics on religion in education, and projects forwarded by the CCC such as the "Salvation Today" and "Faith and Order" commissions.

In 1969, the new Toronto School of Theology (TST) was born and the new graduate faculty arranged to take over all courses previously taught by the Canadian School of Missions, except those in the area of missiology. Over years, the connection with the Toronto School of Theology was lost and then re-established in 2005, when the agency moved into the Toronto School of Theology building, and strengthened again in 2019 when coursework was offered for academic credit. In 1969, the University of Toronto succeeded in expropriating the Institute's building at 97 St. George Street and the institution moved to 11 Madison Avenue in Toronto. Shortly after this move, confusion between the Ecumenical Institute of Canada and the Ecumenical Institute of Chicago (coincidentally with a Chicago address of 17 Madison Avenue), necessitated a name change to the Ecumenical Forum of Canada.

Regular assessment of context continued to be part of the life of the organization and in 1973, The Ecumenical Forum was part of the "An Affection for Diversity" report. It would be decades before the organization would fully live into the recommendation of that report to *help end ethnocentric pride and narcissism, racial bigotry and mono-cultural blindness*. The core mission to become a centre for understanding world mission and for teaching missiology continued, but the seeds for the current programs and mandate were sown. A broader understanding of ecumenism also shaped the Ecumenical Forum as illustrated by the recommendation that it become a centre for inter-faith encounter, study, and reflection. Once again, the foundation was

laid for the broad visions of ecumenism and community that shape today's programs and activities.

In the 1980s, The Ecumenical Forum's program emphasis began to shift from academic courses on mission to cross-cultural education for mission practitioners (such as denominational mission personnel). The organization changed its name again in 1989, after yet another extensive re-visioning and restructuring process, and it became the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries. The 1970s to 1990s was also the era of the emergence of the Canadian justice coalitions (such as The Aboriginal Rights Coalition, Inter-Church Coalition on Africa, Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, and others).¹¹ The life of the CCFGM was intertwined with these coalitions shaped by issues of global justice encountered in the mission field and staffed by former mission personnel who had come through the CCFGM's programs. CCFGM operated as a "landlord" for many of these coalitions, renting out office space at its 11 Madison building and providing meeting and event space.

Late Twentieth Century Shifts in Mission and Shrinking Denominational Budgets

Through the World Council of Churches, in the early 1970s, there was a proposed moratorium on sending missionaries and money from the North, and an alternative proposal for more justice in mission relations.¹² In the last quarter of the twentieth century, a related debate in the member denominations of CCFGM was shaping mission practices and attitudes. There were calls for a shift from the model and attitudes that saw "missionaries go from the West to the rest, from what had been seen as superior to the inferior, from the religious to the pagan" and to no longer see the purpose of mission as conversion, development, or civilizing. Mission was to mean that all churches should become both send and receive missionaries.¹³ Within the global ecumenical

¹¹ The stories of these coalitions are well documented in: Christopher Lind and Joe Mihevic, eds., *Coalitions for Justice: The Story of Canada's Interchurch Coalitions*. (Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul University, 1994)

¹² World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism History, accessed February 29, 2020, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/cwme/history>

¹³ Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, "From Colonization to Right Relations: The Evolution of United Church of Canada Missions within Aboriginal Communities", *International Review of Mission*, Volume 103, Issue 1 April 2014): 153 – 171.

movement “mission as conversion” shifted to “mission as witness.” A key moment in this shift was the 1989 San Antonio, Texas World Mission Conference at which there was a consensus statement reached on the relation between Christianity and other religions.¹⁴ Although the historic mission sending churches continued to hold more wealth and power in decision making it appeared a new approach to mission was emerging. In the 1990s the shrinking budgets of national churches and shifts in denominational missiology, that now emphasised mutuality and partnership over the sending of overseas mission personnel, impacted the agency. The positive impact of this evident in the shaping of the current intercultural ministry programs was a lived experience of the “other” as no longer an “object” of mission activity. Rather, overseas partners, and, increasingly, Canadians born in other cultures and contexts, were seen as having equally valid experiences of God and faith. The churches of the Majority World (global south) who first began to make themselves known at the beginning of the 20th century had become no longer dependent on their “mother” churches in the “north.” By the beginning of the 21st century, the Majority World Church far outnumbered Christianity in North America and Europe.¹⁵ CCFGM continued to offer Missionary Personnel Programs. Mission Discernment, Orientation, Furlough, Re-entry and children’s programs helped to support those who were involved in international cross-cultural ministry. CCFGM offered programs for short-term visitors to Canada and for Canadians engaging in short term cross-cultural ministry.

At the time, many assumed that a new model of mission would emerge that would result in “reverse mission.” Sending personnel overseas no longer would dominate Canadian mission. Rather, the focus would be the receiving of missionaries from the majority world and cultures that had historically received Canadian missionaries. To resource this reverse mission activity, described as “mutuality in mission,” CCFGM participated in the Forum for Mutuality in Mission of Church World Service, produced written resources,¹⁶ and developed an orientation to Canada

¹⁴ *World Council of Churches Commission on Mission and Evangelism History*, accessed April 15, 2020, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/cwme/history>

¹⁵ Todd M. Johnson and Sun Young Chung, “Tracking Global Christianity's Statistical Centre of Gravity, AD 33-AD 2100”, *International Review of Mission* (April 2004).

¹⁶ Mary Rose Donnelly was contracted to produce the book *Here Among Us: A Guide to Intercultural Experience - for visitors to Canada*, (Toronto: The Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries, 2000).

program. Several member denominations of the agency funded missionaries from overseas to work within the Canadian denominations. However, the bias of the power dominance of the Canadian churches in relation to partners from the global south was still present. There continued to be more energy for funding the sending of missionaries overseas, so these initiatives were short lived.¹⁷ Recognizing the need to resource the voice of the other, and in particular voices from outside Canada, was one of the seeds that continues to shape the current work of the FILL.

There was increased networking with other ecumenical organizations and participation in shared projects in the 1990s. This included the Ecumenical Presence Project during the Fourth Latin American Bishop's Conference on the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus in the Americas, the Faith and Justice Training Project, a series of workshops held across Canada to promote economic literacy and theological reflection, and the World Council of Churches study on "Gospel and Culture." Decreasing finances led to the sale of the 11 Madison building in 1996.

Reflecting Canadian Church solidarity with the Latin American Church and patterns of migration at the time, the book was also translated into Spanish and published as *Aquí entre Nosotros: Guía para una experiencia intercultural – Para visitantes a Canadá*

¹⁷ The author of this thesis, during this time, as Director of the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries, participated in the Church World Service Forum on Mutuality in Mission (FMM) and was part of conversations in which denominational staff described their experiences with and winding down of mutuality in mission and reverse mission programs. Among the struggles with the model was that at the local congregational level there continued to be an orientation toward mission as sending of personnel from Canada overseas. It continued to be easier to raise funds for overseas missionaries. There was little local congregational interest in funding reverse missions or supporting allocation of funds from national church budgets. The influence of the historic mission paradigm continued to be problematic in other ways. Local communities assumed the missionaries from overseas less competent and needing to be cared for by the host communities. Relationships were often paternalistic and shaped by a charity-helping relationship. There was a spoken and unspoken sense that they were in Canada to become civilized or better themselves. (During the mutuality in mission era I was Pastor in a congregation which hosted an overseas missionary. Part of the orientation by denominational staff was a caution she might be looking to marry to gain Canadian Immigration status) There was little recognition that the missionaries from outside Canada would experience culture shock and cultural adaptation as there was an unspoken belief that Canadian culture was easier to live in. There was often no real openness from the Canadian communities to be missionized or learn about and grow in their Christian faith through the wisdom and experience of these missionaries. For a while FMM continued as a table for conversation on best practices for short term mission trips, but by 2009 the FMM ceased to exist and merged into the Forum on International Personnel (FIP). While there were later attempts by denominational staff to resurrect this body, FIP would cease to meet in 2013. Membership in both bodies was made up of denominational and agency staff responsible for denominational overseas mission and included staff from The Presbyterian Church-USA, American Baptist Churches (USA), Episcopal Church (USA), Anglican Church of Canada, United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ (USA), African American Episcopal Church (USA), United Methodist Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Church of the Brethren (USA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

CCFGM would move its offices between temporary locations before it found a permanent location in 2005, in the Toronto School of Theology building.

Another significant event that helped shape the current intercultural ministry programs was the process of apology and reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous communities. At the end of the twentieth century, several of the Canadian churches, including most of the member denominations of CCFGM, entered into this process with Indigenous peoples in Canada as they became aware of the abuses and damage to culture done by the church-run Indian Residential school system.¹⁸ The recognition of the cultural damage of the residential schools' assumptions and approaches to education is part of the careful intentional attention to pedagogy of the current intercultural programs. The pedagogy recognizes the potential for damage, and the potential resources, of learning across cultural, power, privilege, and other differences.

Twenty-first Century and a New Vision

In 2005, the author of this thesis joined the staff of CCFGM as Co-Director. The early years on staff included keeping the organization viable despite rapid change. I shaped and was shaped by a process that resulted in a new vision for the organization. Rapid increases in globalization and changes in technology were changing the world. In the early twenty-first century, massive numbers of people migrated, by choice or by being driven out of their homelands. Canadian

¹⁸ This is a decades-long process that continues to shape the Canadian Churches. The 2015 "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action" http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf (Accessed March 2020) directed ongoing reconciliation for the Churches, including a covenant process for Canadian denominations that were not directly involved in the running of the Indian Residential Schools. Within denominations there are processes of reconciliation with their indigenous members and relationship. The parties to the Residential Schools (institutions that were involved in the running of the schools) issued individual apologies. The Anglican Church of Canada, through the Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, apologies to the National Native Convocation Minaki, Ontario, Friday, August 6, 1993 <https://www.anglican.ca/tr/apology/english/> (accessed March 8, 2020). The Presbyterian Church in Canada apologized through adoption of a confession at its General Assembly, June 9th, 1994 <http://presbyterian.ca/downloads/35607/> (accessed March 8, 2020). In 1988 the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, The Right Rev. Bob Smith, issued an apology <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/apologies-response-crest.pdf> (accessed March 8, 2020). The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate issued an apology in 1991 through the Oblate Conference of Canada http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/oblate_apology_english.pdf (accessed March 8, 2020). The Royal Canadian Mounted Police would issued an apology for their involvement in 2004 <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/aboriginal-autochtone/apo-reg-eng.htm> (accessed March 8, 2020). Through Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Government of Canada apologized in Parliament in 2011 <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1571589171655> (accessed March 6, 2020).

cities became increasingly diverse. CCFGM, located in Toronto, found itself in a city where the majority of its citizens were either first- or second-generation Canadians. This was also happening in other large Canadian urban centres and was beginning to emerge in smaller urban and even rural communities. The context had changed and again there was a need for the organization to discern its context and mandate.

CCFGM existed as an ecumenical partnership through which Canadian denominations worked together.¹⁹ In 2012, despite its mandate and funding from and collaboration with Canadian denominations, there was only one of fifty participants in the overseas personnel program from a Canadian denomination, while all the others were from denominations in the United States. This was a seminal event for the organization toward today's mandate. There was a significant decrease in the number of Canadian overseas personnel in the first decade of the twenty-first century, so the agency was forced to question its purpose and viability. At first, the organization was creative in surviving by offering different programs, including training for leaders of short-term mission trips, and keeping its historical programs viable by resourcing denominations from the United States. As those denominations experienced shrinking capacity, they were no longer offering an ecumenical program for overseas personnel and looked to the CCFGM to fill a gap. In the first years, this experiment went well as bringing together Canadian and USA cultures provided a hands-on cross-cultural experience for the participants. The history of bringing together in programs the cultures of different denominations, and during this time of different countries, set the groundwork for today's diverse program learning communities as a hands-on learning of relationship and ministry across cultural differences. However, as the USA participants began to outnumber the Canadians their cultural perspectives overwhelmed conversations, and Canadian program staff, not knowing the USA culture well enough, found it difficult to facilitate the sometimes-challenging course content for USA participants. As a Canadian agency largely funded by Canadian denominations, CCFGM had to consider whether its role primarily should be preparing overseas mission personnel from USA denominations.

¹⁹ The Canadian Council of Churches By-Laws. As amended in 2000. Section X: Agencies under the Aegis of The Canadian Council of Churches: sub-section A: The Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries.

The agency engaged a process of consultation and discernment with stakeholders to shift its mandate as a response to the current Canadian context. The CCFGM board called together denominational representatives and other potential stakeholders. In the meetings, it outlined the CCFGM's history and resources. It asked questions about plans for future overseas engagement and the need to resource this activity ecumenically. Participants named their contexts and needs, and they explored other possible ecumenical work that would build on the agency's history and resources. This process led to identifying need for resourcing Canadian denominations as they respond to the actual increasing diversity within Canada and a growing awareness of diversity long present within the culture.

Engaging stakeholders led to conversations with CCC and its member denominations. Already an arms-length agency under the aegis of the CCC,²⁰ CCFGM was proposed as a possible third CCC commission, a Commission on Mission and Evangelism. The proposal failed but conversation continued. This led to the agency becoming more fully part of CCC where it could engage a broader experience of Canadian ecumenism through the CCC's twenty-six member denominations. In 2017, CCFGM became the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL), a reference group of The Canadian Council of Churches. As a director of the CCFGM, the author of this thesis played a key role in this change. With the CCFGM board and others, we identified the need to change the organization's mandate, facilitated conversations with stakeholders, negotiated the new relationship with CCC, and developed the new mandate and resulting program and activities. In my role as director of CCFGM, I was tasked with maintaining the agency and designing and implementing program that responded to its understanding of Canadian global mission. The work helped me to learn and to appreciate the history and resources of Canadian missiology. Through shepherding the process of change, I gained new understanding of the Canadian context. Guiding the agency into its new mandate to engage diversity in Canada would shape my understanding of ministry.

²⁰ The Canadian Council of Churches bylaws. Section X: Agencies under the Aegis of the Council. Revised 2014.

Since 2013, the primary focus of the agency became the prophetic challenge of Canadian churches to engage the other in more just ways within Canada. Building on the resources of its historic roots the agency was reborn as FILL, with a new mandate to serve as a centre for ecumenical dialogue and praxis around the increasingly diverse Canadian context. FILL provides ecumenical programs to help Canadian denominations do ministry more effectively in this context. The centrepiece of this work is a five-day ecumenical program, *Engage Difference!*²¹ This work is a product of the one-hundred-year history of the Canadian School of Missions. It draws from that history the experiences of Canadian and global ecumenism, the skills of understanding and responding to context, the intentional pedagogy as a praxis of justice, the emphasis on creating and supporting community, and on relationship across cultural differences. It also draws on the role of Canadian churches in mission and in colonial relationships globally and in Canada.

The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning

As the FILL reference group formed, the outgoing governing board of CCFGM shepherded the development of terms of reference for the new group, which were adopted by the CCC governing board at its spring 2017 meeting.²² The groups mandate was:

The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of the Canadian Council of Churches is an ecumenical Christian partnership through which Canadian churches work toward intercultural leadership development and ministry learning in Canada and Globally.

Through The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning, Canadian churches:

- Come together for biblical and theological reflection on issues of contemporary intercultural mission and ministry;
- Provide innovative educational resources and programs for intercultural learning, leadership development and ministry in Canada and globally, with special emphasis on cultural awareness and identity;

²¹ *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program*, accessed November 2017, www.interculturalleadership.ca/duim

²² Terms of Reference: Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (F.I.L.L.) A Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches. Adopted by the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches May 24, 2017, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/terms-of-reference>

- Participate in learning and dialogue with church members and wider communities of faith about a society that fully honours diversity and God's unequivocal welcome; and
- Network and support persons directly engaged in ministry across cultural and other differences.

The reference groups' activities were to be in the areas of education, theological reflection, and relationship building. Appointed members, primarily denominational staff, long made up the board of CCFGM. Historically, a minority of the CCFGM board were "members-at-large" vetted by their denominations, who brought interest, experience, and volunteer time to the board's work. As the new reference group formed, special attention was given to ensuring diverse membership from across Canada. Breaking with norms of the ecumenical institution, the new reference group included a significant number of "members at large." These were alumni of the intercultural ministry programs previously offered across Canada, and other grassroots practitioners of intercultural ministry. The locus of Canadian ecumenism and intercultural ministry was moving away from denominational offices and staff to local contexts and resources. At a time when many denominational staff teams did not reflect Canada's diversity and were located only in Toronto, drawing board membership from broader circles was an intentional strategy to form a more culturally and geographically diverse body.

As CCFGM was dissolving to become FILL, its membership included The Anglican Church of Canada, The United Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Scarboro Foreign Missions (Roman Catholic), and The Toronto Archdiocese of The Roman Catholic Church. Earlier in its history it included the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec, and representation from other organizations including Our Lady's Missionaries (Roman Catholic) and The Toronto School of Theology. The new reference group was now part of the CCC, an ecumenical body with a membership of twenty-six denominations representing eighty-five percent of the Christians in Canada. I also had connections to denominations and organizations with observer status at the CCC such as the Pentecostal

Assemblies of Canada and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.²³ While historic denominations dominated membership before, the new reference group fostered membership from the broader ecumenical community of the CCC. The board of CCFGM met for the final time in the spring of 2018.

Another important development in the forming of the FILL reference group was that the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network (CEARN), previously connected to the CCC Commission on Justice and Peace, would move into FILL. Staff of CCFGM had participated for many years in CEARN, housed in the CCC. The work of CEARN influenced the work of CCFGM and, in part, was an “anti-racism conscience” to the agency. As new intercultural ministry programming was developed, racial justice was a key lens. This network described itself as “an expression of Canadian churches working together to support anti-racism programs and educators who are working in member churches, sharing resources and learning among anti-racism educators, and supporting long-term change in Canadian churches and church organizations.”²⁴ It formed as a Canadian response to the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa. The mandate of CEARN was “to accompany churches and church organizations in Canada who are working toward racial justice, racial reconciliation, and peace, to transform themselves and their communities.” Its goals were, “to build and strengthen a national ecumenical network of anti-racism educators and activists, mutually support and hold one another accountable as we learn more about racism in the churches and church organizations in Canada—and become transformed churches, and to develop and share resources.”

In the winter and spring of 2018, representatives of CCC denominations and other stakeholder organizations along with *Engage Difference!* program alumni and facilitators participated in a series of videoconference and face-to-face consultations across Canada. The consultation sought

²³ The Canadian Council of Churches, Accessed April 2017, <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/about-us/members/>

²⁴ Accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/social-justice/undoing-racism/anti-racism-network/>

to “hear the experiences, resources, successes and needs of [FILL’s] members around relationships and ministry across cultural and racial differences.”²⁵ Out of those experiences and needs it was asked “What can we do ecumenically and what can FILL be and do?” The reference group adopted four areas of work from those identified:

- **Training for Transformation:** There is a need for ongoing training for intercultural ministry and racial justice including continuing to offer the Engage Difference! program across Canada, design and offer shorter workshops, and train and support facilitators of intercultural ministry.
- **Gathering and Networking:** There is a strong need to bring people together. FILL can support networking nationally and locally. It can provide opportunities and safe spaces for conversation, dialogue, and learning. As it does it can engage the margins, provide alternative models of leadership, and be rooted in the experiential and contextual.
- **Theology and Research:** FILL can serve as a Canadian Centre for well-done theologies of intercultural ministry and racial justice. It can also provide connections to research on these topics and resources from social sciences disciplines such as sociology and anthropology.
- **Collaboration across institutions:** FILL should continue to work ecumenically. It can encourage collaboration between institutions such as theological colleges and learning centres. It can be a resource to these institutions as well as encouraging them to provide training in intercultural ministry and racial justice. FILL should collaborate with other bodies of the Canadian Council of Churches, including challenging the CCC and other institutions to look at their diversity and ways of being through intercultural and racial justice lenses.

Following the first face-to-face gathering of the new reference group in the fall of 2018, working groups organized around the four named areas with CEARN as a fifth group.

When engaging diversity first was conceived in this process, it was primarily understood as diversity of “culture” and race. However already at the time of this consultation, the experience of providing programs for ministry across diversity had led to a much broader understanding of diversity that includes the intersectionality of many ways that power, privilege, and marginalization are experienced and shape ministry in Canada. The consultation of stakeholders tended to avoid naming other diversity, but the transcripts of the consultation included comments

²⁵ *FILL 2018 Consultation Summary report*, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/wp-content/uploads/Summary-report-CCC-FILL-CEARN-Consultation-spring-2018.pdf>

such as a need to engage “hidden diversities.” The ways of being in relationship of CCC shaped the ecumenical consultation. During the consultation a frustrated participant declared, “The Council focuses on diversity of denominations, at the expense of other diversity.” More recently participants in a CCC event described the difference between “polite ecumenism” where focus is on what we have in common, and “impolite ecumenism” in which we name how we are different and disagree. Some of the most evident, but certainly not only, differences are denominational understandings of sexuality, gender and roles of women in the church, and approaches to issues such as end of life decisions and reproductive rights. At the writing of this thesis, the presence of FILL in CCC has begun to invite “impolite ecumenism” conversations.

The Author of the Doctor of Ministry Thesis

As mentioned above, I was involved deeply in the migration of CCFGM to FILL. The move involved changing the mandate of the agency from resourcing international mission personnel to resourcing intercultural ministry in Canada and the development of *Engage Difference!* Not only did I help to shape these transitions, these changes marked my own journey of discovery and my ability to articulate my pedagogy, theology, and cultural self-awareness. My studies and research for this Doctor of Ministry thesis overlapped many of these transitions and helped to shape and was shaped by those changes.

In intercultural work, it has been important to name my social location that informs my understanding and experience of diversity and the contexts and culture this work hopes to engage. I am a White, well-educated, middle class, married, heterosexual cis-gender, male of European (German) heritage, well rooted in Lutheran church tradition. I have lived most of my life in large urban or suburban centres where many people are not from my ethno-racial background. Out of my socio-economic and other privilege, I can choose to interact with this diversity while not experiencing the marginalization that is the reality of many in the communities where I have lived. I was born in Canada months after my parents immigrated to Canada from the United States. My father was clergy in the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church (for which Canada was the mission field). At the time, USA clergy in Canadian churches were placed in large innovative and growing urban congregations, positions of power and

privilege, while Canadian clergy were placed in less privileged rural congregations. My ancestors on my father's side founded the Missouri Synod after immigrating to the USA in the 1800s in order to maintain a theology that was marginalized in Germany. In my family genealogy I am the ninth generation of Lutheran clergy. My mother's family emigrated from Germany prior to the American Revolution and were part of the settling of German (and Lutheran) communities in the USA Midwest. In the pecking order of European immigrants to the USA her family was part of the more powerful German immigrants of the area, owning the local bank and a salt mine. As part of the pre-revolution immigration, females of the family would have the prestigious membership in the "Daughters of the American Revolution" and thus able to stake a claim to defining what an American is and looks like.

Through this history, I am steeped in the theology, doctrine, and culture of the Lutheran tradition. I was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and served in parish ministry, and then university campus ministry. In addition to Canadian contexts, I have lived in Albuquerque New Mexico, inner city Cleveland Ohio, and San Salvador, El Salvador. Currently I live in Scarborough, a very diverse part of the city of Toronto.

My Latin American experience gave me a firsthand experience of Latin American liberation theology and living in Latin America, USA inner cities, and inner suburbs of a Canadian city exposed me to the dynamics of poverty and marginalization. In Cleveland, I connected with the Catholic Worker movement and the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. In my theological training at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, I was influenced by the social gospel and liberation theology emphasis of the faculty at the time such as Rev. Dr. Bob Kelly and my comprehensive supervisor and mentor Rev. Dr. Oscar (Oz) Cole Arnal.²⁶ My Latin America experience, making home in low income neighbourhoods of Canada and the US, encounters with liberation theologians and practitioners in person and writings, and involvement with the Catholic worker movement have meant my faith finds a comfortable dialogue partner in Liberation theology. Encounters with

²⁶ Arnal, Oscar Cole. *Priests in Working-Class Blue: The History of the Worker-Priests (1943–1954)*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

wise persons with no formal education in communities of poverty and the wisdom of Indigenous persons in Latin America and North America shaped my pedagogy.

The Lutheran “priesthood of all believers” prepared me to recognize and appreciate the gifts of wisdom and experience in all persons. This view means theology is not only the purview of the trained theologian nor wisdom only of the formally educated. It means that God is being revealed and theology is being done whenever a group of people gather. Pedagogy becomes helping a community discover the tools needed to discern and articulate their collective wisdom and theology. The dominant western culture’s notions of progress and success mean a tendency to see wisdom and theology as carried out by those who have done the hard work of formal education or build on generations of, typically western, academia. A Lutheran understanding of grace is also countercultural to these notions of success and makes possible the idea that learning and wisdom can be in other communities and done in other ways. The ways of knowing, decision-making, and learning of Indigenous communities and other peoples and cultures marginalized by formal western understandings of learning then are valid.

While I was born into a Missouri Synod Lutheran tradition that emphasises doctrine and views scripture and theology through founding Lutheran documents such as The Book of Concord, I grew up in the milieu of clergy and parts of the Church questioning that emphasis. My Lutheran pastor father and his colleagues were shaped by schisms in that branch of Lutheranism and moving toward different understandings. I am in a tradition that sees the Reformation less as a one-time event, but rather an ongoing process. The process of reformation continues for me by asking whether ways of thinking and doing by the Church communicate the gospel and are a means of grace. This provides an openness to context, contextualization and contextual theologies that are at the core of my understandings of culture and pedagogy. It also allows for setting aside Lutheran notions such as two-kingdom theology in favour of questioning structures, power, and privilege toward a more just world. Other themes in early Lutheran thinking, including racism expressed through anti-Semitism, can be discarded confidently while pointing to a need to counter similar injustices in today’s context.

Reformation era notions of moving faith from the priestly class to the popular shape Lutheranism as seen in the importance of both the publishing of scripture and the use of language of liturgy in the vernacular. Religious education as a family responsibility was the impetus for Luther's small catechism, a tool for teaching faith in the home. During Martin Luther's time, value was given to informal conversation as well as systemic theology and writing as can be seen in the importance given to conversations with guests in his home and over meals as recorded by listeners and preserved as "Table Talk."²⁷ My affinity for popular education and a pedagogy that emphasises the learning that occurs in community, relationship and conversation is rooted in this tradition. "Where two or three are gathered" (Mathew 18:20) not only is God present in their midst, but God's wisdom emerges.

In 2005, I became the Co-director of CCFGM. The shared position would fluctuate, depending on grants and projects, between a single full-time position and a 1.4-time position. Early work in this position included responsibility for the resources, culture, and facilitating the program inherited from that agency's long history. Over my time in this ministry, I would play a key role in shepherding the changes described above. In 2014, I became the sole full time Director of the agency. In 2018, as the agency moved more closely into the CCC, I became a CCC Associate Secretary. The intercultural work was reduced to about half time as resources dwindled. I took on the role of staffing the CCC's Commission on Justice and Peace, which provided for full time work, but also helped to connect the intercultural work to wider ecumenical justice work. My current job title is CCC Associate Secretary: Intercultural Leadership; Justice and Peace.

The process of discernment and program development resonated with my own career and faith journey of justice seeking. I am interested in finding approaches to and systems of faith-based justice that go beyond responding to individual injustices or issues of justice. The vision of Just Intercultural community as defined by right relationships between people, with all of creation, and with God, provides me with an overarching understanding, theology, and praxis of justice.

²⁷ Theodore G. Tappert, ed. & trans, *Luther's Works Volume 54: Table Talk* (Fortress Press. 1967).

The pedagogy of FILL program that will be described in this thesis resonates with and is shaped by my own pedagogy, including Liberation Theology's Hermeneutic Circle of *ver* (to see), *juzgar* (to discern), *actuar* (to act), and *celebrar* (to celebrate).²⁸ As discussed in this thesis, learning takes place within the context of a community of co-learners. Learning is transformative, allowing learners to be active agents in history and bringing about change in collaboration with God. The program's emphasis on process and engaging participants holistically resonates with my Lutheran liturgical faith tradition and understanding of the Eucharist as described below. Ritual is important for learning and change. As with the liturgy, learning is not a single moment but rather a well thought through process. Just as the liturgy contains different parts or movements, which build on and shape each other, a well-crafted facilitated learning experience does so as well. Each of those movements is essential to the change that the learning will foster. My pedagogy's reliance on the experience and wisdom of participants is resonant with the Lutheran notion of the Priesthood of all believers. As with the Hermeneutic circle, learning is done in community in which each person is fully a child of God and through whom God and speak or be heard.

Ministerial Responsibilities

My ministry role includes creating conversations and networks for intercultural ministry in Canada, and designing, implementing, facilitating, and promoting of programs for intercultural leadership. As part of this work I identify, train and nurture program designers and facilitators across Canada so that denominations have members who are better able to design, facilitate, champion, and participate in intercultural ministry. I develop local host groups to offer programs in different contexts across Canada. I provide support to a growing network of program alumni and other intercultural ministry practitioners. While others are taking on more responsibility for design and facilitation, I continue to have the primary role in the shaping, delivery, pedagogy,

²⁸ Some English versions of the hermeneutic circle translate the Spanish *juzgar* as "to judge." "To discern" more closely translates the concept. Many versions also only include *ver-juzgar-actuar*. I include *celebrar*, first because I observed it as common in my experiences of grassroots Latin American Liberation theology, but also because it emphasizes the participants as active agents in history. There has been a participation in God's transforming action. The world is different because of this process. The naming of this then leads again to *ver*.

theology, and integrity of program. I engage a wide range of Canadian denominations and institutions at the national, regional, and local levels.

I work with many others, including contract staff with whom I co-develop and facilitate program, program resource people, program alumni, members of the FILL reference group and the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network, and colleagues at the CCC. I have primary responsibility for articulating the vision and theology of the work, maintaining the integrity of pedagogy, and providing administrative and logistical support. This is in addition to my responsibilities staffing the Commission on Justice and Peace of CCC, which sees me supporting and working with Commission and governing board members and staff representing CCC's twenty-six denominations as well as observer and affiliate members. This work includes administrative support of the commission, setting priorities, helping facilitate meetings, and shepherding engagement with federal political leaders through letters, statements, meetings and representing CCC at consultations and other engagements.

Theology of Ministry

My commitment to justice is central to my faith and career and I wrestle with finding ways of engaging injustices that address root causes and that create movement toward a more just world. My current intercultural ministry work provides foundational theologies and praxis that identify structural evil and the way it shapes culture and individuals. Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda argues that the notion of justice grounded in Hebrew scripture is right relationship with God, self, others, and the earth.²⁹ This notion of right relationship is at the core of my ministry. Rather than focusing on individual issues, intercultural ministry as a discernment of right relationship provides an underlying culture, theology, and approach that might allow the Church to live a more holistic justice. Attention to individual justice issues no longer stands in isolation but flows out of and are lived expressions of a church rooted in justice. The church might then not only be justice seeking, but also a just church rooted in right relationship.

²⁹ Moe-Lobeda, Cynthia D. *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press: 2013) 176.

Layered on my Lutheran theology described above is a theology shaped by witnessing how people are excluded from power, privilege, opportunities and resources based on racial, economic, gender, sexuality, cultural and other criteria. Important to my theology and to the design of the programs I facilitate is my own journey of discovering how I participate, often unconsciously, in systems of injustice. As a White, middle class, well-educated, cis-gendered male living in an affluent consumer society I continue to be called to discern how my privilege shapes relationships across difference. That process has included working with communities of privilege and recognizing that exposure to the other is insufficient and that intentional and difficult processes of discernment and self-awareness are necessary for change.

Lutheran notions of the Priesthood of all Believers³⁰ have expanded for me through living in Latin America, in low income neighbourhoods of Canada and the US, in encounter with liberation theologians, in experiences of intentional community like the Catholic Worker Movement, and in experiential education centres. To believe in an inclusive priesthood requires recognition of the God created gifts in all persons. The Lutheran theology of grace³¹ is central to this counter-cultural and inclusive priesthood that does not earn wisdom through its own work, but rather is a gift of God to be exercised in all persons.

Pedagogy of Ministry

My pedagogy is integrated with this theology of justice and values the experience and wisdom of participants. My faith and pedagogy resonate with the Liberation Theology's Hermeneutic Circle and its recognition of learning and discerning God's will within the context of community.³² The views of the person and their role in theology and learning that emerged out of the Reformation era as found in Lutheranism described above resonate with the emphasis on community in the hermeneutic circle and the notion of God's people as active agents in history through this praxis.

³⁰ "Martin Luther's Treatise on Christian Liberty [The Freedom of A Christian]" *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 606.

³¹ Martin Luther, "By grace alone, in opposition to every other means, we obtain the forgiveness of our sins and peace with God", *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, Translation by Theodore Graebner (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary. Lulu.com 2007) 8.

³² Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (New York: Orbis. 1987) 4ff.

The non-linear sense of time and space of the hermeneutic circle is like understandings of history and learning that I have experienced in Indigenous learning circles and other spaces shaped by other diverse cultural worldviews. The hermeneutic circle also gives name to my sense that transformation requires careful attention to process. Experiential learning, popular education, and Paulo Freire's concept of *conscientization*³³ also shape my pedagogy, which challenges what Freire would describe as the banking model of education in which an expert prescribes learning.³⁴ Instead of learning being bestowed by an expert, learning comes through individuals within community being able to experience and understand their context. These pedagogies recognize that each person is a child of God and that each community is created by God and given the ability to know God. This allows for the local theologies, praxes, and pedagogies that are central to the recommendations emerging from this research project.

Although there is no broad ecumenical consensus on the practice of the Eucharist, my Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist integrated with insights from Liberation Theology methodology informs my practice of pedagogy in subtle but decisive ways. The Eucharist brings together in ritual these experiences of community, process, justice, and transformation. The Eucharist is a non-linear moment of transformation like liberation theology's hermeneutic circle. *Ver*, or describing of context, is in the corporate and individual confession of the Eucharist. *Juzgar*, or discerning to what God calls us, is in the hearing of the word in scripture and preaching. *Actuar*, or acting toward the world God is calling us, is in the participation in God's saving acts around the communion table. *Celebrar*, or celebrating participation in God's transforming action, is the sending out as a changed people to "go in peace, serve the lord." Around the communion table, we participate in and experience God's salvation throughout history "from Creation to Consummation."³⁵ In the same moment, we participate in God's acts of creation throughout history, God's actions as told in the Hebrew Scriptures, the story of the Jesus event, God's presence in and through the world now and God's promised future acts. The Eucharist table is

³³ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1968)

³⁴ Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper Row, 1971), 2.

³⁵ Philip H. Pfatteicher and Carlos R. Messerl, *Manual on the Liturgy: Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979) 236.

radically inclusive as it is large enough for all to gather. At the table, all are welcome. The understandings at the core of my theology are experienced in the Eucharist.

As a product of a liturgical church tradition, I understand liturgy as transformative and holistic experience of individuals and community. Just as the liturgy of the Eucharist engages the person and community holistically, my pedagogy and ways of designing and facilitating education reflect liturgy in which the full beings of participants are engaged fully through ritual, dialogue and learning processes aimed at transformation shifting attitudes and actions. The learning setting, including the programs I design and facilitate, echo the liturgy in which all are welcome, in which all the senses are engaged, in which we join in God's work with all people of all time in a process of transformation.

The organization of this thesis mirrors my pedagogy. The hermeneutic circle begins with *ver*, "to see," or to describe our context. In the first two chapters, we name the context and move into the second part of the hermeneutic circle. In this second part of the hermeneutic circle, *Juzgar* or "to judge" or "to discern." Scripture, theology, the social and other sciences help us ask, "What is God calling us to do and be?" The second and third chapters' theoretical framework provide theology, pedagogy, and social analysis to continue naming the context and asking about to what God calls us. The fourth and fifth chapters follow the parts of *actuar* or "to act" and the final two chapters' naming of learning and change are *celebrar* or "to celebrate." Discerning God's voice in our context we act as active agents in history and we participate with God towards a world the way God would want. This action is in the design of *Engage Difference!* program. Finally, we celebrate how this process changes us and the world, and we describe our new context. The last chapters of this thesis describe the change brought about through *Engage Difference!* and then as this new context is described the thesis looks at next steps and recommendations.

The thesis also moves us through a process that echoes the liturgy. In the first chapter we begin with confession as we name our context. Then we hear the Word through which God is calling us to act in the second and third chapters' theoretical and theological frameworks. In the Eucharist, we participate in God's action throughout time. In this thesis this is the fourth and fifth chapters' presentation of methodology including the design of the *Engage Difference!* program and the

research methodology through which we discern the program's impact. In the liturgy, the final movement is into the world as a people changed by participating in God's saving action. The final chapters of this thesis and the research identify the learning and change and invite questions and recommendations. Transformed by the process there is an invitation to name the new context.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm

Canadian Christianity is moving into a new era, one that requires new tools for different ways of being Christian. The “*Engage Difference!*” program provides participants and their communities tools to understand their own culture and to discern what Just Intercultural community looks like within their own contexts.

Instead of prescribing those new tools, *Engage Difference!* provides a creative space for imagination. “[The role of imagination] is to seek and create spaces beyond the places that exist. Not confined by what is, or what is known, imagination is the art of creating what does not exist.”³⁶ The *Engage Difference!* approach draws on an emerging ecumenical consensus about the need for a new embrace of the diversity of the global Church. The authors cited below represent perspectives from both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions affirming this transformation of the contemporary Christian reality.

David Bosch and the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm

David J. Bosch argued that Christianity is in a paradigm shift away from the “Enlightenment” or “Modern” paradigm.³⁷ He described the emerging ecumenical age or the emergence of a postmodern paradigm. More than simply an openness to other denominations, ecumenism is a response to the diversity of the context, which includes diversity of culture, faith, Christianity emerging out of non-European cultures, justice, and the local church. Instead of Western European Christianity and culture being the norm, ecumenism recognizes the validity of the full breadth of human experience, context, and culture. The term “Intercultural” is often limited to relationship between cultural or ethnic groups but needs to include this breadth of human experience. In this thesis I argue a new term is required as the use of limited definitions of

³⁶ Marilyn J. Legge, “In the Company of God and One Another: Feminist theo-ethics, heterogeneous publics and intercultural churches” in *Public Theology and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed Anita Monro and Stephen Burn. (New York: Routledge, 2015): 46-62.

³⁷ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 249, 368-510.

intercultural have become common. I propose *Just Intercultural* as an alternative term to encompass this breadth. In the emerging ecumenical paradigm, Canadian churches will be fully ecumenical when they are fully intercultural. To be fully ecumenical is to be fully in relationship with the diversity of human experience, context, and culture. The emergence of the pluriformity of expression of world Christianity has challenged the normativity of the “European experience.” Christianity outside of its historic European-American contexts, in the words of John G. Flett:

...has been largely uniform in lamenting the faith’s unnecessary “foreignness,” the over-identification of the Christian gospel with its European and American cultural expressions... While theologians outside the Western cultural sphere constitute no monolithic other, their voices appear unified and unequivocal in affirming that the institutions regarded as basic to the visible continuity of the church are, in fact, derived from Western culture and that these origins affect the growth of the church in other contexts.³⁸

David Bosch argues, “[The] West has often domesticated the gospel in its own culture while making it unnecessarily foreign to other cultures.”³⁹

Bernard Lonergan’s Empirical Notion of Culture

Bernard Lonergan described this paradigm shift as a movement from a “classicist notion of culture” to an “empirical notion of culture.”⁴⁰ In the classicist notion of culture, there is just one normative culture and therefore just one normative theology. In the empirical notion, there are many cultures and sets of meanings and values. Theology is not a permanent achievement or set of fixed and unchanging propositions and principles but an ongoing process.⁴¹ This is significant in that there no longer is a sense that there is one theology and praxis of Christianity that simply can be transplanted or imposed on any context or culture in the world, but, rather, it now can be perceived that there are many unique Christianities, or as many expressions of Christianity as

³⁸ John G. Flett, *Apostolicity: The Ecumenical Question in World Christian Perspective* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2016), 28.

³⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 455.

⁴⁰ John D. Dadosky, “Methodological Presuppositions for Engaging the Other in the Post-Vatican II Context: Insights from Ignatius and Lonergan”, *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue* (March, 2010): 11.

⁴¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Mark D. Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 443.

there are contexts and cultures. As the research of this study will demonstrate, this allows for and requires local theologies and praxes.

Karl Rahner's Third Great Epoch of Christianity

Likewise, Karl Rahner spoke of the current era, only just begun and observable officially at Vatican II, as the beginning of the third great epoch in Christian history.⁴² The first epoch being Jewish Christianity, the second the Christianity of Hellenism and European culture and civilization, and the third a world church. During the second epoch, the church exported throughout the world a European religion that it did not think needed to change together with a culture and civilization it considered superior. At the beginning of the third epoch, the contexts and cultures the church encounters shape Christianity.

Walbert Buhlmann and the Coming of the Third Church

Walbert Buhlmann describes the coming of the Third Church as the emergence of the churches in the new nations of the post-colonial world, largely in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.⁴³ The First Church is the first-born or Eastern Church of the eight ecumenical councils held on "eastern" soil. The Second is the Western Church, commonly thought of as "the" Church. The Third Church is the product of a historical process with its origin in the Second Church's mission activity. It is emerging as a new Church as the location of the majority of Christians and the fastest growing churches, many of them flourishing after the departure of the Western Church and its missionaries.

⁴² Karl Rahner, SJ, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II", *Theological Studies*, 40:4 (1979: Dec.): 721.

⁴³ Walbert Buhlmann, *The coming of the Third Church: an analysis of the present and future of the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1970), 3ff.

Lamin Sanneh: the Changing Face of Christianity

The Gambia born and raised Lamin Sanneh describes the “emergence of Christianity as a world religion.”⁴⁴ The church is rising in prominence in the global south and east while it is waning in numbers and influence in Europe and North America. He names this phenomenon as “nothing short of a fundamental historical shift in the character and fortunes of the religion and of the social modes appropriate to it.”⁴⁵ This has not been simply the duplication or transplantation of European Christianity, but rather a variety of forms and styles as Christianity has multiple cultural expressions and geographical centers. As it emerges as a world religion, it has a new diversity of faces, structures, languages, liturgies, and practices. Western European cultural ways of thinking no longer confine it.

"We are not living an era of change but a change of era."

In 2015, Pope Francis echoed these voices when he declared, “We are not living an era of change but a change of era.”⁴⁶ I engage these voices to argue the need to equip churches in Canada in this new context. While the Western, European, and male theology from which we are moving away shapes these theologians, it is important to listen to their voices as an act of confession. It is part of our *ver* or “to see,” the naming of our context of the hermeneutic circle of liberation theology. It is the confession at the beginning of the liturgy. Using language familiar to us, they help bring to consciousness assumptions about our world and faith that shape our relationships.

Ecumenical as Other Theologies are Possible

The emerging ecumenical paradigm and intercultural ministry make it possible to contemplate the existence of valid theologies shaped by other contexts and that other theologies can emerge

⁴⁴ Lamin Sanneh, “The Cultural Impetus of a World Religion” in *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World*. eds Sanneh, Lamin and Joel A. Carpenter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-25.

⁴⁵ Sanneh. 3.

⁴⁶ McElwee, Joshua J. “Catholicism can and must change, Francis forcefully tells Italian church gathering.” *National Catholic Reporter* (November 10, 2015), accessed April 6, 2020, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/catholicism-can-and-must-change-francis-forcefully-tells-italian-church-gathering>

out of our own context. Bevans describes this as contextual theology, shaped by the spirit and message of the gospel, Christian tradition, culture, and social change.⁴⁷ Participants in *Engage Difference!* typically do not consider their own theology as shaped by context and culture. Some might be open to considering the theologies of others as shaped in this way. As discussed above, Western theology often is seen as normative and other theologies as contextual. In this work, I do not use the term “contextual theology,” since all theologies are contextual, and, in the minds of program participants, “contextual” tends to be identified with “other” theologies and not with their own. A goal of this project is to help Canadian Christians, as they encounter diversity, to be open to consider their theology as one of many, to learn from other theologies, and, as a community, to discern contextual theologies out of Canada’s diversity. It is also important to identify the power dynamics when one theology is normative. Considering the theologies of World Christianity, Kondothra George describes the power dynamic of the relationship of Western theology to contextual theologies as “a dominant culture to various cultural contexts with no power or very little. These so-called particular contexts are, in fact, culturally in the orbit of the dominant culture.”⁴⁸ Perhaps it is more useful to use Robert J. Schreiter’s language of “local theologies.”⁴⁹ Christian scriptures and traditional Western theology then are “successful local theologies.”

The topic of this study is how to equip Canadian Christians to do this work of examining the theologies they have inherited and discerning theologies for Canada’s diverse contexts. One of the goals of this work is to equip Canadian Christians to do contextual theology or to discern their “local theology” as they move into the new ecumenical paradigm.

FILL programs expose participants to theologians from the margins of mainstream theology, demonstrating the shaping of theology by different contexts. Some examples are theologians like

⁴⁷ Stephen Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology”, *Missiology: An International Review* 13, no. 2 (April 1985): 185-202.

⁴⁸ Kondothra M. George, “Cross-Cultural Interpretation: Some Paradigms from the Early Church,” *International Review of Mission* 85 (1996): 220.

⁴⁹ Bevans, 197.

Jung Lee Young (*Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*⁵⁰), Justo Gonzalez (*Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*⁵¹) and James Cone (*The Cross and the Lynching Tree*⁵²). While there is a relative scarcity of these kinds of resources from a Canadian context, a useful recent addition is a collection of writings, *Reading In-Between: How Minoritized Cultural Communities Interpret the Bible in Canada*.⁵³

Aboriginal Spiritualities as an Example of Other Theologies are Possible

In today's Canadian context, there is opportunity to encounter other cultures and expressions of Christianity, including the Christianities brought to Canada through migration and Christianities shaped by Canadian Aboriginal spiritualities. For Canadian Christianity, a formative "event" that calls it to be aware of the emerging era is the recognition of Canadian social and religious attitudes toward and treatment of Indigenous cultures and Aboriginal spiritualities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,⁵⁴ the naming of what was done through the Indian Residential Schools, and the apologies of a number of Canadian denominations for their roles in the Indian Residential Schools forged this recognition.⁵⁵ Voices out of this process, such as those of the Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools, name the complicity of Canadian Christianity and theology in historical violence and injustice against Indigenous peoples and call for critical reflection and rethinking of Western Christianity.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995)

⁵¹ Justo González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from an Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990)

⁵² James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011)

⁵³ Néstor Medina, Alison Hari-Singh, Hyeran Kim-Cragg, eds, *Reading In-Between: How Minoritized Cultural Communities Interpret the Bible in Canada* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2019)

⁵⁴ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, accessed December 18, 2017, <http://www.trc.ca>

⁵⁵ Anglican Church of Canada (1993), The Presbyterian Church in Canada (1994), The United Church of Canada (1986), The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (2001)

⁵⁶ The Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools, *Reflections to Spark Conversation on Christian Theology* (April 2015), accessed December 15, 2017, <https://holytrinity.to/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/EWGRS-paper-on-theologyFINAL.pdf>

As Canadian Christianity begins to listen to Aboriginal spiritualities, there is an opportunity to engage a clear example of a “local theology.” or an alternative Christianity as a lens through which to see how context and culture shape their own “local theologies.” Indigenous spirituality and theology provide examples within the Canadian context of the possibility of theologies different from those of the historic Western European and Canadian theologies. From the North American, or Turtle Island, Indigenous context, Vine Deloria Jr.⁵⁷ provided a framework, and authors such as Adrian Jacobs, Calara Kidwell, George Tinker, James Treat, Richard Twist, Robert Allan Warrior, and others have continued exploring, explaining, and refining its themes to offer a critical reflection on Western thought and culture.

Church acts of repudiation of *The Doctrine of Discovery* and *Terra Nullius* assert that “some peoples and ways of life are imagined to be inherently more valuable than others –or worse, where some peoples and ways of life are imagined as not being human, and thus not valuable at all.”⁵⁸ Importantly, repudiation calls the churches to reflect on how “domination, occupation, a racialized hierarchical cataloguing and organization of entire populations, and the commodification of natural resources...continue to have profound effects on the way our societies, including in Canada, are organized [and] the way peoples from different ethno-cultural backgrounds interact with each other.”⁵⁹

The transition identified by Bosch, Lonergan, Rahner, Bühlmann, and Sanneh has profound implications for Canada’s and Christianity’s relationship with Indigenous peoples. The policies of the Canadian government and practices of Canadian Christianity towards Indigenous peoples, including the Indian Residential Schools, were the mission approaches of a particular era which ultimately proved to be harmful. The Christianity of the era believed these practices were faithful

⁵⁷ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1973, 1992, 2003)

⁵⁸ Jeffrey Metcalf, in *Truth and Reconciliation and the Doctrine of Discovery: Select Responses of Member Denominations of The Canadian Council of Churches to TRC Call to Action #49 on the Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius* (Toronto: Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network/Canadian Council of Churches, 2017), 8.

⁵⁹ Néstor Medina, *On the Doctrine of Discovery* (Toronto: Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network/Canadian Council of Churches, 2017), 24.

responses and those working in the residential schools for the most part were well-intentioned people who believed they were doing the will of God. Work in the residential schools was a calling to God's work.⁶⁰ This serves as a warning to the Church today, and in every time, to carefully critique its approaches to mission and mission practices. More recently, the work of CCFGM included resourcing short-term overseas mission practices, believed to be faithful responses by participants. That work included discerning best practices and research into the impact of short-term mission. Naming the potential for harm documented in that research is beyond the scope of this thesis, but Ivan Illich summarized it well in his *To Hell with Good Intentions* address to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects in 1968.⁶¹

Canada's and the churches' process of reconciliation and apology were made possible by the paradigm shifts described by Bosch, Lonergan, Rahner, Bühlmann, and Sanneh. For both Christianity and Western Culture, these shifts signify a change from viewing the "other" as an object to be civilized, conquered, enslaved, or converted to seeing all people as equally children of God. The government funded, church-run project to "kill the Indian in the child" harmed Canada's Indigenous peoples. The church needs to contemplate that the refusal to listen to Canada's Indigenous peoples ignored and silenced the voice of God.

Contextual theology emerges out of these paradigm shifts.⁶² Contextualization allows us to see, in the words of Canadian ethno-biologist, Wade Davis, that "other cultures are not failed attempts at being us."⁶³ Aboriginal spirituality is not a failed attempt at Christianity but a spirituality that emerges out of a context and that has something to offer Western spirituality and theology.

⁶⁰ Lorrie Ransom and Mark MacDonald, "Systemic Evil and the Church: How Does the Church Repent." *Forum Mission* (Volume 10. 2014) Association for the Promotion of Mission Studies: 77.

⁶¹ Illich, Ivan, *To Hell with Good Intentions* accessed March 11, 2021, https://www.uvm.edu/~jashman/CDAE195_ESCI375/To%20Hell%20with%20Good%20Intentions.pdf

⁶² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 420.

⁶³ Wade Davis, *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World*. CBC Massey Lecture Series (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2009)

Bosch wrote about an *emerging* ecumenical paradigm and not an *emerged* paradigm. Canadian Christianity is only just beginning to glimpse what this new relationship with Indigenous peoples might mean. The discussion paper from the Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools reflects this new relationship:

It only has been relatively recently that churches have begun to reflect in deep humility on the theological assumptions and interpretations that gave rise to the churches' complicity in this evil.⁶⁴

As the process of reconciliation continues, this working group and others have begun to note the profound implications of this new relationship with Indigenous peoples. The Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools argues that it will require Western Christianity to look critically at and rethink its own theology:

Our theologies of confession, repentance, and reconciliation are not yet sufficient to address the churches' complicity in historical violence and injustice against Indigenous peoples, perpetrated in Christ's name, or to confront the injustices that continue.⁶⁵

The Working Group argued that Christianity not only needs to rethink its theologies of confession, repentance, and reconciliation but also to examine its core theologies, identity, and relationship to others, to all of creation, and to God.⁶⁶ The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission and apology process mark a profound moment in Canadian theology.

There are many contexts and many possible theologies. Given Canada's process of reconciliation, the important role of the churches in the Indian Residential Schools, and the

⁶⁴ The Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools, *Reflections to Spark Conversation on Christian Theology* (April 2015), accessed December 15, 2017, <https://holytrinity.to/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/EWGRS-paper-on-theologyFINAL.pdf> This working group is made up of Indigenous persons and staff and others of the denominations that were involved in the administration of the residential schools and were parties to the Settlement Agreement (Anglican, Presbyterian, United, and a number of Roman Catholic entities). As the initial work of Canada's Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission draws to an end this group has shifted its attention to the long-term process of reconciliation and broadened its table by actively inviting other denominations and ecumenical agencies (including the Canadian Council of Churches) to be part of the work.

⁶⁵ The Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools.

⁶⁶ The Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools.

ongoing impact of reconciliation with First Nation communities on the Canadian churches, I focus on the example of Indigenous spirituality and theology to show that other theologies and Christianities are possible and valid expressions. Aboriginal spiritualities are not an invitation for the Canadian churches to adopt those theologies. They emerge out of particular contexts and cultures. They provide an invitation to see, within an emerging ecumenical paradigm, that other theologies are capable of emerging out of Canadian social and religious contexts. Considering Indigenous spirituality helps equip Canadian Christianity in doing the discernment of *juzgar*, or “to discern,” the second part of the hermeneutic circle. It opens it to the possibility of “local theologies” as well as to different ways of thinking and knowing that might help Canadian Christians discern their own “local theologies.”

Notably, Indigenous participation in the work of FILL shapes programs and pedagogy. Indigenous program participants, facilitators and designers, and resource people have helped shift the work toward the resourcing of local theologies, praxes, and pedagogies that emerges as a recommendation of this research. A partnership with the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Manitoba as a program location, and their pedagogy and physical space shaped by Indigenous ways of knowing, has helped FILL to have its pedagogy shaped by contexts. An understanding of Indigenous spiritualities, theologies, and world views provides a glimpse into the possibility of, and need for, local theologies.

Aboriginal Spiritualities, Theologies, and World Views

In *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, Vine Deloria Jr. describes Indigenous worldviews and theologies that are different from European Western worldviews. His work was important because it “both systematized and gave voice to general American Indian thought...It was an important first for Native people...modeling a systemic, coherent Indian response to the fundamentals of Euro-western historiography, philosophy, theology, social criticism and political theology.”⁶⁷ Vine Deloria Jr’s work does not describe a singular Aboriginal Spirituality, as there

⁶⁷ George E. Tinker, “Forward,” in Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. 30th anniversary edition (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003), xi.

are many Indigenous cultures and contexts, but rather points to significant themes in world view and understanding through which to begin to explore Indigenous local theologies. Many Indigenous authors, Jacobs, Kidwell, Tinker, Treat, Twist, and Warrior to name a few, used this work as a structure for exploring, explaining, and refining its themes. Beyond introducing a systemic description of Native American thought, Deloria offers a critical reflection on Western thought and culture.⁶⁸ It invites those immersed in Western culture and thought to look critically at their own tradition.

According to Deloria, “the statements of either group [Native or White Western] do not make much sense when transferred from one context to the other without proper consideration of what is taking place.”⁶⁹ Deloria identifies several ways Indigenous thought differs from Western thought. One difference is relationship to time and space.⁷⁰ Western understanding of time and space gives Western Christianity the wrong sense that its theology and worldview is applicable in different times and places. Native American theology is much better able to understand and respond to its current context.⁷¹ Western and Indigenous thought also differ in their understandings of a relationship to creation⁷², of story over chronology⁷³, of time as linear or cyclical⁷⁴, and of the Christian focus on the individual and the need for spirituality to bring about a radical change of human personality.⁷⁵

Deloria was overwhelmingly critical of Western tradition, and in particular of Christianity. In his 1969 book, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, he identified America’s great weakness as its inability to

⁶⁸ George E. Tinker, “Forward,” in Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. 30th anniversary edition

⁶⁹ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion 30th Anniversary Edition* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1973, 1992, 2003), 61.

⁷⁰ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 61.

⁷¹ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 62.

⁷² Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 77.

⁷³ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 97.

⁷⁴ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 94.

⁷⁵ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 185.

make a successful peace because of its incapacity to exchange ideas, concepts, and thoughts and to recognize that two systems of life can exist without conflict.⁷⁶ In *God is Red*, he described Christianity, and its inability to respect or tolerate those who are different, as the root cause of this weakness.⁷⁷ The culture of Canada, in its historical and current relationship with its Indigenous peoples, demonstrates a similar weakness. This is a significant critique in an emerging era of contextualization. In our increasingly diverse context, Deloria's critique raises the question of whether a theology distinct from that of dominant Canadian theologies, one that might better respect or tolerate difference, is essential for the emerging paradigm.

In articulating an Aboriginal spirituality, George "Tink" Tinker argues, "our methodologies must begin to seriously challenge the very categories of analysis and modes of discourse that have been imposed on us as normative by the euro-western and amer-european church structures."⁷⁸ He cites the Western notion of God as an anthropomorphized apex of a male hierarchy⁷⁹ and the notion that humans are in charge of creation as opposed to the Aboriginal sense that humans are "merely part of the whole, like any other species, and most often humans are traditionally perceived to be the least of all species."⁸⁰

The existence of Aboriginal peoples, cultures, spiritualities and theologies, including distinct Christian Aboriginal theologies, remind us that, in the words of Adrian Jacobs, "Christianity was meant to be experienced and lived out in every culture of the world...God, as Creator, made all of humanity. It makes sense then that [the Creator] could speak to every human culture of [God's] person and ways in terms that every human could understand."⁸¹ This does not call for

⁷⁶ Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing, 1969), 256.

⁷⁷ Leslie Marmon Silko, "Forward" in Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion 30th Anniversary Edition* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1973, 1992, 2003), vii.

⁷⁸ George E. "Tink" Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 24.

⁷⁹ Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*, 26.

⁸⁰ Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*, 26.

⁸¹ Adrian Jacobs, *Aboriginal Christianity: the way it was meant to be* (Vancouver, Washington: Wiconi International, 1998), 2.

adopting Aboriginal theologies as Canadians articulate their own “local theologies.” It instead points to the possibility of other Canadian local theologies. Local theologies include Indigenous concepts and ways of thinking in dialogue with Indigenous communities living in diverse contexts. For example, the idea that humans are merely part of creation, or seeing creation as “all my relations,” might help to inform “Shalom” or right relationship and to better understand relationship as not just between each other and God but with all of creation. As the work of the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL) engages Canadian Indigenous communities, “all my relations” shapes an understanding of Shalom and right relationship that informs this project’s definitions of justice and Just Intercultural community. Justice is not only about relationships with people, nor Just Intercultural ministry about relationships between groups of people, but rather includes relationships among all of creation or “all our relations.”

Definitions

Defining Justice

At the core of *Engage Difference!* is the seeking of Just Intercultural communities. The emerging ecumenical paradigm and intercultural ministry require an understanding of justice rooted in right relationship and recognition of justice not just as individual acts but as systemic. As noted in the discussion of my own theology, Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda argues that the notion of justice grounded in Hebrew scripture is right relationship with God, self, others, and the earth.⁸² Moe-Lobeda describes years of activism and a discovery that she was wrong in the assumption that simply helping people to know about injustice “would be enough to enable radical social change.” She describes instead a “systemic exploitation of others and of the earth that is intricate and cleverly hidden.”⁸³

Radical social change requires more than advocacy for justice or simply helping people to know about injustice. Instead, it requires the systemic understanding of injustice that Moe-Lobeda

⁸² Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 176.

⁸³ Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*, 2.

describes and of our part in those systems. This understanding shapes the work of FILL as it seeks radical social change. Rather than simply naming injustice, *Engage Difference!* brings people together in relationships across diversity where the injustice is named and contemplated in community, and where addressing injustice is seen as a project of just communities.

I have added emphasis to “cleverly hidden” since the role of sins of omission, both known and particularly unknown, are central to my reflections on injustice. Given today’s access to information, it is not for a lack of information that change does not happen. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag demonstrates that the abundance of information, of images of horror, has the opposite effect.⁸⁴ Greater exposure to images of suffering brings tolerance of that suffering. Dean Brackley SJ describes how systemic evil keeps us from living justice when he asserts, “We in the North, because we have so much, have a low-grade confusion about what is really important in life, and because of that, it is much more difficult for us to live the life of a disciple.”⁸⁵ Ursula Franklin questioned the assumption that awareness of injustice and the presence of systemic injustice are sufficient, noting, “Citizens, particularly religious groups, tend to approach the authorities under the assumption that those in power are well-intentioned but perhaps ill-informed and that supplementary information will change views and practice. However, we must seriously consider the possibility that those in power are ill-intentioned and well-informed.”⁸⁶

Evil and injustice are systemic. Justice is more than awareness of and action against individual injustices. Systemic injustice and systemic evil cannot be addressed without considering individual roles and, through sins of omission, unconscious complicity in systems of injustice. For the Christian community, justice includes uncovering that which makes it “difficult for us to live the life of a disciple.” In my experience of justice work of the church, it is common to name injustices in the wider society and try to address the causes of that injustice. Ours is often a voice

⁸⁴ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003)

⁸⁵ Dean Brackley SJ, in a meeting attended by the author at the University of Central America, San Salvador, El Salvador in 1997.

⁸⁶ Ursula Franklin, *The Ursula Franklin Reader: Pacifism as a Map* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 72.

blaming the wider society for injustice. This does not allow for engaging the ways we support the systemic exploitation of others and of the earth by participating in those very systems. Nor does it provide an inspiring alternative vision. *Engage Difference!* provides ways for Canadian Christian communities to discern other ways of being in relationship that are authentically just.

Defining Culture

In the words of Paul Michael Gallagher, “culture remains one of those words that can be exasperating in its inclusiveness.”⁸⁷ He describes two main schools of interpretation that emerged in the nineteenth century. Western Enlightenment high culture is a view of culture as traditional normative and permanent values that survive over history and that are separate from the wider context or society. It is a repository of knowledge and tradition and points to “the highest available expression of human vision and human value.”⁸⁸ In this definition, one engages culture as the pursuit of perfection by becoming acquainted with “the best that has been thought and said in world history” through works of art, literature, classical studies, etc.

A second school has its roots in the work of British anthropologist Edward Tylor who defines culture as a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a person] as a member of society.” It points to “a cluster of assumptions about what is acceptable in a context.”⁸⁹ When a person is out of his or her context, he or she is aware of different ways of doing things. This anthropological definition of culture points to human diversity, and, therefore, to diversity of cultures. Whereas high culture implies objective or conscious, the anthropological understanding recognizes subjective or invisible culture that includes hidden and unconscious powers that shape meaning and perception. The sociological understanding of culture pays more attention to the ways culture

⁸⁷ Michael Paul Gallagher SJ, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 13.

⁸⁸ Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture*, 14.

⁸⁹ Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture*, 14-15.

reproduces across institutions including the dynamics of power and how cultures produce inequalities and racial, ethnic, and other group boundaries.

Within this second school, there is no single definition of culture. Rather, definitions range from understanding of culture as a fixed set of rules and norms to the broader definition offered by Si Kahn: “the environment in which things grow...a person’s environment determines much of what she is able or not able to do, feel, to think.”⁹⁰ The understanding of culture of the *Engage Difference!* programs acknowledges that cultures can be carriers of systemic and often unconscious, or cleverly hidden injustice. Michael Paul Gallagher attempts to synthesize hundreds of definitions of culture into three groups. They are “the *neutral* description of culture as a convergence of various elements in human society and history; the *idealist* tendency to highlight meanings, ideas, symbols, and values; and a more *political and moral* sense of culture as conditioning human choices and actions therefore having unconscious power over human behavior..⁹¹ It is this latter set of definitions and the notion of unconscious power of culture that shape *Engage Difference!* Participants are invited to consider the following definitions:⁹²

Culture is a conceptual framework by which individuals order their lives, interpret their experiences, and evaluate the behaviour of others.

Culture is a set of spoken and unspoken rules by which we know how to act, behave, get what we need.⁹³

Important to this work is the notion that culture “[communicates] human vision across generations.”⁹⁴ Taken alone, this definition sounds like Western Enlightenment high culture or an anthropocentric understanding of culture. However, the Indigenous notion of “all my

⁹⁰ Fyre Jean Graveline, *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness* (Halifax: Fernwood, 1998) 20. Quoting Si Kahn, *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots leaders* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 325.

⁹¹ Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture*, 24.

⁹² Canadian Churches Forum. *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry Program Binder*. 2016 (first published 2013). Toronto: Canadian Churches Forum. 12.

⁹³ Lingenfelter, Sherwood. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003)

⁹⁴ Graveline, *Circle Works*, 25.

relations” provides nuance. Culture is a repository of the wisdom of all of creation across generations. It also carries the wisdom of how to be in a multitude of contexts over time. It provides resources for responding to local contexts and for developing local theologies. Wade Davis argues that in today’s climate crisis, the many cultures of the world hold knowledge of ways of living within different environments that will be crucial to the survival of the human species.⁹⁵ In the same way, the multitude of local theologies are a resource for Canadian theologies and are crucial to the survival of the Canadian churches in the new context of the ecumenical paradigm.

Based on the definitions of culture and of justice described above participants are asked to question what part of the communicated human vision is helpful in the current context, what ways might the vision need to change, and what the processes of power and privilege are that shape the vision. Program discussions consider the inherited and socialized nature of culture, culture as a response to contexts, and the conscious and unconscious aspects of culture.

Defining Dominant Culture

The dominant culture is that which determines the norm or the centre.⁹⁶ It has the power to define the “other,”⁹⁷ and it is the privileged culture capable of carrying forward its vision to the present generation and determining appropriate responses to the current context. As discussed above, Western European and North American Christianity long has been the dominant culture of Christianity and continues to shape Canadian Christianity. Dominant Canadian culture shapes Canadian institutions, including the churches. It is the one to which others are required to conform. It shapes access to power, privilege, and social capital, and it sets the norms under which that access is granted. In tracing the literary project that is part of the narrative formed by the dominant culture, Daniel Coleman identifies a “specific form of Whiteness based on a British

⁹⁵ Wade Davis, *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World*. CBC Massey Lecture Series. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2009)

⁹⁶ Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 5.

⁹⁷Kawuki Mukasa, *Belonging: Constructing a Canadian Theology of Inclusion* (Toronto: Kamu Kamu Publishing, 2005), 53.

model of civility” that conflates Whiteness with civility.⁹⁸ This myth of civility is one of the barriers to intercultural ministry in Canada.

The existence of a dominant culture is apparent in the voices of the marginalized. Racialized participants in *Engage Difference!* describe not feeling completely part of their church or deciding to stop serving on church committees when they suspect that their skin colour and not their views are wanted. A staff person from the Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commission noted how quickly newcomers to Canada adopt Canadian stereotypes about Indigenous communities. Leadership of the mainline denominations continues to be predominantly White. Toronto, an obviously diverse city, has a predominantly White, male city council.⁹⁹ The staff of the Indian Residential Schools had clear assumptions about what Indigenous children needed in order to be part of Canadian society. A racialized colleague commented that the difference between his daily life and mine (as a White male) is that every day he is reminded that he is not White while I can go about my day not having to think about my skin colour. When participating in a task of modelling power within their denomination, a church leader from a denominational office described feeling trapped within the power structure and unable to bring about significant change.

Those from the dominant culture tend not to recognize that they have a culture nor are they able to describe it. Since the rules of their culture simply are the norms of daily life, they remain unspoken and unquestioned. The marginalized know the power and privilege of the dominant culture well. They need to be aware of it both to survive and to struggle against it. In the words of Berta Cáceres Flores, an Indigenous leader and activist from Honduras martyred in 2016,

Women have been resisting, defending our lives, our bodies, our territories, our culture, our spirituality, our autonomy because we desire not only territorial autonomy and

⁹⁸ Daniel Coleman, *White Civility*, 5.

⁹⁹ The 2014 forty-five member Toronto City Council included just six people of colour. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://nowtoronto.com/city-councils-race-problem/> The current City council of twenty-five members is eighty-five percent White and male. This in a city that is over fifty percent “visible minority.” Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://thediscourse.ca/scarborough/white-male-scarborough-toronto-city-council>

autonomy for this country, we want autonomy for our bodies, for individuals, for the sovereignty of the body of people.¹⁰⁰

Defining “Intercultural” in Canada

The unique experience of Quebec provides helpful insight for defining “interculturalism” in Canada. Quebec’s dominant culture also is a minority culture within Canada, which makes it more cognizant of its unique characteristics. Quebec’s dual existence as dominant and marginalized results in insightful reflections on culture that are relevant for other parts of Canada. Gérard Bouchard, describing these reflections, defines interculturalism as:

a form of integrative pluralism [in which there is] a search for balance that seeks to find a middle ground between assimilation and segmentation that.... Emphasizes integration, interactions, and promotion of a shared culture with respect for rights and diversity.¹⁰¹

Current FILL programs recognize that the differences negotiated go beyond the ethno-cultural ones focused upon in early programs. As more diverse groups of participants came together, the intersectionality of identities and the interaction of the power and privilege, and conversely marginalization that society assigns to those identities became a core theme of the program. “Society recognizes the ways people are different and assigns group membership based on these differences; at the same time, society also ranks the differences.”¹⁰² All people have a social location defined by their gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic location. Privilege and power, and resistance to privilege and power, are found in (but not limited to) race, ableness, education, attractiveness, height, language, skin colour, fertility, gender, sexuality, and many others ways society recognizes difference. The recognition of the role these play in power and privilege and ways in which persons are included or excluded from community because of them is an important part of fully realizing Bosch’s emerging

¹⁰⁰ Nobel Women’s Initiative. accessed November 2016, <http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/day-12-spotlighting-berta-caceres-flores-honduras/>

¹⁰¹ Gerard Bouchard, *Interculturalism: A View from Quebec* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

¹⁰² Kathy Pauly Morgan, “Describing the Emperor’s New Clothes: Three Myths of Educational (In)Equality” in *The Gender Question in Education: Theory, Pedagogy & Politics*, eds Ann Diller et al. (Boulder CO: Westview, 1996).

ecumenical paradigm. Drawing on feminist thought, naming intercultural means naming how power and privilege work as well as naming one's own social location. Becoming intercultural means recognizing, and working actively against, how one's own power and privilege prevent the other from being fully human.

In FILL programs, it has been important to clarify the terms multi-cultural, cross-cultural, intercultural, and “Just Intercultural.”¹⁰³ In common usage, these terms often are used interchangeably. Making clear distinctions is useful in describing the contexts of communities, including the nature of relationships across diversity, while also clarifying visions of more just ways of being in relationship. The visuals provided here (figures 1 through 5) are helpful tools in understanding the differences between these terms, and they illustrate how ways of being in relationship can create barriers to Just Intercultural community.¹⁰⁴ Research participants indicated that a common understanding of these terms explored in *Engage Difference!* was one of the important tools provided for intercultural ministry. The research also indicated a need to go further in exploring these definitions, continue the process of defining Just Intercultural that has been an important part of the work of FILL. Here I provide the current definitions that have emerged from the program.

Multi-cultural

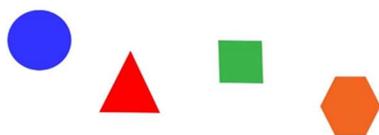


Figure 1

Defining Multicultural

Multicultural (Figure 1) is simply a descriptive term. There are many cultures. This term does not include how and if those cultures interact. As discussed below in barriers to Just Intercultural community, “Multiculturalism” is an official Canadian policy. Those outside the dominant culture critique this official policy of multiculturalism as being part of maintaining that dominant culture.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Canadian Churches Forum., *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry Program Binder* 2016 (first published 2013). (Toronto: Canadian Churches Forum), 27.

¹⁰⁴ Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning, *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry Program Binder* 2019 (first published 2013 by Canadian Churches Forum). (Toronto: Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of the Canadian Council of Churches, 2019).

¹⁰⁵ Daniel Coleman, *White Civility*, 7.

Multiculturalism has prevented the critique of inequalities, power, and privilege while maintaining those unjust relationships. Just relationships call for an alternative to multiculturalism.¹⁰⁶

Defining Cross-Cultural

Cross-cultural

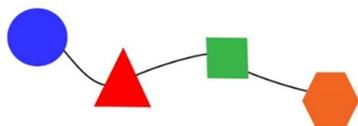


Figure 2

Cross-Cultural (Figure 2) is the term historically used in the work of the predecessor agencies of FILL as they resourced overseas mission personnel. It simply states that two or more cultures are interacting. It does not describe the nature of nor make a judgement of that interaction or those relationships. As

long as the two cultures are interacting, no matter the justice of those relationships, it is cross-cultural.

Cross-cultural and issues of power

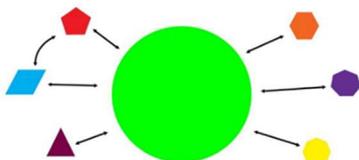


Figure 3

Relationships across culture include issues of power and privilege (Figure 3) with a dominant culture being able to set the norms and rules of interaction. Typically, other cultures are able to maintain their identity only insofar as they conform to the rules and norms of the dominant culture. Often the marginalized cultures or communities compete for access to the power of the dominant culture.

Defining “Intercultural”

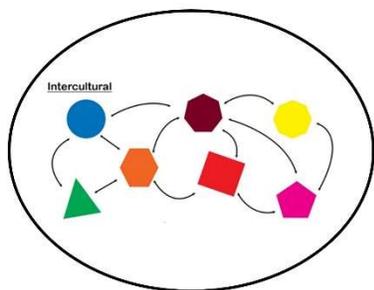


Figure 4

“Intercultural” (Figure 4) is something to which we aspire. In cross-cultural settings, a dominant culture to which others must relate is typical. Intercultural allows each person and culture to stand in full identity and dignity of difference. There is an equitable relationship. Each culture is aware fully of itself and able to engage from a position of equal power and influence.

¹⁰⁶ In this thesis I argue multiculturalism is a barrier to Just Intercultural community, citing the critiques of multiculturalism by Himani Bannerji, Néstor Medina, and others.

Intercultural is what Eduardo Galeano described as “fighting for a world that must be the house of everyone.”¹⁰⁷ It is important to note that there is not a single dominant culture but rather a common culture negotiated across the diversities present. The goal of intercultural community is not to find a new more just dominant culture, but rather to acknowledge, celebrate, and give voice to the differences and diversity within the community. Intercultural also means more than simply tolerating difference. Diversity and difference are engaged as gifts with an openness to being shaped by others while working together to maintain and support each other in our diversity.

In the diagram, there is still a boundary (a solid line) that allows for common norms and rules apart from other groups of people. One example of this is The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) where the multiplicity of denominations, each with its own culture, ecclesiology, processes of decision making, theology, etc. aspire to being an intercultural community while still agreeing on and maintaining common norms and rules that distinguish their community from others. CCC membership is limited to Christian church bodies approved by the other members. The constitution of The Council states,

The Canadian Council of Churches is a community of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and also other churches which affirm the same faith but which do not make doctrinal confessions.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Eduardo Galeano, “Vivir sin Miedo” (“Live Without Fear”), accessed April 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryggfWagvhQ

¹⁰⁸ *The Canadian Council of Churches Constitution*, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Constitution.pdf>

Defining “Just Intercultural Community”

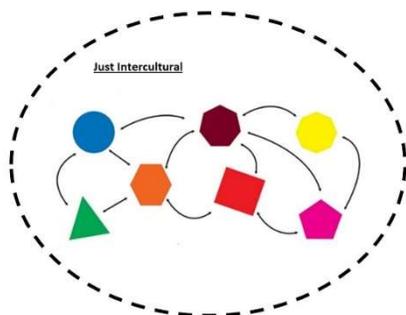


Figure 5

people and with all of creation.

One of the issues in defining intercultural is that it has become a common term, used in a number of disciplines to describe very different understandings of interaction or relationships across cultures. The emphasis on justice in the relationships described is lost in many of the uses of Intercultural. To distinguish from these uses, FILL utilizes the term “Just Intercultural” to describe just relationship between

In the Canadian context, the Quebec understanding of interculturalism is in reaction to the policy of Multiculturalism imposed by English Canada. A member of the Parti Québécois summed up this sentiment, “Multi-culturalism is not a Quebec value.”¹⁰⁹ In Quebec, interculturalism is used to describe a new model that maintains the centrality of francophone Quebec culture as it integrates other cultures. It is offered as a solution to anti-immigrant backlash as Quebec accommodates minorities.

The term intercultural is becoming more commonly used by ministry practitioners such as congregational and parish leaders. In the work of FILL, it has become common to hear ministry leaders describe their congregation or ministry setting as “intercultural.” As we work with them, it is apparent that this term describes a wide variety of approaches to and experiences of ministry. One set of these would have described their church as “missional” in the past. Another, and perhaps most common, use of the term is in parishes that are clearly multicultural or cross-cultural. The faces have changed, and there is ethnic or racial diversity, but the structures and ways of relating have not changed.

¹⁰⁹ Jonathan Montpetit, “Quebec group pushes 'interculturalism' in place of multiculturalism”, *Globe and Mail* (March 7, 2011), accessed February 21, 2020, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/quebec-group-pushes-interculturalism-in-place-of-multiculturalism/article569581/>

The term “intercultural” is used in a number of fields of study including contextual theology, anthropology, philosophy, and mission studies. In some circles, the term “intercultural theology” has replaced “mission studies.”¹¹⁰

In addition to losing the emphasis on justice, what is common to many of the uses of “intercultural” is that there continues to be a culture that maintains centrality, whether it be Quebec francophone culture or the centrality of the Christian Gospel. There continues to be a defined boundary, and cultures are able to interact and shape each other within that boundary insofar as they maintain that common overarching culture. “Just Intercultural” opens the possibility of an open boundary as illustrated with a dotted line in Figure 5. It is, as described above, as being fully intercultural. In Just Intercultural spaces, relationships are shaped by justice and an awareness of power and privilege that cause harm or prevent individuals, communities, or cultures from being fully themselves. There is awareness of self and one’s impact on others. As the term intercultural has become more common, FILL has begun using the term “Just Intercultural” to describe the full vision. In The Canadian Council of Churches, an intercultural approach would enable imbalances of power among Christian denominations and the marginalization of diverse communities that occurs within Christianity to be addressed.

Just Intercultural would extend this beyond the Christian churches and aspires to these kinds of relationships between all of humanity and with all of creation, or “all my relations.” Just Intercultural community is a radical and aspirational concept. It does not yet fully exist. The openness of the boundary implies an openness to who can be part of the community and who can, in a place of equal power and privilege, be part of negotiating relationship. This even implies negotiation and shared understanding of concepts such as justice. While Christian communities see the Gospel as a central and unifying value, and Just Intercultural community, Beloved Community, and Shalom as Gospel values, fully Just Intercultural community would be open to other traditions and their understandings of community while still fully embracing the Gospel. Just Intercultural community goes beyond relationships between people. Ways of acting

¹¹⁰ Hennig Wrogemann, *Intercultural Theology Volume One: Intercultural Hermeneutics* (IVP Academic, 2012 (English version 2016)), 22.

and relating are mindful of their impact on all of creation. A Just Intercultural community would “listen” to all of creation and actions would not be damaging to the earth and its creatures. Mindful of relationship with all of creation, Just Intercultural Community would allow all of creation to be fully as God created it.

The rationale for Just Intercultural ministry first includes avoiding the potential harm of the other ways of being church. Some examples of harm are the churches’ involvement in the tragedy of the Indian Residential Schools, its involvement in colonial projects, the “othering” that makes possible war, genocide and societal inequality, and participation in environmental damage and climate change. As noted above intercultural community may be essential for the survival of the church in Canada as it can draw on the wisdom and gifts of global local theologies. Finally providing space for the voices of many cultures allows for a fuller experience and expression of our faith as “no human culture has a final definitive grasp of the gospel.”¹¹¹

Defining “Beloved Community”

In the Road to Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-36) God is revealed through a stranger, a companion on the journey who at first is not recognized (v. 16). In the words of Dom Helder Camara, “opening ourselves to ideas, including those with which we disagree, this is what the good traveller should do. Happy are those who understand the words, ‘If you disagree with me, you have something to give me.’”¹¹² He goes on to assert, “Happy are they who feel they are always on the road and that everyone they meet is their chosen companion.” Dom Helder Camara notes, drawing on the Latin root words for common and bread, “‘Companion’ means one who eats the same bread.” This resonates with the image of Eucharist discussed previously. As we share bread, we do so around a table large enough for all to be included. George R. Hunsberger uses a similar understanding of companion as he notes we are “like all others, creatures made by God and sharing the same earth.”¹¹³ The “bread” we share is the common experiences of human

¹¹¹ George R. Hunsberger “Contrast and Companionship: The Way of the Church with the World.” *Cultural Encounters*. 7, no. 2 (2010), 7-16.

¹¹² Dom Helder Camara, *The Desert is Fertile* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), 15.

¹¹³ George R. Hunsberger “Contrast and Companionship”, 7-16.

longing and aspirations, pain, and joy. If we see as our companions to include “all my relations.” the bread we share is with all of creation as it celebrates the joy of life and as it cries out in the pain of climate change and species extinction.

For decades, the Road to Emmaus story resonated with returning overseas mission personnel as part of their journey of re-entry as they recognized the ways in which God was revealed in the strangers and cultures they encountered.¹¹⁴ Excluding or dismissing the stranger means the possibility of excluding the voice of God. Intercultural ministry is recognizing all those we encounter as a companion with something to offer. Just Intercultural Community requires being able to be open to God revealed through the stranger.

Significant to the vision of intercultural ministry are the words of Jesus that follow in the Emmaus narrative, “While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’” (Luke 24:36, John 20:19). In the Greek New Testament, these passages use, εἰρήνη (Eirene). This has broader meaning than the English word *Peace* communicates. In Jesus’ time this also is more than the literal Greek. Used as a greeting, and in the context of the Jewish and Christian faiths, it echoes the fuller meaning of שָׁלוֹם (*šālôm* or *Shalom*). In this simple greeting are notions of wholeness or completeness, prosperity and security, right relationships between people in community, right relationships, and covenant with God, and even a harmonious relationship with nature. It also has an eschatological sense and the promise of salvation and right relationship through God.¹¹⁵ This then is Shalom, a relationship more profound than the English word *Peace* communicates. It is all persons and communities being fully as God created them. It is right relationship with each other, with all of creation, and with God. It is glimpse and promise of God’s vision for community and relationship.

One of the projects of CCC in recent years is a common agreement on a theology of peace among its 26 member denominations. In 2018, the governing board of CCC adopted by

¹¹⁴ *The Road to Emmaus: A Journey of Transition for Communities Welcoming Missioners Home* (Colorado: Federation of Returned Overseas Missioners, 1991).

¹¹⁵ George A. Buttrick, ed, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Vol. 3 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 705-706.

consensus a “Principles of Peace” that reflects this Shalom understanding. In part, the document states;

Peace is a dynamic state of well-being and harmony—right relationships among people and nature where there is no fear. Nothing and no one is excluded from God’s vision of peace; it includes all nations, cultures, and peoples, the whole inhabited Earth, indeed the whole cosmos. The quest for peace is at the heart of ecumenism and the shared path of reconciliation, of walking one another home.¹¹⁶

This Shalom vision appears in other work of CCC, including reflections on poverty by the CCC Commission on Justice and Peace;

What is the kingdom of God? An understanding of the kingdom of God begins with the knowledge that humans are created in God’s image. As bearers of this image, all human beings have inherent dignity and worth and whatever compromises that dignity is contrary to the will of God and outside of God’s kingdom. The kingdom of God is also a kingdom of community. God, who exists as the community of the Trinity, intends us to live in community. It is in community that human beings realize their fullest potential and the unique purpose for which each has been created. Consequently, anything that compromises the bonds of community is also contrary to the will of God because it separates us from the relationships that sustain us and for which God created us.¹¹⁷

In the Emmaus narrative, we can discern the Eucharist liturgy. God is revealed in the companion, literally in the one with whom we share bread: “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him” (Luke 24:30-31a). As with the liturgy, there is a clear vision of mission and community in the words of Jesus, “Peace be with you.” There is a glimpse of the vision of right relationship with all of creation not just in that moment but also in the living out of this relationship. In the words of the World Council of Churches statement, *Together Towards Life*, “The faithful go forth in peace (in mission) after they have experienced in their Eucharistic gathering the eschatological kingdom of God as a glimpse and foretaste of it. Mission as going

¹¹⁶ *Principles of Peace*, (Adopted by consensus by the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches, May 23, 2018), accessed August 13, 2019 <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/social-justice/principles-of-peace/>

¹¹⁷ *Healing Poverty: A Reflection from the Commission on Justice and Peace of The Canadian Council of Churches* (Toronto: The Canadian Council of Churches, 2019).

forth is thus the outcome, rather than the origin of the church, and is called ‘liturgy after the Liturgy.’”¹¹⁸ This statement also affirmed that this peace is for “every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society”, recognizing “the whole *oikoumene* as being interconnected in God’s web of life.”

The Shalom of the Emmaus story is the biblical notion of peace that Martin Luther King Jr. described as “Beloved Community.”¹¹⁹ It is a global vision in which all people share in the wealth of the earth. Beloved Community represents systemic change where poverty, hunger, homelessness, racism and other forms of discrimination are not tolerated and are eliminated.¹²⁰ Beloved Community is a vision of inclusiveness, both economic and social, in which all persons are valued and able to live fully as themselves. Theologically, Beloved Community is community where each member is able to be fully as created as a Child of God. Likewise, each culture is able to express itself fully as a creation of God.

Dr. King’s vision of Beloved Community was not devoid of conflict. Conflict is an inevitable part of human experience.¹²¹ Rather, when there is conflict each culture or individual is free to shape and be shaped by the other, from a position of equal power. The Canadian pacifist, scientist, Quaker, and feminist, Ursula Franklin, connects this understanding of conflict to the concept of Shalom. “Peace is not an absence of war, but an absence of fear of not having what is needed to be fully human.”¹²²

¹¹⁸ World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, 2012, accessed April 17, 2020, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes/@/@/download/file/Together_towards_Life.pdf

¹¹⁹ Martin Luther King Jr, “Facing the Challenge of a New Age” (1957) *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M Washington (New York: Harper Collins, 1986).

¹²⁰ The King Centre, *The King Philosophy* www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy as developed throughout Martin Luther King Jr’s writings, speeches, and sermons.

¹²¹ King, “Facing the Challenge of a New Age”

¹²² Ursula Franklin, *The Ursula Franklin Reader: Pacifism as a Map* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2006), 69.

There are other biblical narratives that add further nuance to how Beloved Community or Shalom might be lived. John the Baptist recognizes the visitor as being a gift, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’” (Matthew 3:13-14). Imagine if churches saw visitors in this way. The welcome would not be, “Come be part of us and accept what we have to offer,” it would be “Your arrival is a gift. Come share what you have to offer us. Come change us.”

In the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), Jesus invites Zacchaeus in a way that also encourages Zacchaeus to be fully himself. Jesus does not invite Zacchaeus to join his movement. Jesus does not even invite Zacchaeus to a place that Jesus would feel most comfortable and safe. When Jesus invites him down out of the tree, he invites him to the place where he is most familiar and at ease in his identity. Jesus invites Zacchaeus to take him to his home and invests him with the power to welcome, “When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.’ So, he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.” (Luke 19: 5-6). A community, including a church, which hopes to live out Shalom or Beloved Community, might do the same. Even in the warmest welcome, there are issues of power. The one who welcomes has the power to decide whether to extend welcome and secondly to set the ground rules of the welcome. As churches, either denominations or local congregations, commit to becoming intercultural, they can contemplate a more radical notion of welcome. Instead of seeking to bring a diverse community into who they are, they might instead ask who and how they might allow themselves to be welcomed. How might our churches instead of saying, “you are welcome at our house” say, “I must stay at your house today?”

The African Nguni Bantu term, “Ubuntu,” provides a further conceptualization of Beloved Community or Shalom of interconnectedness in God’s web of life. Archbishop Desmond Tutu described this interconnection as being the “very essence of being human.” It is to say, “My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.” Being human is participating, belonging, sharing and being available to others. In Just Intercultural Community, each person is able to be fully himself or herself while being able to be shaped by the other. Likewise, “a person

with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.”¹²³ The Indigenous concept of “all my relations” expands this web to include all of creation so that our humanness is not only bound up in one other, but it is bound up in the relationship with all living creations and with all of creation.

The welcome offered by many churches can be like the welcome given to a short-term houseguest. The guest is welcomed and embraced, but much of who he or she is or how she or he behaves, including ways that potentially are disruptive of the household, might only be tolerated in the short-term. If the guest stays, the expectations, responsibilities, and rules of the house to which they must conform are articulated, or they may be asked to move along. The message is, “You are welcome only if you become like us.” As the research of this thesis demonstrates, it is in the experiencing of the discomfort of difference that Just Intercultural relationship emerges. Research participants noted the importance of a five-day residential program where discomfort is engaged as opposed to a short workshop where it is easy to tolerate discomfort for a short time.

Several denominations use the hymn “Draw the Circle Wide”¹²⁴ as an expression of their welcoming of diversity. The lyrics “Draw the circle wide, draw the circle wide. No one stands alone; we’ll stand side by side,” provide beautiful imagery of intercultural community, but leave unanswered questions. Who gets to define the circle? Who has the power to choose to widen the circle? As one reflects on the welcome offered by churches. It is helpful to examine if the welcome is motivated by a desire for a diverse church, an inclusive church, or a community where all present experience belonging.

The Indigenous understanding, as I have been told by elders, of a circle as a place for community, sharing, teaching, and learning, and decision-making is closer to the vision of

¹²³ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday Random House, 1999), 29.

¹²⁴ Gordon Light, *Draw the Circle Wide* (Common Cup Company, 2008).

Shalom. People enter the circle not because it is drawn wider or because they are invited by those who are already in the circle. There is an opening in the circle through which any may enter. There is room for them in the circle. Within the circle, all are acknowledged and all voices heard. As people speak into the circle, it is very different from a typical Western linear process of decision-making and sharing wisdom that build on thoughts of the previous speaker. Rather, all the voices speak into the circle to create a collective wisdom of the community.

Having identified the new era Canadian Christianity is moving into, identified the need for tools for local “theologies,” and defined Just Intercultural community, we turn to visions of Shalom. These visions are not prescriptive of how Canadians understand their contexts and respond faithfully. They provide theological frameworks and methods that inspire the creative space for imagination needed to support Canadian communities of faith creating new spaces and ways of being. They inspire the imagination out of which *Engage Difference!* was created and continues to evolve.

CHAPTER 3

VISIONS, BARRIERS AND RESPONSES: TOWARDS JUST INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Visions of Just Intercultural Communities

As the Canadian churches participate in the emerging ecumenical paradigm, they do so as part of a wider global community of faith. The rise of World Christianity and the recognition of a multiplicity of contexts and “local theologies” brings insights about the rapidly changing contemporary context, and the gifts and challenges of relationship across diversity. It also brings awareness of global injustices in relationship between peoples and with all of creation. The importance of marginalized peoples to mission is recognized as they provide clarity and urgency in naming, and resources in countering, injustice.

FILL’s vision of Just Intercultural resonates with the notion of “mission from the margins” of The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches. The CWME names the need for an alternative to the perception that mission can only be from the powerful to the powerless. “Mission from the margins” is a source of,

God-given gifts that are under-utilized because of disempowerment and denial of access to opportunities and/or justice. Through struggles in and for life, marginalized people are reservoirs of the active hope, collective resistance, and perseverance that are needed to remain faithful to the promised reign of God.¹²⁵

FILL emphasizes providing tools and resources for people of faith to work together, to name, to discover, and to articulate intercultural ministry in their unique Canadian contexts. It intentionally does not prescribe how intercultural community will look in ministry contexts but rather assumes that intercultural community will emerge differently in each community that commits to imagining their own expression of intercultural ministry. As they are supported in discerning local theologies and praxes of ministry, they are inspired by other visions of Just

¹²⁵ World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (2012), accessed April 17, 2020, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes/@/@download/file/Together_towards_Life.pdf

Intercultural community. The formation of FILL and the design of *Engage Difference!* are inspired by many others naming emerging contexts and discerning faithful responses. Letty M. Russell and Stephanie Speller develop ideas FILL and the program draw on. A number of others in the Canadian context join this growing community discerning Just Intercultural community.

Letty M. Russell's Vision of "Just Hospitality"

In *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference*,¹²⁶ Letty M. Russell describes a vision of "Just Hospitality" that resonates with the emerging Canadian notions of intercultural ministry. She recognizes the importance of the margins, drawing on bell hooks' definition of margins as "socially constructed sites that dominant groups consider to be the location of those who are of no account."¹²⁷ Russell describes the location as "the site of my theology of resistance."¹²⁸ In her vision, Russell asks questions like "Who is missing?" and "Who are the ones whose voice is not heard?"¹²⁹ Beyond asking who is outside, Russell insists on "giving priority to the perspective of the outsider"¹³⁰ and hopes for a church as "a community of Christ where everyone is welcome and Christ's presence among us calls us to be open to each other."¹³¹

Recognizing the "potential of misusing hospitality to demean those with less power and wealth and to make ourselves feel superior,"¹³² Russell proposes Just Hospitality as an alternative. Even with this clarity, there is need for caution for those in a place of power and privilege in our approach to the margin. There continues to be an issue of agency. Who is doing the empowering? Who is allowing those voices?

¹²⁶ Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

¹²⁷ bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margins to Centre* (Boston: South End, 1984).

¹²⁸ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 2.

¹²⁹ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 14.

¹³⁰ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 45.

¹³¹ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 69.

¹³² Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 121.

Hospitality in churches is often an exercise of welcoming others to join us, to become as we are, or as an act of offering to the other something that we have and think the other needs. This is not Just Hospitality. It devalues who the others are, takes away their agency, and prevents our being changed, shaped, and enriched by the God given gifts and cultures of those sent by God into this context. For Russell, “we need to...strive to meet others as they are, not as objects of our charity, but persons in their own right, capable of making choices about their destiny. If we insist, they dress as we do and follow the same manners” and, I would add, experience, and respond to God as we do, “we are not exercising hospitality but ‘reforming’ others to match our expectations.”¹³³

Russel recognizes hospitality not just as welcome but also as solidarity with strangers, a two-way street in which those at the centre might learn from those at the margins. She echoes Audre Lorde’s assertion that, “It is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather *our refusal to recognize those differences.*”¹³⁴

For Russell, the church is “a community of Christ where everyone is welcome and Christ’s presence among us calls us to be open to each other.”¹³⁵ She envisions a “community where the participation of each and every one is valued, where no one is excluded on the basis of race, sex, religion, or cultural practice, where diversity is celebrated as God’s gift to the world.”¹³⁶ Russell insists that, “Just Hospitality is the practice of God’s welcome by reaching out across difference to participate in God’s actions bringing justice and healing in our world of crisis and fear of the ones we call ‘other’.”¹³⁷ Further, Russell asserts that, “hospitality in a world of difference needs to be practiced in a way that seeks to be just with those involved... In our practice of hospitality, justice includes not only an equal distribution of goods and opportunities, but also the creation of

¹³³ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 81.

¹³⁴ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. (Trumansburg, NY. Crossing Press. 1984), 155.

¹³⁵ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 69.

¹³⁶ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 70. (Quoting a letter to the representatives of the World Council of Churches at the end of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women).

¹³⁷ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 101.

institutional conditions that allow persons to flourish and have a say in the shaping of their lives and communities.”¹³⁸

Stephanie Spellers “Radical Welcome”: Being Changed by the Other

While Russell’s work offers theoretical and theological understanding, Stephanie Spellers offers a praxis of Just Intercultural Community.¹³⁹ In *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation*,¹⁴⁰ Spellers gives a “how-to” for Russell’s Just Hospitality framework. She draws on her own experience as someone outside the dominant culture who yet participates and interacts with it. Her reflections are similar to those of the *Engage Difference!* Intercultural Mentors. They have ‘eyes’ of one on the outside, are able to see things that those on the inside are unaware of, and understand those on the inside well enough to speak with them. As Spellers explains:

As a thirtysomething person of colour raised in the working class south, I’ve had to continually set aside the hope of hearing and seeing the voices, images, stories, and values of my home culture incorporated regularly in any but the most intentionally welcoming churches... We are already [in the church]: the strangers, the outcasts, the poor, people of colour, gay and lesbian people, young adults, and so many more. We resonate with our church’s theology and traditions. We love our congregations and pray and labour for their health, growth and ministry.¹⁴¹

Spellers uses the term “Radical Welcome” which she defines as “the spiritual practice of embracing and being changed by the gifts, presence, voices, and power of The Other: the people we systemically cast out of are or marginalized within a church, a denomination, and or society.”¹⁴² She wonders, “What it would take to reverse the effects of years, if not generations, of alienation, marginalization and outright rejection?”¹⁴³ Often intercultural ministry is motivated

¹³⁸ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 122.

¹³⁹ Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation* (New York: Church Publishing, 2006).

¹⁴⁰ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*.

¹⁴¹ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 5-6.

¹⁴² Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 6.

¹⁴³ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 6.

by fear of falling numbers. For Spellers, it is time to bring a different set of questions. She urges us to ask not just how we get more people, “but how do we share power, how do you create a culture that is flexible and fluid enough to be open, constantly evaluating and reorganizing based on the reality around you?”¹⁴⁴

Spellers draws on Miroslav Volf’s images of opening arms to telegraph the desire to reach beyond yourself in order to connect with the other.¹⁴⁵ This opening arms, or Radical Welcome, is not forcing the other to come inside, but waiting at the boundary of the other in the hope that your vulnerability and desire will prove compelling or even transforming.

However, I note that, there are questions of agency in this model as well. Who does the opening of arms? Who responds? How does that shape the other and the relationship? We might also ask why we might fail to notice or respond to the open arms of the other.

Grounded in scripture, Spellers builds her vision on examples of faith communities in the United States. She sets measures for assessing “signs of a radically welcoming church” and offers ways for a community to move toward radical welcome.¹⁴⁶ She recognizes the ability of the margins to name issues of power, as “people on the margins know the importance of power, mostly because institutional power is so often withheld from them. They know there can be no genuine radical welcome without a sharing of power.”¹⁴⁷

Recent Canadian Explorations of Intercultural

The effort to define and describe intercultural is not singular. There have been several recent Doctor of Ministry theses focused on intercultural ministry in various Canadian contexts. Sonia Hinds’ work questioned assumptions about multiculturalism as she looked at how an ethnically and racially diverse Canadian Anglican congregation practises worship and leadership in a

¹⁴⁴ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 11.

¹⁴⁵ Miroslav Volf. *Exclusion and Embrace: A theological exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 140-45, as described in Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 12 ff.

¹⁴⁶ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 76.

¹⁴⁷ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 88.

multicultural setting.¹⁴⁸ As a Caribbean born female priest, she names the need for further work by the church where she demonstrates that multiculturalism is not universally accepted and acceptance of ethnic and racial diversity is not the norm in the Anglican parish. Her thesis points to the need for the work of FILL. When the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries (CCFGM) transitioned to focusing on intercultural ministry in Canada, Hinds was at the table, and she was part of the first program design team.

Another example from the Canadian churches comes from Susan Howard who described a bible study group in a United Church of Canada congregation that discussed themes of oppression, community, and barriers.¹⁴⁹ Reminiscent of the process recommended by Spellers, this group was able to move intentionally toward the United Church vision of intercultural ministry. Key to this work is her recognition that there “isn’t a clear method for justice making among cultures” and that “becoming intercultural communities is an evolving journey.” Creating spaces for that process of discovery by the community is an important part of *Engage Difference!*

Consideration of intercultural ministry in Canada includes additional scholars and theologians. Heather Vais looked at a process for becoming intercultural in a Presbyterian congregation.¹⁵⁰ Her work contributes to ideas of welcome as it explores practices that foster feeling of belonging within communities that are culturally diverse. She currently is a Presbyterian representative to the FILL reference group and member of FILL’s program oversight group. Kawuki Mukasa’s PhD thesis focused on racism as he looked at processes for inclusive communities of faith.¹⁵¹ His examination of diversity and racism in The United Church of Canada (UCC) particularly is helpful, and his work contributed to the UCC’s commitment to becoming an intercultural

¹⁴⁸ Sonia Hinds, *A Perspective on Cultural Diversity in an Anglican Setting*. Doctor of Ministry Thesis (Toronto: Trinity College, 2013).

¹⁴⁹ Susan Howard, *Co-constructing Relational Spaces of Grace: Downsview United Church’s Being/becoming Intercultural Church*, Doctor of Ministry Thesis (Toronto: Emmanuel College, 2012).

¹⁵⁰ Heather Vais, *Beyond Cordiality: Interpreting Practices of Mutual Hospitality toward Building Interculturally Competent Community at Thornhill Presbyterian Church*, Doctor of Ministry Thesis (Toronto: Knox College, 2017).

¹⁵¹ Kawuki Mukasa, *Belonging: Constructing a Canadian Theology of Inclusion*. Kamu Kamu Publishing. 2005.

denomination. Without that denomination's initiative, CCFGM likely would not have discerned its new intercultural mandate. In his Doctor of Theology thesis, Hyuk Cho asked, "How does the United Church of Canada (UCC) build just relations with the other without breaching the Other's identity?"¹⁵² He identifies the need for relationships in which all are able to maintain their identity. The assertion that other cultures and theologies are resources to the "local theology" that grounds this current thesis is reflected in Cho's use of the Indigenous concept of "all my relations", the Six Nations' Two Row Wampum belt and Nam-dong Suh's Minjung theology. Hyung Jin (Pablo) Kim Sun, a Paraguayan born Korean Mennonite who works as a FILL research and program assistant at the CCC, is working on a Doctoral project that examines how his Canadian Mennonite denomination might become intercultural.¹⁵³ His work will be important in demonstrating how the dominant Western Christianity might be challenged to allow for other world theologies in the context of a Canadian denomination, a case study in the work FILL aspires to resource and support.

Intercultural Community in Specific Areas of Ministry

In addition to those working on the scholarship of intercultural ministry, other authors focus on intercultural within particular areas of ministry. Michael Jagessar, in *Christian Worship: Postcolonial Perspectives*, argues that there is more to creating intercultural community in worship than bringing in various music, readings, or even language to adapt worship that already is shaped by a particular culture.¹⁵⁴ There is a complexity in the emerging ecumenical paradigm that acknowledges the cultural influence on liturgy and allows worship shaped by many cultures and contexts. It is common for participants in FILL programs to wrestle with how to create intercultural worship. They tend to do this by bringing in elements (music, readings, etc.), from

¹⁵² Hyuk Cho, *Sharing Concern for Justice: Becoming an Intercultural Church as a Postcolonial Mission Practice in the Canadian Context of Integrative Multiculturalism*, Doctor of Theology thesis, (Toronto: Emmanuel College, 2017).

¹⁵³ Hyung Jin (Pablo) Kim Sun, "Toward a Critical Intercultural Ecclesiology for the Mennonite Church Canada: Theo-Ethical Guidelines for Becoming an Intercultural Church of Peace and Justice-Love" Doctoral Thesis, (Emmanuel College: Toronto. Not yet published).

¹⁵⁴ Michael N. Jagessar and Stephen Burns, *Christian Worship: Postcolonial Perspectives* (Sheffield, UK: Equinox Publishing, 2011).

various cultures instead of stepping back to ask how the process of creating worship might be intercultural. In the programs, there is an invitation to pay attention to the decision process used in planning worship to take them beyond using diverse worship elements having a diverse group of people plan worship. Intercultural worship, then, is worship shaped by a diverse group of people having equal voice in creating the worship including diverse ways of planning.

In *Pastoral Counselling Across Cultures*, David W. Augsburger recognizes that the culture of the person providing pastoral care shapes the relationship.¹⁵⁵ In diverse contexts, this means recognizing one's own culture and assumptions that shape the relationship. Models and assumptions of pastoral care are created out of a cultural context, including views and values related to the individual and community, shame, family, and understandings of healing and wellness. Participants in FILL programs often recognize that there needs to be an awareness of the presences of different cultures in the counselling setting, however, many do not recognize that the very notions and models of counselling under which they operate come from a particular culture. Those that do, may not be cognizant of how deeply those models shape their practice and pastoral care relationships. Pastoral counselling is a Western construct, which means there is a need to go beyond simply considering the culture of the counsellor, to examining the very culture that shaped the assumptions, institutions, and models of counselling. Tapiwa Muchera argues that Western ethical and moral guiding principles used in counselling are autonomy, beneficence, and justice. He argues that these are contrary to wellness in African Indigenous communities where interdependence and healthy community relationships are measures of health.¹⁵⁶ Ethan Watters argued, "Offering the latest Western mental health theories in an attempt to ameliorate the psychological stress caused by globalization is not a solution, it is part of the problem."¹⁵⁷ Models of counselling and mental health shaped by Western culture undermine beliefs and methods of healing and conceptions of the self of the local culture. He uses the examples of the

¹⁵⁵ David W. Augsburger, *Pastoral Counselling Across Cultures* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986).

¹⁵⁶ Tapiwa N. Mucherera, *Meet Me at the Palaver: Narrative Pastoral Counselling in Postcolonial Context* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2009), 101.

¹⁵⁷ Ethan Watters, *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (Toronto: Free Press, 2010), 253.

rise of anorexia in Hong Kong, the introduction of PTSD to Sri Lanka, schizophrenia in Zanzibar and depression in Japan as the exporting of Western mental illness to cultures that have their own rich resources for individual and community mental health. In *Engage Difference!* participants are invited to look at cultural assumptions of wellness and models of pastoral care they have been taught and practice. There are always tensions of values in intercultural settings. Participants are invited to name the values of their own culture as both potential sources of resources for relationship and pastoral care and as sources of conflict, oppression, or misunderstanding. Discussion with a therapist from a culture other than the dominant European culture, or one that works with populations in Canada outside that culture, provide other models of pastoral care. Resource people working from Indigenous understandings of healing or are from an immigrant community and can describe how wellness is understood and supported in their community as they negotiate the wider cultures of Canada bring content on wider questions of wellness and mental health.

Barriers to Just Intercultural Community

The USA Assumption: Fear is Central to our Relationship with the Other

Writing from the USA context, Stephanie Spellers¹⁵⁸ and Letty Russell¹⁵⁹ suggest that fear is the primary barrier to Just Intercultural Community. Eric Law also responds to fear as a central barrier.¹⁶⁰ While having worked in Canada, he writes primarily from and for USA contexts.¹⁶¹ I argue that in the Canadian context, while fear is operative, the primary barriers are the myths the culture holds about itself. By “myths,” I do not mean “untruths” but rather I mean the shared beliefs and stories that inform how a culture understands itself. Given the central theme of fear in

¹⁵⁸ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*.

¹⁵⁹ Russell, *Just Hospitality*.

¹⁶⁰ Eric Law, *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000).

¹⁶¹ Eric Law worked for the Diocese of New Westminster of The Anglican Church of Canada. His work, through his USA based “Kaleidoscope Institute” has largely been in the USA and his publications for USA audiences.

these authors' work, there is a need to discern intercultural ministry differently in a Canadian context.

Spellers devotes an entire chapter to fear as a primary barrier to radical welcome. Russell also points to “the fear of difference in a pluralistic and dangerous world” as a barrier.¹⁶² In his workshops, another author central to the conversation on intercultural ministry in the United States, Law, suggests that between a fear zone and a safe zone when encountering the other, there is a grace zone where change can happen.¹⁶³ USA culture and context shape this focus on fear. Fear is a defining characteristic of that culture. Michael Moore, in the documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, described fear as defining of USA culture and used it to examine the USA relationship with violence and weapons.¹⁶⁴ In *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things* Barry Glassner documented the pervasiveness of fear in USA culture.¹⁶⁵ His term, “Culture of Fear,” commonly is used in USA media, academia, and research on USA culture and relationships across communities.¹⁶⁶

CCFGM decided it could not continue to resource overseas personnel for the United States denominations, in part, because Canadian staff felt ill equipped to engage the fear USA overseas personnel experienced and expressed as they prepared to work across cultures. The USA participants tended to view the world as a much more dangerous place than their Canadian counterparts did. While not seen as a priority for the Canadian denominations, USA denominations staff required their personnel to practice kidnapping scenarios. USA program participants refused to do the program's experiential activities in the community arguing that they exposed them to danger. The overseas living and work settings for USA participants were

¹⁶² Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 78.

¹⁶³ Eric Law, Kaleidoscope Institute, accessed July 2017, <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org>

¹⁶⁴ Accessed March 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zqh6Ap9ldTs>

¹⁶⁵ Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

¹⁶⁶ Barry Glassner in the forward to the 10th anniversary edition of *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

more likely in compounds in which they would have little direct contact with local communities. Perhaps this is because the world, including within many USA communities, is more dangerous for USA citizens. However, this taps into a deeper cultural characteristic of fear. I observed this fear when living in USA inner cities. Several of the neighbourhoods where I lived, and never experienced violence, were also places people from wealthier neighbourhoods would avoid as “dangerous.” This fear keeps people from different communities in the USA from interacting and poses a distinct barrier to their engagement across diversity.

In its early intercultural programs, CCFGM used USA-based tools that engaged the theme of fear. However, fear was not perceived as a barrier to intercultural ministry by program participants. While fear of the other is at work in the Canadian context, there are other more significant barriers to intercultural community. In Canada, there are myths that the culture holds about itself that, while decreasing the fear of the other, prevent Canadians from seeing a need to examine their relationships across difference or to see them as problematic or unjust. Rooted in its colonial history, Canada carries myths about itself as peaceful, more civilized, and already in right relationship with others and with creation. The research of this study demonstrated the need to counter these myths as participants described as profound learning hearing, through the program, harmful and often violent experiences of Canadian society of marginalized participants.

Canadian Barriers to Intercultural Ministry

Edward Said argued that “the major component in European culture is precisely what made it hegemonic both in and outside of Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all non-European peoples and cultures.”¹⁶⁷ As a product of European culture, Canada’s culture and image of itself inherits and stands firmly in this tradition. This belief of having a superior culture is a significant barrier to intercultural ministry as it leads to, at best, an unwillingness to understand and value other cultures and, at worst, a drive to make the “other” be like us. Cultural superiority, which will be discussed more extensively later in this paper, motivated both Canadian attempts to “civilize the Indian” and a policy of that protects the

¹⁶⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 7.

dominant White European culture of Canada. This superiority stands in the way of Canadian churches responding faithfully to the increasing diversity of Canada.

Daniel Coleman describes the myth of Canada as the ideal civilized British Colony. In *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* he uses literary criticism to argue:

English Canadian whiteness has been modelled upon a specific form of British civility, a form of Britishness that is a uniquely settler-colonial project, and that this British-inflected White civility was formulated and popularized by means of (at least) four ubiquitous allegorical figures in late-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century Canadian writing: the Loyalist brother, the Scottish orphan, the muscular Christian, and the maturing colonial son.¹⁶⁸

In *Unsettling the Settler Within*, Paulette Regan argues that the Canadian myth of the peacemaker is a barrier to reconciliation.¹⁶⁹ For Regan, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation process is an opportunity to examine the Canadian myths about ourselves as benevolent peacemakers who brought British law, justice and the Christian message of the peaceable kingdom.

A lack of critical self-awareness of this shared cultural myth allows Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to declare Canada the "first post-national state" and that, "There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada."¹⁷⁰ He also declared that being racist "is not in our DNA" as Canadians, a statement that is contrary to a history of Canada that has no shortage of examples of racism.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Daniel Coleman, *White Civility*, 211.

¹⁶⁹ Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press, 2010).

¹⁷⁰ "The Canada experiment: is this the world's first 'post national' country?" *The Guardian International Edition*, Wednesday, 4 Jan 2017, (Reporting on remarks made to the NY Times magazine October 2015), accessed April 13, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/04/the-canada-experiment-is-this-the-worlds-first-postnational-country>

¹⁷¹ The outlawing of Aboriginal ceremonies in 1876, the Chinese head tax of 1885, the 1914 Komagata Maru incident, the relocation of Japanese Canadians in 1941, anti-black racism in Dresden Ontario in 1954, the Indian Residential Schools, and Racial Profiling by police of black and Indigenous youth in cities across Canada today to name a few.

In *Rethinking the Great White North, Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*¹⁷² Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayash provide a collection of essays that connect Canadian racism and notions of Whiteness to Canadian myths about our relationship to the land as central themes in our identity that shape our relationships with others and stand in the way of reconciliation. They describe The Great White North as an enduring Canadian myth that “invokes a metaphor of nature’s purity to reinforce norms of racial purity... [and] assert the dominance of whiteness and as a cultural norm and...national identity linked closely to nature and whiteness.”¹⁷³ This makes Canadian whiteness noble in its relationship with nature, and natural and innocent, erasing Canada’s history of colonialism, slavery, genocide and racism.

David Augsburger argues that knowing one’s own culture requires coming to know other cultures: “One who knows but one culture knows no culture.”¹⁷⁴ While this may be true, there are barriers to a dominant culture to knowing another or even knowing itself, barriers which I name and for which I offer remedies in this study. Research in short-term, overseas mission points to problems with the assumption that encountering another culture can be transformative. While many participants in cross-cultural encounters self-report transformation, Kurt Ver Beek found little long-term change in behaviour and likened any change to a sapling that is held down and quickly springs back to its original shape when let go.¹⁷⁵ Karla Ann Koll questioned whether it is possible to encounter another culture since these encounters are not with the culture itself, but with local leaders who are more like us and with whom we are comfortable and recognize their way of relating.¹⁷⁶ Using Geert Hofstede’s differences of perception of power among

¹⁷² Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron, & Audrey Kobayashi. *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada* (Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 2011)

¹⁷³ Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron, & Audrey Kobayashi. *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*, 18.

¹⁷⁵ Kurt Ver Beek, “The Impact of Short-Term Missions: A Case Study of House Construction in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch,” *Missiology: An International Review*. 34. (2006): 477-495.

¹⁷⁶ Karla Ann Koll, “Taking Wolves among Lambs: Some Thoughts on Training for Short Term Mission Facilitation,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Overseas Ministries Study Center. New Haven Connecticut. 34, No 2 (April 2010): 93-96

cultures,¹⁷⁷ Koll names that those of us from the dominant White culture have a ‘low power distance culture’, or perception that we have a high degree of personal power to effect change. According to Koll, we are what Eric Law describes as *wolves*.¹⁷⁸ Often our encounters are with cultures that are ‘high power distance cultures’ in which people accept a high degree of social inequality and perceive themselves as powerless, people whom Eric Law describes as *lambs*. Typically, contact with these cultures is with those who are motivated to interact with us, leaders who have a great deal of social power and ability to effect change, so are not the norm of their culture. Koll describes these as *Wolves in Lamb’s Clothing*.

When individuals from a dominant culture, those who have more power, privilege, and access to resources, are in these encounters, the encounter is shaped by their needs and level of comfort.¹⁷⁹ This is an unjust relationship and potentially harmful to the “hosts.” Affluence and power shape the encounter so that the dominant culture is not encountering another culture but engaging in an experience that is shaped by their own culture. By definition, it will be the rules and norms of the dominant culture that will drive encounters across cultures.

It is common in Canada for organizations and individuals, when engaging diversity, to seek “intercultural competency.” This model continues to give power to the one engaging the other. It assumes that someone from the dominant culture need only learn enough about the other and gain the skills to engage. However, there are limits to the extent to which one can encounter or understand another culture. It is not possible to be competent fully in or know another culture as this competency results from a lifetime of experience and knowledge that is transferred consciously and unconsciously through that experience.¹⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, the intercultural

¹⁷⁷ Accessed April 30, 2020, <https://geerthofstede.com/>

¹⁷⁸ Eric H.F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (Chalice Press, 1993).

¹⁷⁹ Lahoma Thomas and Uppala Chandrasekera. “Uncovering What Lies Beneath: An Examination of Power, Privilege, and Racialization in International Social Work,” in *Globetrotting or Global Citizenship?: Perils and Potential of International Experiential Learning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 90-111.

¹⁸⁰ Gurdeep Parhar, “Fixing Racism” *TEDx Vancouver*, accessed June 2017, <http://canadianimmigrant.ca/community/integration/dr-gurdeep-parhar-tackles-the-topic-of-overcoming-prejudice-for-ted-talks>

competency model comes out of the corporate world that seeks not to be changed by the other, but to acquire the skills to operate and gain profit in the context of the other. By giving even more power to the already powerful, the cultural competency model stands in the way of Just Intercultural community in which all are able to be in relationship from a position of equal power and influence. *Engage Difference!* explicitly provides a different approach. Rather than providing more power and privilege through competency to the dominant, it invites self-reflection and humility to change the attitudes and behaviours of those with power so that the competencies already present among the marginalized flourish as gifts that shape the community.

Paulette Regan: The Peacemaker Myth

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), documenting the impacts of the Canadian Indian residential school system, highlights barriers to Just Intercultural relationships. In *Unsettling the Settler Within*, Paulette Regan describes one of those barriers, the Canadian Peacemaker myth.¹⁸¹ The TRC is a wakeup call and that should shake Canada's and Canadian Christianity's self-images to the core. The Indian Residential Schools experience, supported by a theology and evangelism shaped by a desire to civilize the other, points to a need to look critically at the theology of the dominant Canadian Christianity. We, the church, and the rest of Canadian society, tried to make Canada's Aboriginal peoples in our image. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology confessed:

Two primary objectives of the residential schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influences of their homes, families, traditions, and cultures, and to assimilate them into their dominant culture. "These objectives were based on the assumption aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was famously said, "to kill the Indian in the Child."¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*.

¹⁸² "June 11, 2008 speech delivered in the house of commons: a full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential Schools system" (2011) *Aboriginal Healing Foundation volume 2: Response, Responsibility, and Renewal*, 325.

The words of the apologies of the churches also include a confession of error in our theology, evangelization, and view of the “other”:

We did not hear you when you shared your vision. In our zeal to tell you of the good news of Jesus Christ, we were closed to the value of your spirituality. We confused Western ways and culture with the depth and breadth and length and height of the gospel of Christ. We imposed our civilization as a condition for accepting the gospel. We tried to make you be like us and in so doing we helped to destroy the vision that made you what you were.¹⁸³

Regan argues that Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an invitation for “non-Indigenous people [to] unsettle ourselves to name and then transform the settler—the colonizer who lurks within—not just in words but by our actions, as we confront the history of colonization, violence, racism, and injustice that remains part of the [Indian Residential School] legacy today.”¹⁸⁴ If Canadian churches take this process seriously, they will look deeper than just its relationship with First Nations but also at its way of being as it participated in Canada’s civilizing and Christianising project.

Regan sets out to alter the Canadian identity, to help deconstruct Canada’s peacemaker myth. The myth is that through peaceful treaty processes and Indian policy, we gave Indigenous Peoples gifts of peace, order, good government, and education. While the phrase, “civilizing the savage” is no longer used today, the attitudes behind it still are present.¹⁸⁵

Canadian churches’ processes of apology, and the TRC reports and Calls to Action¹⁸⁶ were important in CCFGM’s discernment of its new mandate to engage diversity within Canada. The work of FILL and its programs is one of the ways the churches are responding to the “wake-up call” of the TRC. As the programs developed, they gave special attention to including content and engaging resource people and partnerships addressing the relationships between Canada’s

¹⁸³ “The United Church of Canada Apology to First Nations Peoples (1986).” *Aboriginal Healing Foundation volume 2 Response, Responsibility, and Renewal* (2011), 345.

¹⁸⁴ Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, 11.

¹⁸⁵ Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, 83.

¹⁸⁶ The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, accessed April 19, 2020, <http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

Indigenous peoples, settlers, and more recent immigrant “settlers.” This includes processes to uncover the attitudes that resulted in the Indian Residential Schools.

20th Century Protestant Christianity: The Myth of the Ideal British Colony

These myths and barriers to intercultural community in Canada are woven well into Canada’s history and the history of the Canadian churches. The myth of Canada as the ideal British colony shaped early twentieth century Protestant English Canadian Christianity. The church of the early twentieth century held a triumphalist view of itself and place in the mission of God and its influence. Far from *Missio Dei*, God’s Mission, it fully embraced mission as its own accomplishment, intertwined with the accomplishments of Western civilization.¹⁸⁷ In the first half of the twentieth century, H. Richard Niebuhr wrote a scathing description of that church in its USA expression:

The old idea of American Christians as chosen people who had been called to a special task was turned into the notion of a chosen nation especially favoured. As the nineteenth century went on the note of divine favouritism was increasingly sounded. Christianity, democracy, Americanism, the English language and culture, the growth of industry and science, American institutions—these are all confounded and confused. The contemplation of their own righteousness filled Americans with such lofty and enthusiastic sentiments that they readily identified it with the righteousness of God... Henceforth the kingdom of the Lord was a human possession, not a permanent revolution. It is in particular the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxon race, which is destined to bring light to the gentiles by means of lamps manufactured in America.¹⁸⁸

Canadian Christianity was not immune to a similar self-centred triumphalism. Canada would bring “light to the gentiles” first draped in the Union Jack and later capped with a blue beret of the peacekeepers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Canada saw itself as the senior British dominion and ideal British Colony. This self-image included a moral authority to be a model. Canada regularly took a ‘high moral tone’ in international relations, including during the

¹⁸⁷ *Missio Dei* is a concept mainly emerging after WWII in the ecumenical movement prominent at the 1952 Willingen conference, introduced by Karl Hartenstein and further developed by others. Mission is not the Church bringing God to the world, but rather mission is participating in the sending of the Son, the *missio Dei*, toward the redemption of all of creation. In the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, “It is not the church of God that has a mission. It’s the God of mission that has a church.”

¹⁸⁸ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (Harper and Row, 1938), 179.

1919 Paris Peace Conference following the First World War.¹⁸⁹ As the model British colony, Canada fully embraced the American vision of Christianity and layered onto it the grandeur and accomplishments of British Empire and civilization.¹⁹⁰ During the early decades of the twentieth century J. Lovell Murray, director of the Canadian School of Missions, in his book, *The Call of a World Task in War Time*,¹⁹¹ challenged Canadian Christianity to embrace John Mott's "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation." Buildings of missionary organizations engaged in spreading Western Christianity and the Canadian ideal colony to the rest of the world lined St. George Street in Toronto.

Later, Canadian ecumenical institutions would continue the notion of Canada as the ideal British colony. A history of the first decades of the Canadian Council of Churches states, "The CCC was successfully formed in 1944 with a vision that was significantly grounded in a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century assumption of the hegemony of a nation's Protestant churches that was essentially a British colonial vision."¹⁹²

Murray and others attempted to organize the church and all its activities to be at the centre of Canada as a global peacemaker. "The Canadian churches were forging a bold new international agenda that would make the Christian church a force for the healing of a broken world."¹⁹³ Canadian politicians would consult with missionaries and missionary societies on foreign policy. As the Canadians who encountered the rest of the world, they were primary shapers of the foreign policy. Later the self-image of Canada as a neutral, respected peace broker with influence beyond its size and Lester B. Pearson's Peacekeeper military and foreign policy would become

¹⁸⁹ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 2001), 47.

¹⁹⁰ Robert A. Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the quest for a new international order, 1918-1939* (Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 3-37.

¹⁹¹ J. Lovell Murray, *The Call of a World Task in War Time* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement, 1918).

¹⁹² Daniel C. Goodwin, "The Canadian Council of Churches: its founding vision and early years, 1944-1964," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 147-173.

¹⁹³ Wright, *A World Mission*, 37.

engrained in the Canadian psyche. The iconic Canadian folk singer Stompin' Tom Connor captured the sentiment when he sang:

Yes, we are the Blue Berets/We're up and on our way/With another UN flag to be unfurled/Till the factions are at bay and peace is on its way/We'll display our Blue Berets around the world.

Yes, we are the Blue Berets/We're always proud to say/We'll stand between the mighty and the frail/And where children cannot play because war is in their way/We shall send in our blue berets without fail.¹⁹⁴

These ideals continue to shape Canada, and it still sees itself as a model for the rest of the world. As Regan argues, we see ourselves as a peaceful people, even peacemakers. The notion of returning the Canadian military to its historic peacekeeper role resonated with Canadians during the 2015 national election. We also see ourselves as peacekeepers at home as a peaceful multi-cultural society in which anyone can participate. Canada sees itself as a successful model of encouraging diversity. Prime Minister Trudeau, a primary communicator and cheerleader of Canada's vision of itself, recently asserted, "There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada."¹⁹⁵ Deep within our beliefs about ourselves is a false assumption that we are too peaceful and accepting to have a dominant culture that others have to negotiate.

While Canada has had some cultural and ethnic diversity for much of its history, those of European descent are the primary shapers of the society. Those populations also have been Christian, with the strongest influences being Protestant Christianity in English Canada and Catholic Christianity in French Canada. These dominant cultures have shaped the space allowed to other groups, such as Canada's Indigenous peoples and each wave of immigration.

Before discussing strategies for overcoming Canadian barriers, it is important to recognize that myths are not harmful in themselves. The myths a culture holds of itself are one of the ways that

¹⁹⁴ Stompin' Tom Connors "Blue Beret" on *Dr. Stompin Tom...Eh?* (EMI 1991).

¹⁹⁵ "The Canada experiment: is this the world's first 'post national' country?" *The Guardian* (January 4, 2017), accessed January 5, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/04/the-canada-experiment-is-this-the-worlds-first-postnational-country?CMP=share_btn_link

community retains and communicates its collective wisdom and learning which can be a resource to respond in a new context. It is when the myths fuel harmful behaviours that they need to be “overcome.”

On a sunny spring day, Alek Minassian drove a van down sidewalks of Yonge Street in Toronto deliberately targeting pedestrians, killing 10 and injuring 16. Some of the early responses on social media theorized that this was an act of Islamic terrorism and deliberately tried to use the incident to foment anti-Muslim sentiments that could have led to further acts of violence. There was an almost immediate response echoing Trudeau’s “No, that is not who we are.” As a culture, Canadians drew on the myth that they are peacemakers who do not respond with racism, Islamophobia, or violence and, so, successfully denied Canadian potential for racism and violence and quieted those voices within the society. In that moment and context, the Canadian peacemaker myth helped support more just relationships across diversity in Canada.

Overcoming Barriers

To say diversity is our strength—as Toronto repeatedly does—makes an assertion that runs contrary to our innate discomfort with change. Difference requires us to change how we interact with others who are, by definition, not like us. It means we are uncomfortable, anxious, stressed, displaced, uncertain or afraid of unpredictability when interacting with people from places, cultures, and social spaces with which we are unfamiliar.¹⁹⁶

Beyhan Farhadi

Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.¹⁹⁷

Martin Luther King Jr.

¹⁹⁶ Beyhan Farhadi, “Identity and the City: Thinking Through Diversity”, in *Subdivided: City Building in an Age of Hyper-Diversity*, eds Jay Pitter and John Lorinc (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2016), 29.

¹⁹⁷ Martin Luther King Jr., “Non-violence: the Only Road to Freedom” (1966) in ed. James M Washington, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Harper Collins, 1986), 58.

Conscientization

Martin Luther King, Jr. argued that Beloved Community is more than a change of behaviour (quantitative change in our lives) but that it is a change in the deepest parts of what shapes us (qualitative change in our souls).¹⁹⁸ Reflecting on diversity in Toronto, Beyhan Farhadi argues, “Difference requires us to change how we interact with others.”¹⁹⁹ Culture determines how we interact with others. This includes the cultures of our wider society, church denominations and other institutions, our local ministry contexts and faith communities, and our families. The guidelines of how we interact with others and our attitudes toward others often operate at an unconscious level. To be in a just relationship with those who are different requires what Freire describes as conscientization,²⁰⁰ or bringing to consciousness one’s own culture and self within that culture. Being aware of how culture shapes relationship will lead to more just relationships between people, and with all of creation, and with God.

The program and vision of FILL recognize that overcoming barriers to intercultural ministry is not easy. Tod Russell, a Canadian Inuit former member of the Canadian parliament, described it well, “Colonization was difficult. It was hard work, blood, sweat, tears. Don’t stop now. Don’t stop now. Undoing colonization will require just as much hard work, blood, sweat, and tears.”²⁰¹ Reflecting on poverty, Jesuit Dean Brackley urged, “It breaks your heart...let it break your heart.”²⁰² So also, with intercultural ministry. It requires a willingness to be vulnerable, to have one’s heart broken. It requires giving up old ways of being.

Allowing one’s heart to be broken is more than an intellectual exercise. Participants in the research of this thesis differentiate between head knowledge and the inclination of the heart. Intercultural community and Beloved Community require “artists” who can engage individuals

¹⁹⁸ King Jr., “Non-violence: the Only Road to Freedom”, 58.

¹⁹⁹ Farhadi, “Identity and the City”, 29.

²⁰⁰ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

²⁰¹ At a 2017 gathering at of denominations party to the Indian Residential Schools, Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre in Pickering.

²⁰² In conversation with visiting students at the University of Central America, San Salvador, El Salvador in 1997.

and communities creatively and holistically. Intercultural community is a work of the Creator and becoming intercultural communities is participating in God's creative action.

Overcoming Barriers as a Process

Anthropology, studies of ritual, and theories of change are helpful in understanding the process of conscientization required to overcome the barriers to Just Intercultural Community. CCFGM work with returning overseas mission personnel used a model of transition based on the work of anthropologist Victor Turner who recognized three stages of transition: *letting go* or *endings*, *letting be* or *neutral zone*, and *letting begin* or *new beginnings*.²⁰³ In *Engage Difference!* there is an emphasis on the first stage which includes naming the participants' cultures, how those cultures are shaped and contextual, and what part of those cultures needs to be maintained and what let go in shaping and being shaped by other cultures. This process includes telling the stories of migration that shaped a community and stories of encounter across difference that each participant brings into the room and naming one's culture and its resources for relationship.

The second stage tends to be an unpopular or distasteful one for many North Americans. Part of the inherited White European culture is assumptions of progress and being able to have solutions. Simply being is difficult for that culture. In intercultural ministry, there needs to be space to sit with an understanding of one's own culture as well as the patience to learn and understand the cultures of others. Conscientization does not happen simply through encounter, but through a longer process, that allows space for reflection and learning new attitudes and ways of being. Paulo Freire often is attributed as having declared, "An experience not reflected upon is not learning." *Engage Difference!* includes a significant amount of time for participants simply to "be" with each other in both the formal program and in built-in informal time over meals and social gatherings.

The final stage recognizes that the change has started to be integrated into attitudes, self-concept, and behaviour. In intercultural ministry, this stage creates spaces where cultures can come

²⁰³ Carl Starkloff, *A Theology of the In-Between* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002), 57.

together in relationships of equal power to be able to shape each other while also maintaining their identity. It is the first experience of not having one culture dominant. As we will see in the research, in the diverse communities of the programs, participants have an experience of being in a community that is different than most have experienced elsewhere. In the programs, participants reflect on how their faith communities might be different because of the experiences from the program. One way they work actively in this stage is through designing and practicing workshops and activities for applying the learning in their home communities.

Of course, these three stages are not neatly linear in practice, both for returned mission personnel and in intercultural ministry. However, the process clearly reveals the intentional work of intercultural ministry.

Overcoming the Barrier of Multiculturalism

Canada's multiculturalism is a brilliant construct toward maintaining the power and privilege of a dominant culture, and in this brilliance an important and difficult to overcome barrier to Just Intercultural community. As we will see in the research of this thesis, participants identify Canadian churches' embracing of multiculturalism as a barrier to Just Intercultural community. In 1971 Canada adopted an official policy of multiculturalism, just as Canada was changing its immigration policies in a way that resulted in more non-European migration to Canada and a more diverse society. Multiculturalism, that affirmed the value and dignity of all Canadian citizens regardless of race or ethnic origin, carefully diffused the threat that the new migrants posed to the power of Canada's dominant culture. In the words of Nestor Medina and Becca Whitla, "multiculturalism is deployed paradoxically both as a tool to celebrate diversity and as mechanism for reinscribing the inherited white Anglo North Atlantic mode of being as normative."²⁰⁴ More than a policy, multiculturalism has quickly become a deeply held and formative myth of Canadian identity. Multiculturalism reduces difference to surface level, exotic

²⁰⁴ Néstor Medina and Becca Whitla, "(An)Other Canada is Possible: Rethinking Canada's Colonial Legacy" *Horizontes Decoloniales / Decolonial Horizons*, Vol. 5, *Thinking from Other Worlds: Decolonial Proposals and Interrogations / Pensando Desde Otros Mundos: Propuestas e Interrogantes Decoloniales* (2019): 13-42.

and entertaining, cultural traditions and ignores depths of difference that are both resources to a society and used to stratify people into hierarchies of power and privilege. Again, in the words of Medina and Whitley, “by perpetuating the myth of multiculturalism and its attending politics of recognition, attempts at unmasking ongoing realities of racism, xenophobia, and white supremacy are seen as social maladies which Canadians have already overcome.”²⁰⁵

The FILL programs recognize that the differences negotiated are more than surface level ethno-cultural. Drawing on feminist thought, naming intercultural means naming how power and privilege work as well as naming one’s own social location.²⁰⁶ Just Intercultural Community is in contrast to Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism. Those outside the dominant culture critique multiculturalism as being part of maintaining of that dominant culture.²⁰⁷ According to Himani Bannerji, the culture of Englishness or Whiteness is central to multiculturalism and serves as the norm or the core of Canadian culture with the others as “multiculture” and having to assimilate into it.²⁰⁸ Canada’s official state policy of multiculturalism provides a way for difference to be “cherished” while erasing real antagonisms. It allows the creation of a national identity around which other cultural elements are sorted hierarchically.²⁰⁹ It operates as an antidote to claims of individual communities²¹⁰, first of all, to the claim of a distinct culture by French Quebec, then more recently by Canada’s Indigenous populations, and finally by the cultures of newer migrants to Canada. Today, with a significant migration from Muslim countries to Canada, multiculturalism is being used to assimilate this significant wave of often wealthy and politically savvy migrants and their clear sense of culture that differs from the historic White English culture of Canada. The discourse of diversity and multiculturalism

²⁰⁵ Medina and Whitley, “(An)Other Canada is Possible.”

²⁰⁶ Kathy Pauly Morgan, “Describing the Emperor’s New Clothes: Three Myths of Educational (In)Equality” in *The Gender Question in Education: Theory, Pedagogy & Politics*, eds Ann Diller et al. (Boulder Colorado: Westview, 1996).

²⁰⁷ Daniel Coleman, *White Civility*, 7.

²⁰⁸ Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2000), 110.

²⁰⁹ Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 109

²¹⁰ Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 104

“portrays society as a horizontal space, in which there is no...room for social relations of power and ruling, of socioeconomic contradictions.”²¹¹ Through its emphasis on tolerating diversity, there is an attempt in multiculturalism to erase issues of classism, racism, sexism, patriarchy and other experiences of unequal power and privilege in Canada. In contrast to such conceptions of multiculturalism, *Engage Difference!* gives significant time to describing power and to discerning ways to counter the injustices caused by imbalances of power. Participants describe their own experiences of power and collectively envision alternate dynamics of power using a hands-on modelling activity. Time is given to describing characteristics of the dominant culture and antidotes to those characteristics when they harm relationship. There is significant time spent on: social location; axes of power, privilege, marginalization, and resistance; and on the role of power in prejudice and racism.

Facilitation as Art and Creating Intercultural Ministry Artists

The *Engage Difference!* program seeks to provide an alternative to the strategies, workshops, and formulas that are popular in church adult education. There is no “formula” or easy simple trick for intercultural ministry or ministry across difference. There is a warning to *Engage Difference!* participants that they will not become “experts” in intercultural ministry. The program is described as helping participants learn the “art of intercultural ministry.” As we will see in the research, participants describe experiencing Just Intercultural community as a “working of creativity.”

One of the struggles of the work has been a cultural expectation of a formula for intercultural ministry or a workshop easily recreated in different contexts. In the Canadian context, there is a tendency to see competency as a defined set of skills that can be compartmentalized easily and taught in a workshop or through written resources. This is an example of thinking shaped by what Lonergan describes as a “classicist notion of culture” that continues to run deep in our culture. Just as Western Christianity assumed to be able to export itself to other cultures and contexts unchanged, there is an assumption that a skill set for an area of ministry can be exported

²¹¹ Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 50.

unchanged to different contexts. The facilitators of *Engage Difference!* have discovered that every offering of the program is different, shaped by the context and by the group of participants. Program facilitators receive a detailed facilitators' binder, but the experience of facilitation has been that going through the step by step of the binder does not work. Rather, the facilitators need to be fully present and adapt their facilitation to the moment. Likewise, when program participants take the course content into their contexts it is not simply a matter of doing the same activities in the same way. It requires adapting the materials, knowing the context, and being flexible. In describing language translation, an interpreter commented that it is not enough to know two languages, noting that most people have two hands but not all are able to play the piano. Simply put, there is an art to intercultural ministry that goes beyond just having a set of component parts. As we will see in the recommendations emerging from this research, and the description of the program's pedagogy later in this thesis, FILL has developed an unique approach, or art, to learning different than easily compartmentalized workshop learning or competency training that can be shared as an important resource to Canadian churches and for Intercultural ministry.

The art of intercultural ministry seeks transformation of communities. Instead of an overarching formula, this transformation will be different in each context and community. Intercultural Community, or Beloved Community, is an ongoing project. While there might be glimpses of it, Beloved Community has not yet been lived into but rather is an imagined ideal. There needs to be spaces for glimpses of God's imagination, or vision, of Beloved Community. Just Intercultural Community is a corporate pilgrimage of the local and the wider Christian community.

Processes of Co-creating God's Vision

Beyond deconstructing of the dominant culture, the church requires a process through which communities can discover and co-create a vision of God's reign in their particular contexts. As discussed above this requires "local theologies." These theologies include a local "praxis" or ways of being a local Just Intercultural Community. In the liberation theology hermeneutic circle, the *juzgar* or "discern" phase asks, "*To what is God calling us?*" Canadian faith

communities are called to imagine transformative possibilities. This requires *creative imagination*.²¹² Charles Fensham describes *poiesis*, or the “role and place of a poetic dimension as the church contributes to social transformation” and “a fruitful dimension of wise knowing, doing, and being in the world where Christian faith and the church are concerned with public witness and advocacy for change.”²¹³ This is “the poetry-the song that is contained in the biblical text and that breaks from our lips or flows from our paint brushes into community.”²¹⁴ There is not a set formula or solitary theology across contexts but rather the need for creative energy in each community to discern intercultural ministry. The DUIM program invites participants into “the art of intercultural ministry” as a process of discovering the tools for ministry in the emerging ecumenical paradigm in their contexts.²¹⁵ While theology and praxis are important for intercultural ministry, creative processes of the community and activities that engage participants holistically produce the transformative moments of the program.

FILL programs intentionally offer an alternative to many of the models of education used in the church and resists requests to offer easier “packages” on intercultural ministry, including “intercultural competency training,” short workshops, webinars, or written resources on anti-racism or intercultural ministry. The program moves the participants beyond what Fensham describes as “one of the theological legacies of the Enlightenment,” a focus on texts and their content or *theoria*.²¹⁶ The program also goes beyond the *praxis* or liberating action of liberation theology. *Poiesis* describes the ways the program goes beyond the focus on the hermeneutic circle, texts, liberating action and recognition of participants as active agents in history.

²¹² Legge, “In the Company of God and One Another”, 46-62.

²¹³ Charles J. Fensham, “The transformative vision: Public witness and the poiesis of Christian social transformation.” *Missiology: An International Review*. 44, no 2 (2016): 155 –166.

²¹⁴ Charles J. Fensham, *Emerging from the Dark Age Ahead: The Future of the North American Church* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2008).

²¹⁵ “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program brochure, accessed July 30, 2018, <http://www.ccforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/DUIM-Brochure.pdf>

²¹⁶ Fensham, “The transformative vision.”155 –166.

In the words of David Bosch, “People do not only need truth (theory) and justice (praxis); they also need beauty, the rich resources of symbol, piety, worship, love, awe, and mystery.”²¹⁷ As an aside, the cultures and communities from which liberation theologies emerged and where it continues to find a rich dialogue partner tend to have no shortage of beauty, symbol, piety, worship, love, awe, and mystery. It is important not to idealize communities that experience oppression. However, one need only think of the *magical realism* found in Latin American literature and culture, the richness of music and dance in community settings in many of these cultures, the art of story-telling, the vibrancy of colour and sound that is part of daily life, the profound deep faith and spirituality reflected in the daily lives of communities in African American, Latin@, Filipino, Canadian Indigenous, African, and south Asian cultures.²¹⁸ The World Council of Churches’ “Thursdays in Black: Towards a world without rape and violence” was created out of an African context where wearing black is in jarring contrast to the vibrant colours of usual dress.

Poiesis is alive in many cultures and *Engage Difference!* is intentional about bringing it to awareness in the Canadian context. Over the years, the program has taken on a much more “*poiesis* feel” as it has moved away from groups of participants made up mostly of White participants of European descent to much more diverse communities, including Canadian Indigenous participants and first or second-generation participants from Asian, Latin American, or African contexts. Much more common now are points made through story-telling instead of “facts.” Participants bring in song, dance, tai chi, and other sounds and movements; experience is more likely to be explained in spiritual terms; and human experience is connected with a broader sense of being connected to creation. There is even more laughter.

²¹⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 431.

²¹⁸ There is debate around the colonial produced nomenclature for these groups. For example, the Philippines as a single national cultural unit is the creation of the Spanish empire and named after a Spanish prince, reinforced by the USA empire. Some Filipino USA groups use Filipino/a and more recently Filipinx to describe a gender-neutral identity. Similarly, Latin Americans have used Latino/a, Latin@, and Latinx. For Just Intercultural community it is important to pay attention to nomenclature as it is a product of power relationships that determines who gets to name and describe and who gets to name their own identity.

Beneath the program is an intentional structure creating spaces for *poiesis*. Participants are encouraged to tell their stories of migration. Story telling is itself an art. Jesus used stories and parables as a different way to tell “truths.” Each program has as a resource person who engages the participants in story telling through art such as weaving, poetry, mask making, photography, and singing circles. “Sense stones,” as opposed to “touch stones” are used to bring out stories, memories, and feelings elicited by the senses. The pedagogy of the program recognizes a variety of ways people learn and activities respond to and encourage different ways of engaging. There is an emphasis on the holistic engagement of the six senses (including feeling and intuition as a sense). Some exercises explore words, facts, and definitions, but participants regularly are asked to “get out of their heads” and into tactile activities. A powerful example of this is an activity where groups describe their experiences of “power” by creating sculptures using clear plastic cups. Part of the learning of the week comes explicitly through informal time and conversation over meals and during free time. When there are Indigenous participants, there is an intentional naming of “Indigenous ways of knowing and learning.” Daily worship engages the creative imagination. Symbols such as woven tapestries run through the program, including in an opening worship in which the participants use thread to sculpt the image of weaving themselves into a learning community. The gathering of the learning community is a process of joining God in a creative process. The program opens with scripture from Exodus that names them as co-creators, “[God] has filled them with skill to do every kind of work done by an artisan or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of artisan or skilled designer.” (Exodus 35:35) As they gather around the closing worship Eucharist table, participants picture it as a table large enough to include all.

Fensham argues that “our doing and knowing arise out of a complex and ongoing creative imaginative process.”²¹⁹ Just as liberation theology’s hermeneutic circle is rooted in experience and community, the program recognizes that transformative learning is done in community. So also, the imaginative production of *theoria*, *praxis*, and *poiesis* require community and is

²¹⁹ Fensham, “The transformative vision”, 155 –166.

communally shared and experienced.²²⁰ Resisting pressure for shorter workshops, *Engage Difference!* provides a multi-day experience where participants become a learning community. Some of the most intense learning comes after several days together. Shorter workshops allow participants to tolerate or avoid discomfort. Often in the five-day program and its intense community experience, there is conflict that leads to learning, as well as insights about the community that would be possible only through being together for an extended time. When non-residential (commuting) options are offered, a regular recommendation from participants is that living in community (residential) should be a required part of the program. As we will see in the research, participants highlight this multi-day learning community as a significant component of the program and the resultant negotiating conflict and discomfort as key to learning. Another emphasis of the program is that the learning is meant to be applied through conversation and facilitation of learning in established and ongoing community relationships. An invitation throughout the program is to name the people of the participant's contexts in order to weave the learning into that much longer term and deeper community.

Overcoming Barriers through Processes for Conscientization

For the dominant Canadian culture to be in a just relationship with those who are different requires a process of becoming aware of one's own culture and how it shapes relationship across cultures, or what Freire described as a process of *conscientization*.²²¹ In this study, and in the DUIM program, this includes awareness of the barriers to knowing other cultures such as the myths the Canadian culture holds of itself. Being in just relationship is a collective undertaking. The learning communities of the DUIM program become what Ivan Illich described as "educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his [or her] living into one of learning, sharing, and caring."²²² These pedagogies recognize learning as transformative when all voices are heard, each person is recognized as a child of God and each community seen as created by God and given the ability to know God.

²²⁰ Fensham, "The transformative vision", 155–166.

²²¹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

²²² Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 2.

The process of conscientization occurs in community. Experience and community provide a grounding for the hermeneutic circle. While the *Engage Difference!* programs have content, the deep transformation that occurs is through the learning community that gathers, the interactions and relationships in that community, and the shared learning that comes from understanding each other, being uncomfortable with the power and other dynamics in the room, and the shared joy and vision that emerges. The learning community of the program becomes a glimpse of Just Intercultural Community. It is in that human engagement that the *poiesis*, or art of intercultural ministry, emerges.

Ivan Illich and “Convivial” Pedagogies

We now need a name for those who value hope above expectations. We need a name for those who love people more than products. . . . We need a name for those who love the earth on which each can meet the other. . . . We need a name for those who collaborate with their Promethean brother [and sister in the lighting of the fire and the shaping of iron, but who do so to enhance their ability to tend and care and wait upon the other. . . . I suggest that these hopeful brothers and sisters be called Epimethean men [and women].²²³

Tools or formulas for intercultural ministry can obscure *poiesis*. It is in the gifts of those Illich describes as “epimethean” and in, “convivial tools” described further below that *poiesis* emerges. Just Intercultural Community is a different way of being in relationship. Instead of the tools and skills of intercultural competency, the focus is on changing attitudes and ways of being. Instead of passing along specific skills or formula for ministry, it is about resourcing communities of people to create and discern how to be Just Intercultural communities in their contexts. The pedagogy of FILL programs recognizes, in the words of Audrey Lorde, “the master’s tools will never demolish the master’s house.”²²⁴ Instead of traditional tools for community and pedagogy, this requires communities of individuals who “love people more than products”, “love the earth

²²³ Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 115-116.

²²⁴ Audrey Lorde, “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, eds. R. Ferguson, et. al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 287.

on which we can meet each other” and “enhance their ability to tend and care and wait upon each other.”²²⁵

In Greek mythology, Prometheus tricked the gods into giving humans fire, symbolic of the tools and technology of civilization. Prometheus represents the human potential for daring and technical ingenuity to improve society. Those same tools, including systems of education, dehumanize, make humans serve the tools of production, and produce the oppressor-oppressed power dynamic. Illich described Freirean pedagogy as a promethean innovation for social change.²²⁶ In the same way the hermeneutic circle and many of the content tools of *Engage Difference!* are promethean. Prometheus represents “industrial strivings of modernity to produce technical solutions to what are perceived to be the given problems of natural scarcity and worldly imperfection through the ideology of progress.”²²⁷ A pedagogy of scarcity assumes there is some information or skill that needs teaching. A pedagogy of abundance assumes what is needed is already present. The focus of *Engage Difference!* is not, “What do we need to teach the participants?” The focus is on acknowledging and revealing the abundance of experience, wisdom, and other gifts of culture present when a group of participants come together.

Illich’s interpretation of the mythology posits Prometheus’ brother Epimetheus, through his marriage to Pandora, as “the ancient cultural archetype of those who freely give and recognize gifts, care for and treasure life (especially during times of catastrophe), and attend to the conservation of seeds of hope in the world for future others.” In marrying Pandora, the “all giver” and keeper of hope, Epimetheus connected humanity to the Earth and all its gifts.²²⁸

The promethean are useful and represent human capacity for innovation, but they require the epimethean to ensure the tools serve good and construct sustainable options using values such as

²²⁵ Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 115-116.

²²⁶ Richard Kahn, “Critical Pedagogy Taking the Illich Turn.” *The International Journal of Illich Studies*, 1, no 1, (2010), 40.

²²⁷ Kahn, “Critical Pedagogy Taking the Illich Turn”, 40.

²²⁸ Kahn, “Critical Pedagogy Taking the Illich Turn”, 41.

“survival, justice, and self-defined work.”²²⁹ Illich argued the epimethean provide “tools for conviviality.”²³⁰ These convivial tools “promote learning, sociality, community, “autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment.”²³¹ These produce a more democratic and sustainable society in which “individuals can freely communicate, debate, and participate throughout all manner of a cultural and political life that respects the unique balance among stability, change and tradition.”²³² In other words, right relationship or Just Intercultural Community.

In FILL programs, the tools offered are means to providing space for *poiesis* or “the art of intercultural ministry” toward change of heart, right relationship, and sustainable community in which all can participate fully. In order to do this, the program draws on pedagogy that values “being” over “doing” and the process of learning over the content of learning. It also draws on ways of learning and knowing outside the traditional Western education models. These pedagogies value right relationship (with each other and all of creation) over efficiency and production. Rather than giving the tools as ends in themselves, these pedagogies provide space where the community can create the tools and ways of being that serve Just Intercultural Community. The pedagogies of the dominant culture give power and primacy to the members of that dominant group. Alternative educational perspectives from outside the dominant culture provide different approaches that allow the hearing of other voices and their gifts to shape the community. Their use in the program also examines the dominant culture assumption that it has the best ways of being and demonstrates some of the gifts from communities at the margins. While not the only ways privilege and marginalization is experienced in Canada, the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples and between people of European heritage and “racialized” persons are two key loci of diversity. Pedagogies shaped by Indigenous ways of learning and others designed to confront racism are important to this work.

²²⁹ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 13.

²³⁰ Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, 41.

²³¹ Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, 27.

²³² Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, 82.

Pedagogies Outside the Traditional Western Model

FILL programs draw on pedagogies outside the traditional Western models. In *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness*, Fyre Jean Graveline contrasts “The Indian Way” with “The White Way.” Graveline quotes Russell Means, a Lakota activist, “While European, Western, and White may be used, it is not race that is being talked about but rather understanding and bringing to consciousness, a mind-set, a worldview that is a product of the development of European culture. People are not encoded to hold this outlook; they are acculturated to hold it.”²³³ Graveline argues that the hegemony of the White worldview, and the pedagogies that support it, are barriers. The myths that need to be critiqued are carefully guarded by a worldview, ways of thinking and understanding the world, pedagogies, and institutions. “Many who are acculturated to the dominant worldview assume theirs is the most accurate and presumably adaptive worldview in the history of humanity. But Eurocentrism is at best an approximation of reality rather than an accurate image of it.”²³⁴ Graveline offers “a revitalized version of Traditional Aboriginality” as an alternative pedagogy,²³⁵ which includes Aboriginal spirituality, worldview, Aboriginal ways of knowing and understanding of wisdom, and the Aboriginal sacred circle.

In *Courageous Conversations About Race*, Singleton and Linton describe intentional process and pedagogy that is required to engage these kinds of difficult transformative conversations.²³⁶ Even for those who on a conscious level want to engage they are difficult conversations for those with power and privilege. The authors point to strategies such as agreements to stay engaged, speaking your truth, experiencing discomfort, and expecting and accepting non-closure to counter the below unconsciousness forces of culture that stand in the way.²³⁷ The design and

²³³ Graveline, *Circle Works*, 23.

²³⁴ Graveline, *Circle Works*, 3.

²³⁵ Graveline, *Circle Works*, 35.

²³⁶ Glenn Singleton & Curtis Linton. *Courageous Conversation About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools California* (Corwin Press, 2006).

²³⁷ Singleton & Linton, *Courageous Conversation About Race*, 17.

facilitation of FILL programs of FILL rely on approaches such as *Adult Dialogue Education*²³⁸ that recognize a variety of ways people learn and the importance of engaging holistically in transformative pedagogy.

In its new mandate to resource the Canadian churches to engage diversity, CCFGM recognized that Canadian Christianity is moving into a new era requiring new tools for different ways of being Christian. The theory and theology discussed here helps with the ongoing work of discerning its context and its own “local theology.” In the hermeneutic circle the second part, *juzgar*, or “to discern,” invites the question, “what is God calling us to do in this context?” This question led to a new program that invited Canadian communities into the art of intercultural community using the hermeneutic circle and processes of conscientization. The program pedagogy has the integrity of providing glimpses and experiences of Just Intercultural Community. There is an invitation to participants to discover the art of intercultural ministry. In the hermeneutic circle we now move into *actuar*, or “to act.” The *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry* program is FILL’s community acting toward the world to which God is calling us.

²³⁸ Accessed May 2017, <http://www.globallearningpartners.com>

CHAPTER 4

ENGAGE DIFFERENCE!

DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING FOR INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY

If there was ever a mission for the Christian churches in today's conflict-ridden world, it is to help us all to learn to welcome and embrace the one who is different as we are all children of the one God. The DUIM course, with its sensitively integrated and local approach, challenges persons of faith to choose listening before judging, sharing before walking away, receiving before dismissing, and loving before condemning. If we can help one another learn to do this a bit more each day, maybe we will live into a renewed relationship, both with God and with one another in all the complexities and diversity of this broken yet beautiful world God has created.

Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers
Engage Difference! program alumna Saskatoon 2016

A process of *concientization* is required to counter the myths about itself held by the Canadian dominant culture that are barriers to Just Intercultural community. The emerging era requires Canadian Christianity to be open to other theologies and learning from other cultures in order to respond to Canadian contexts. In order to respond creatively to the emerging ecumenical paradigm, Canadian churches need new tools to enable local communities to envision, discover, and construct intercultural ministry and theologies that respond to their local contexts. Based on the theoretical analysis in previous chapters, the design of the *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry* program helps participants understand their own cultures and contexts, recognize and name theologies that emerge out of their contexts, and it provides tools to engage similar processes with their communities. The program participant, Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers, captured the collaborative nature and goal of this work as we “help one another [and] live into a renewed relationship.”

Discerning the Needs of the Context

A consultation process with Canadian stakeholders identified the need for training and programs for people at the local level and developing individuals in the church who could facilitate, promote, and engage conversation around intercultural ministry. Working with outside

consultants on pedagogy and program design, the agency embarked on a multi-year plan to design and launch new programming.²³⁹ At the core of that programming is the five day *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry* program, now offered in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Beausejour (near Winnipeg, Manitoba), Toronto, Barrie (a small urban centre outside Toronto) and Montreal, with deliberation about other program sites. The Manitoba program is a collaboration with the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, a ministry training centre dedicated to Aboriginal theological education. In Montreal, it has been offered as a bilingual (French and English) and as a French only program. In Toronto, participants take the course for academic credit through Wycliffe College at the Toronto School of Theology.²⁴⁰ At the time of writing, there are over two hundred alumni of the program.

Responding to stakeholder consultations, the original vision of the program included two formative assumptions that later changed. The ability to revisit these assumptions reflects the core values of the program that allow it to be shaped by the experience of learning together how to be intercultural in the Canadian context.

The first assumption was that the program could isolate and engage culture and relationship across cultural differences as its core topics. A need to engage a wider understanding of diversity became clear in early program offerings. Program designers and facilitators added "Engage Difference!" to the program title, and concepts such as "intersecting axes of privilege" and social location became important dialogue concepts.

The second assumption was that participants from the dominant culture were the primary audience. The need of this group to understand its own culture and its impact on other cultures shaped the program. The groups of participants are much more diverse than anticipated and participants from the "margins" or outside the dominant culture enrich the program. In recent years, intentional recruitment of these voices as program participants, designers, and facilitators

²³⁹ Primarily Jeanette Romkema of Global Learning Partners, Accessed January, 2020, <https://www.globallearningpartners.com/>

²⁴⁰ Accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.wycliffecollege.ca/>

enhanced the program. The five days of the program bring together multiple cultures in Canada for mutual learning and growth. All the cultures and individuals in the room become more aware of themselves and of their social locations. Together they explore their impact on relationships and the community gathered. The program brings people of the dominant Canadian culture together with non-dominant cultures for mutual learning, growth, and discernment of Canadian theologies and praxes of Just Intercultural ministry.

The Mission Personnel programs of the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries (CCFGM) emphasised the need for individuals to know their own culture and how it shapes relationship across difference. This emphasis was not unique as seen in a number of spaces for preparing mission personnel in the latter part of the 20th century. There was an increasing awareness of the potential for harm from mission relationships, in particular out of the developmentalism of the 20th century.²⁴¹ The work of Ivan Illich's Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) in the 1960s in Cuernavaca, Mexico exemplifies this emerging shift in preparation of mission personnel.²⁴² The new program builds on these programs and sees cultural self-awareness as necessary for intercultural ministry.

The program intentionally is different from the cultural competency training often offered for engaging across cultures. There are difficulties with cultural competency. As argued earlier, it is not possible to ever become fully competent in someone else's culture.²⁴³ Cultural competency training is a model that gives more skills to those who already have power and access to skills. Instead of learning to be competent in the culture of another, *Engage Difference!* focuses on

²⁴¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 434ff

²⁴² Todd Hartch, "Ivan Illich and the Catholic Missionary Initiative in Latin America", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 33, no. 4 (October 2009): 185-88.

²⁴³ I draw on work such as that of Gurdeep Parhar who argues that even though "we use terms like cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural tolerance, cultural safety, [and] cultural competency...can we truly be competent in someone else's culture? "Fixing Racism" *TEDx Vancouver*, accessed June 2017, <http://canadianimmigrant.ca/community/integration/dr-gurdeep-parhar-tackles-the-topic-of-overcoming-prejudice-for-ted-talks>

skills, attitudes, behaviours, humility, and working together to create spaces so that all are able to be fully themselves.

Creating a program

After recognizing the need to move from the previous mandate of preparing denominational personnel for overseas ministry, and through a process of consulting with stakeholders about a new mandate, the CCFGM board instructed the agency's staff to develop programs to resource intercultural ministry in Canada. The change was supported by a financial decision to draw down a portion of the agency's endowment, largely proceeds from the sale of a building in the 1990s and funds originally set aside to support an annual international visitor to Canada.

The new mandate that emerged was to resource ministry across diversity in Canada with an emphasis on cultural diversity. There was a wide range of needs identified for this new mandate. There was concern about decreasing church membership, recognition that the membership of many local congregations no longer reflected their surrounding communities, desire to engage racism and xenophobia, recognition of the need to serve faithfully in a changing context, and clear calling for the churches to be Just Intercultural communities. National churches articulated this in a variety of ways, shaped by the contexts and cultures of each denomination. In 2012, The United Church made a commitment to be an intercultural church and was looking to engage this commitment ecumenically.²⁴⁴ The Anglican Church of Canada, through a process of apology and reconciliation related to their role in the Indian residential schools, made commitments to counter racism. In 2004, they adopted "A Charter for Racial Justice in the Anglican Church of Canada."²⁴⁵ The Anglican Church of Canada, as part of a global Anglican Communion continued to experience diversity through immigration from countries with Anglican presences. Roman Catholic parishes had similar experiences as many migrant communities brought with them

²⁴⁴ "Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church," which was adopted at the Executive of General Council (GCE) in October 2012 as part of the report *Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation*, accessed August 7, 2019, <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/vision-becoming-intercultural-church>

²⁴⁵ *A Charter for Racial Justice in the Anglican Church of Canada*, accessed August 7, 2019, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/ccc/cogs/arwg/charter/>

Catholic Christianity. The Presbyterian Church in Canada statements on social action described agreed positions on faithful Christian witness on issues of diversity.²⁴⁶ Staff at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada noted a common theme of racism in many of the Canadian and global issues they were engaging and denominational guiding documents recognized a calling to engage diversity.²⁴⁷ As the CCFGM moved closer to The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), it recognized that several of the CCC's newer member denominations were largely immigrant churches. A number of the denominations prepared and accredited were clergy from overseas who were shaped by cultures other than those in the parishes where the clergy were serving. The new mandate also emerged out of the historical work of CCFGM toward faithful and just global partnerships and the CCFGM orientation for global ministries program's emphasis on recognizing the culture mission personnel carried with them and how it shaped relationship.

In the fall of 2012, staff of the CCFGM called together a diverse team of people for a five-day training in design and facilitation of adult education. This training also was a time to begin building a framework for a course in intercultural ministry. CCFGM engaged a consultant from Global Learning Partners as a resource on adult learning based on the work of Jane Vella.²⁴⁸ In the spring of 2013, there was a pilot of the course, "Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry" in Toronto as a six-day program. Later, the program became a five-day program and the title "Engage Difference!" was added as the program began to engage wider diversity beyond ethno-cultural diversity. After programs in Toronto, Winnipeg provided another context for the program through a partnership with the Centre for Christian Studies.²⁴⁹

Today, several sites and contexts across Canada shape the program and engage different groups of participants. In Toronto, the city's cultural and ethnic diversity and experiences of migration shaped the program. A Vancouver offering had a strong influence of experiences of migration

²⁴⁶ *The Presbyterian Church in Canada Social Action Handbook*, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://presbyterian.ca/downloads/24141/>

²⁴⁷ *Evangelical Declaration* adopted in 1997 and revised in 2007 as *In Mission for Others*, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://elcic.ca/What-We-Believe/Evangelical-Declaration.cfm>

²⁴⁸ Global Learning Partners, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.globallearningpartners.com/>

²⁴⁹ Centre for Christian Studies, accessed August 8, 2019, <http://ccsonline.ca/>

from Asia. As several participants were recent immigrants from non-English speaking communities, a strong theme was achieving full inclusion when there is a diversity of language ability. After an initial offering at the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg, the program moved to the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre,²⁵⁰ where the program has a significant number of Indigenous participants and a theme of relationships between Indigenous, settler, and newer migrant. The context of Saskatoon also brings an emphasis on relationship with Canada's First Nations peoples. The program in Barrie, Ontario engages issues of diversity in smaller urban or urbanizing centres. The first Montreal offering was a bilingual French and English program engaging relationships across cultures shaped by Quebec culture as a minority in Canada. This program included mostly Protestant participants. A reshaped offering of the program in French only, engaged Catholic francophone communities.

There is an overall content framework shaped by each context. The pedagogy allows participants to shape the program as most of the activities draw from their knowledge and experience. As the size of national church staffs decreased, denominations gave direction to shape the program in ways that would increase grassroots capacity to facilitate learning around intercultural ministry. Toward this, Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL) staff work with local host groups to identify and mentor local facilitators, and local resource people facilitate some individual sessions.

A local host group is the primary contextual entity shaping the program. The first step in offering a program is the gathering of local ecumenical leaders and other interested persons. During this initial meeting, the group describes their context and issues. There is an overview of the program, and this group determines whether there is need for and interest in offering the program. The next step is identifying a smaller local host group. Typically, one or two members of this host group attend a program offering in another location to understand the program better. The local host group helps to shape the program, including identifying activities, facilitators, and

²⁵⁰ The Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, accessed August 8, 2019. <https://sandysaulteaux.ca>

resource people from their context. They also help promote the program as well as offering logistical support.

Overview of the Engage Difference! Program

I am still figuring out what happened to 18 of us during the course I attended at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Beausejour last week....All of us, the 18 people agreed that there was a transformation among the group. Each of us encountered the other, the holy.²⁵¹

Min-Goo Kang, participant: Engage Difference! Manitoba 2016

In describing *Engage Difference!*, it is important to note that much of what occurs is *poiesis*. It is not the designed content, but rather a design of program and facilitation that allows the unexpected and creative imagination. The program design provides and models a safe space where participants engage difficult and challenging conversations, where people who normally do not have voice might be comfortable being heard, and where participants shape conversations. There is less emphasis on providing information and more on design of activities and questions that elicit the collective wisdom and experience gathered in the room. This means no two programs are the same, the outcomes of an individual program are unpredictable, and conversations during the program often “go where they need to go.” It is a creative process – *poiesis* - as the participants, facilitators, and resource people collaborate in a communal project of creating each program.

While the act of creative imagination is in every program, a helpful illustration is one offered at the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Manitoba. A third of the participants were Canadian Indigenous, and the rest a mix of descendants of historic settlers and recent immigrants to Canada. One of the activities planned for the week was a teaching sweat with an elder and *scabe* (fire-keeper). However, the local township had not lifted a fire ban, even though it was raining, and in spite of the scabe’s training and experience, would not allow the fire for the sweat. A consultation with participants, program facilitators, the elder, and the Centre’s staff broke down

²⁵¹ Min-Goo Kang, *Crossroads: a reflection on the “Engage Difference!” learning experience*, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://sandysaulteaux.ca/crossroads-a-reflection-on-the-engage-difference-learning-experience/>

in anger, not only over the loss of this ceremony, but also over the historic loss of Indigenous ceremony through laws and other methods of colonialism. Instead of continuing the planned course content, the group decided to move into an Indigenous conversation circle and a process of naming the personal and communal impact of this event and histories of relationship across cultures. That moment shaped the rest of the week's conversations. Participants' program evaluations named it as a highlight of the program and key to transformative learning. The creative way the group unfolded this conversation was possible through the framework of the program that provided a safe and inviting space for participants to be themselves more fully in relationship to each other.

While each context and group of participants shape the program, there is common content across programs. As described previously, there are assumptions around pedagogy to engage difficult and courageous conversations. Activities engage multiple styles of learning, draw on the wisdom and experience of the participants, and assume a process of *concientization*. There is an invitation for participants to see the program in two ways. The first is to help them learn about themselves and their own culture and how it shapes relationships. The second is to provide a set of tools and ideas that can be adapted to their own ministry context so that they can invite and facilitate similar conversations there. Toward that, there are regular reminders to participants to connect the learning to their ministry setting. The five days provide a process with content of successive days building on learning from previous days, culminating in a group project to practice applying the learning in their home ministry settings. A strong message of the program is that learning for intercultural ministry is not just these five days but is part of a longer journey of learning.

An Outline of the Program Content

Each time the program is prepared and redesigned for a new context, the common structure and toolbox of activities evolves. Below is a summary of the program's current structure and content. The design of the program reflects the pedagogy described in the previous chapter. For example, the activities of the five days move through a process of *ver* (to see), *juzgar* (to discern), *actuar* (to act), and *celebrar* (to celebrate). The process of *letting go* (through a process of storytelling

and naming culture), *letting be* (through exploring new understandings and ways of being) and *letting begin* (through imagining implementing the program in the home contexts) shapes the design of the program. As with the Eucharist, participants are engaged not only through ideas and through words, but also holistically with all their senses. The program moves through a process similar to the Eucharist's confession, word, participation in God's action in the world, and sending. The pedagogy of the program has a learner centred and popular education approach, assuming that participants are the experts in their experience and contexts. Most often, the program is in a residential setting as a retreat to minimize outside distractions. Informal conversations and relationship building over meals and free time intentionally are built in as important times of learning. The wisdom and ways of learning and knowing of the participant are honoured. Learning is *poiesis*, or a creative collective project of the community.

The program draws heavily on the stories, experiences, and wisdom of the participants. Content of the program includes building a learning community, understanding how culture works, and exploring God's vision for relationship across difference. Issues of power and privilege are identified. The program explores how culture shapes theology. Participants apply their learning as they practice and design applications for their local contexts. Conversation includes identifying ways to make the work sustainable and the creation of a supportive network of program alumni.

Now that a general description is complete, here is an outline of the core content and daily activities of the five days of the program.

Day one morning

Tapestries weave together many different threads. So also with intercultural ministry. It is a weaving together of different people, gifts, Christianities, communities, histories, theologies, ways of engaging the world, experiences of God, and so much more. Each thread is important as it makes the tapestry stronger and more beautiful. So it is with each person and community. If we see each as equally important, equally children of God, it shapes our relationships.²⁵²

²⁵² Opening Worship Engage Difference! Toronto 2019 Participants binder

As the content and imagery of this quote describes, the tone is set for the community's work together as *poiesis* – a creative communal project of Just Intercultural community. The theme of the first morning is “identity of self and community.” This is a time of gathering and creating a learning community. Participants describe and intentionally make their ministry contexts part of the learning community and course content. Participants begin to tell their individual and communal stories of encounter across diversity. The morning is very deliberate in its pace and allows a significant amount of time to build a learning community. As participants gather, there is attention to welcome and a physical layout of the learning space that reflects the pedagogy. For example, facilitators engage participants as they enter; the room is set up with tapestries on small group conversation tables; worship takes place in a circle; and there is space and time for conversation. The activities for the morning include:

- An opening worship using the image of a tapestry and weaving as image of intercultural ministry.
- An acknowledgement of the land and the peoples of the land. If an Indigenous elder is present, participants are welcomed to the land.
- Activities introduce participants to each other and their communities. An activity moves participants around a map to name their encounters and stories of migration as a way to begin to tell their intercultural journeys.
- There is an overview of the program content and pedagogy and participants identify learning they anticipate.
- Participants design a community agreement to support learning (including the four agreements from *Courageous Conversations about Race*: stay engaged, speak your truth, experience discomfort, and expect and accept non-closure) and a covenanting process emphasising that the group, including facilitators and resource people, are co-learners and responsible to support the learning of each other.

Day one afternoon

The work of intercultural ministry is the work of making all fully included, and able to be fully themselves, to be fully as God has created each of us.²⁵³

²⁵³ Day 1 afternoon: *Engage Difference!* Toronto 2019 Participants binder

The afternoon of the first day focuses on definitions of culture, and theories of how it works and shapes us. Activities include:

- Facilitators present definitions of culture.
- Participants describe their own experiences of culture.
- There are descriptions and illustrations of the conscious and unconscious of culture. There are several different engagements of this, including the “iceberg model of culture” illustrating the majority of culture as below consciousness (just as most of an iceberg is below the waterline and unseen),²⁵⁴ exploring types of unconscious bias, and discerning the difference between observation and perception.²⁵⁵ Participants consider several myths operating in Canadian culture.
- Several activities help participants explore definitions including: culture, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, racism, institutional racism, multi-cultural, cross-cultural, dominant culture, inter-cultural, beloved community, and shalom.
- In the evening there is an activity led by a local artist who helps the participants tell their cultural stories. Some of the forms of art used have included, weaving, spoken word, watercolours, mask making, poetry, collage making, photography, kimchi-making, and stories invoked by smells, touches, tastes, and sounds.
- In a closing circle, participants reflect on the learning of the day and an Intercultural Mentor engages the group.

Day two morning

Today we are going to the sometimes-difficult work of exploring issues such as power and privilege. We will name numerous ways in which people are identified that shapes their experiences and access to power and privilege, including (but not limited to) race, gender, citizenship, education, age, ethnicity, and more. We will talk about our place in this, and how power and privilege look in our communities.²⁵⁶

The morning and much of the afternoon of the second day invites often-difficult conversations on power in relationships across cultures. Participants explore their understandings and

²⁵⁴ Adapted from: Guy Rocher, *Introduction à la sociologie générale*, Tome 1, 1969, Centre for Intercultural Learning Canadian Foreign Service Institute, accessed November 20, 2017, www.intercultures.gc.ca

²⁵⁵ Participants have critiqued the cultural bias and ethnocentrism of the image of an “iceberg.” Other images are presented such as a pier with most of its structure below the water and participants are asked to name images relevant to their own cultures and of others. Another exercise asks participants to look into each other’s eyes. This has similarly been critiqued, first by indigenous participants who point out this would be considered inappropriate in their culture. Participants and facilitators introduce new exercises and adapt activities as the program evolves.

²⁵⁶ Day 2 morning: Engage Difference! Toronto 2019 Participants binder

experiences of power, privilege and racism. Together, the learning community describes the dominant White culture and possible “antidotes” to allow participation of marginalized cultures.

Activities include:

- An opening worship uses the Road to Emmaus story to help participants reflect on how they have experienced God through the other.
- An exercise asks participants to name how Exploring Power, privilege, and racism might be a joyful activity.²⁵⁷
- In small groups, participants discuss and model their experiences of power through creating sculptures out of clear plastic cups.
- Participants explore characteristics of the dominant culture and antidotes to use to include other cultures.²⁵⁸

Day two afternoon

There is a school of family therapy that describes the family we are born into in this way: A family is like a plane in flight. It already has a direction; it has already flown through generations...all of whom have shaped its course. It may to different degrees be flying smoothly, spinning, or be out of control.

We are born onto that plane and immediately inherit its flight.

Be careful not to judge what is the “correct” way it should fly is.

So it is with culture.

The work that we do together and that you do in your community will change the flight.²⁵⁹

The afternoon continues to explore some of the themes of the morning with special attention to the historical roots and stories of culture, racism, conferred power, social location, and privilege.

Activities include:

- Participants create alternative ways of telling a history that includes resources and barriers to relationship to the “other” found in Christian theologies, scriptures, and stories and a focus on the Canadian history of relationships across difference.

²⁵⁷ As printed in *Cracking Open White Identity Towards Transformation*. Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network. Canadian Council of Churches. 2012 adapted from Diane J. Goodman. *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups* 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge. (2011)

²⁵⁸ Adapted from “Characteristics of White Culture” by ChaTema Okun, of *Dismantling Racism Works* as found in *Cracking open White identity towards transformation*. Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network. Canadian Council of Churches. 2012.

²⁵⁹ Day 2 afternoon: *Engage Difference! Toronto 2019 Facilitators binder*

- Activities explore sources and methods of conferred power with a focus on the experiences of power and authority in the church.
- Participants engage a “Colour Line” activity modelling access to privilege based on Peggy McIntosh’s work.²⁶⁰
- Participants describe their own social location and place themselves on intersecting axes of power and privilege.
- In a closing circle, participants reflect on the learning of the day and an Intercultural Mentor engages the group.
- Typically, there is an optional social activity in the evening.

Day three morning

Grandma, incredulous, looks at both men and asks, “Do you still cut the ends off of the pot roast.”

“Yes,” they said in unison. “That’s how you showed us to make pot roast. We know that’s just how pot roast is made.”

Grandma broke into hysterical laughter. After she composed herself again, she explained, “I cut off the ends of the pot roast because my pot was too small! Cutting off the ends of the pot roast was the only way I could get it to fit!”²⁶¹

The focus of third day turns to applying the content of the first two days to understand participants’ ministry contexts. Activities include:

- An opening worship uses prayers from African contexts.²⁶²
- Denomination caucuses describe the culture of their denominations using the models, definitions, and tools of the first two days of the program. Caucuses identify why this is the culture: “What is the context that shaped this culture and it is a response to?”
- Participants use craft supplies to model the culture of their local ministry context and place themselves in that culture.
- There is time to share and discuss the denominational cultures and local contexts.

²⁶⁰ Based on work of Peggy McIntosh as adapted by Pacific Education Group in Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton, *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* (Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Publishers, 2006).

²⁶¹ Culture of our ministry context session: Engage Difference! Toronto 2019 Participants binder

²⁶² Prayers from *Desmond Tutu: An African Prayer Book* (Random House, 2006).

Day three afternoon

Where are you located as a theologian? (Recall our conversations on social location on day 2)

What is the “location” of the community you do theology in and with?

How do these locations shape how theology is done? How do they shape the theology? (Theology and Culture session: *Engage Difference!* Toronto 2019 Participants binder)

The afternoon of the third day intentionally engages participants in the work of identifying “local theologies.” They consider how culture shapes theology and our experiences of God, and they are invited to be open to learning from other cultures and theologies. Activities include:

- A resource person engages participants in a workshop on Theology and Culture.
- Participants reflect on readings describing theology from other cultures and from the margins.
- Participants reflect on implications of culture and theology for their ministry contexts.
- In the evening a resource person or activity engages the participants in reflecting on culture and a particular area of ministry such as worship, music, or Pastoral care.
- In a closing circle, participants reflect on the learning of the day and an Intercultural Mentor engages the group.

Day four morning

Dean Brackley, a Jesuit who served in El Salvador for decades talked about poverty and suffering: “It breaks your heart...LET it break your heart!”²⁶³

The activities of the fourth morning focus on practical skills and examples of ministry across diversity. As the opening worship recognizes, it is often difficult and conflictual work. Activities are:

- An opening worship using the image of “hearts of flesh” (Ezekiel 36)
- A resource person engages participants through a workshop on conflict and difference across cultures. Workshops have included “Engaging Conflict”, “Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Decision Making”, “Decolonization”
- There is a debriefing and contextualizing of the workshop

²⁶³ Opening Worship day 4: *Engage Difference!* Toronto 2019 Participants binder

Day four afternoon

The afternoon of the fourth day is an opportunity for participants to imagine and design ways they can invite their local communities into the conversations and content of the program.

Activities include:

- Participants recall concepts, models, and experiences of the week as way to recall learning. As they do, they throw a ball of yarn around a circle to create and imagine interconnected matrix of learning.
- Facilitators introduce theories of change and transition.
- Small groups are formed and they work together to adapt the weeks learning to a local context, designing workshops, programs, and other activities for the local contexts. The afternoon is a time in small groups creating these activities.
- In a closing circle, participants reflect on the learning of the day and an Intercultural Mentor engages the group.
- There is an evening social activity, usually including a supper out at an “ethnic” restaurant.

Day five morning

For the Ojibwe the North is the rest period. Some call it the remembrance period. Just as in the winter the earth rests from its labours, we are mindful of our physical body and its need for rest, care, and food. The north is where we honour the elders. In the winter, there is time for teaching, telling stories, and handing down ceremonies. The north is a place of wisdom.²⁶⁴

The morning of the final day provides opportunity to practice and support each other in intercultural ministry. The morning worship, shaped by Indigenous understanding of learning, reminds the participants of the program’s grounding in right relationship. The worship connects the participants with their local communities and other cultures and communities of the world.

Activities include:

- Each group presents for twenty minutes the work from the previous afternoon. This can take the shape of a presentation or an opportunity to guide the participants through an activity. There is a time of feedback from the full group of

²⁶⁴ Opening Worship day 5: *Engage Difference!* Toronto 2019 Participants binder. With materials from: Ojibwe/Powawatomi (Anishinabe) teaching elder Lillian Pitawanakwat. Department of Canadian heritage National Indigenous Literacy Association, accessed January 2013, <http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com>

participants including reflections on how they might use the project in their context.

- There is an invitation for participants to document and share their projects more widely through the public web page of Canadian resources for intercultural ministry.²⁶⁵

Day five afternoon

‘Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you’ So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him. (Luke 8:39)²⁶⁶

The final afternoon of the program recognizes intercultural ministry as a journey beyond the five days of the program. Participants identify ways they can support each other and make the work sustainable. A closing worship celebrates the learning of the week and sends participants back into their home contexts. Activities include:

- Recalling learning of the week.
- Identifying needs for support.
- Strategizing to support ongoing community.
- Program evaluation.
- Intercultural Mentor final reflections.
- Closing worship with Eucharist using the image of a table large enough for all.
- Participants send each other on the journey.

Other content

The program includes a daily opening worship connecting scripture, prayer, and the themes of the day. In some programs, these are designed and led by participants and in others, they are led by a facilitator.

Every day of the program ends with a “circle” which provides participants opportunity to reflect on their experiences of the day and to “check-in.” This is important as it emphasises and models key parts of the program pedagogy. It is a time of reflecting upon experience. It grounds the learning in community. The check-in helps participants identify ways to support each other, and

²⁶⁵ Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning, *Resources for Intercultural Ministry*, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/resources>

²⁶⁶ Closing Worship Day 5: Engage Difference! Toronto 2019 Participants binder.

it is a reminder that they are shaping each other. Hearing each other's daily learning and the reflections of the program Intercultural Mentor remind participants to be open to learn from all other voices and to allow other cultures to shape them.

A dinner out or special meal near the end of the program provides an opportunity for celebration of learning and community. There are a number of optional community building social activities providing informal conversation, learning, and cross-cultural experiences. Some examples include a Latin dance class, a movie night, a games night, or an evening socializing in a local neighbourhood.

There are a number of people involved in facilitating each program and in bringing content. In keeping with the pedagogy that recognizes all as co-learners, when one of these resource people is not facilitating or leading, he or she fully engages as a participant.

Intercultural Mentor

An Intercultural Mentor accompanies each program. These are people who are from outside Canada's "dominant" culture but who have experience both negotiating the dominant culture and their own culture, as well as having gifts as a "translator" across cultures. They fully participate in the program bringing wisdom, experience, challenges, and story to the conversations. There is a time set aside every day of the program for the Intercultural Mentor to reflect on or respond to the conversations of the day and to challenge the participants. Often the Intercultural Mentor is able to help the participants recognize assumptions, provide different ways of thinking, or note conversations participants are avoiding. Each Intercultural Mentor has approached this reflection time differently, using a variety of storytelling, questions, scripture or theology, and other activities. Their presence provides an experience of learning from cultures outside the dominant culture.

Mentoring facilitators

Several of the denominations of FILL specifically have asked the agency to equip people in the local context to facilitate workshops and conversations around intercultural ministry. Newer

facilitators take on parts of the program, mentored by experienced program facilitators. Typically, there is a team of two to five facilitators.

Resource people

Each program includes a number of resource people who lead a short portion of the program on topics such as culture and engaging conflict, pastoral care, music, liturgy, and theology, storytelling, decolonization, Indigenous ways of knowing and decision-making, and decolonizing land acknowledgements. The program has included panels, such as a group of newer immigrants to Canada reflecting on their experiences of Canadian churches. Another resource person led a role-play of a denominational examination and accreditation committee shaped by Indigenous cultures.

Other context specific activities

As the local host group shapes their offering of the program, they bring in activities from their context to help engage the program content. Examples of this have been “field trips” to meet with cultural groups in the community or visiting historical sites or museums that engage the history of relationships across cultures such as an historic African church outside of Barrie, Ontario, a cannery museum in Vancouver, and a temporary art installation on the cultures of Montreal. One program offered a self-guided “socio-economic tour” of a neighbourhood with questions helping participants to observe dynamics across cultural and other differences. Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre offerings of the program include a sweat with a teaching elder. In several contexts, the Kairos Blanket exercise²⁶⁷ provides an experiential activity of the history of colonialism in Canada.

The program participants

Each program has a maximum of 20 participants recruited through denominational communications, word of mouth, and referrals from former participants. Early groups were

²⁶⁷ Reconciliation through Education and Understanding: The KAIROS Blanket Exercise, accessed April 28, 2020. <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/>

mostly made up of White participants, but as word of the program spread and strategies implemented to increase diversity, such as targeted bursaries, the groups have had a wide ethno-cultural and other diversity including, but not limited to, racial, denominational, gender, sexual orientation, and able-ness. A majority of the participants are in ordained or other paid church work, but there is a significant number of lay participants. Participants come from a wide variety of ministry settings ranging from national and regional church offices to congregational, community ministry, and service agency settings. A key quality of the participants is that they self-select to participate. They keenly are interested in engaging and learning, and they are open to self-reflection. Many come with an anticipation of a transformational learning experience and expect to gain tools for transformational ministry in their context.

At the time of writing, eight years have passed since the piloting of *Engage Difference!*, and each program has been shaped and revised through each of its offerings. Close to 200 participants, facilitators and designers, and resource people have been shaped by the program and have taken the learning into their contexts. In the next chapter, we turn to finding a way to tell the story of the impact of the program and look for ways the program might be shaped further as a resource for Just Intercultural community in Canada.

CHAPTER 5 APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Design for Intentional Program Evaluation

The *Engage Difference!* program design and delivery include intentional feedback, assessment of impact, and evaluation of the program. This study provides an additional and more focused opportunity to measure the program's impact and will reshape future program. In particular, it will give additional evidence of the impact of the program in local contexts.

At the end of every program, participants complete a written evaluation. Throughout the program, they recall learning and reflect together on how they will use their learning in their home context. Each day of the program, participants recount the most memorable content and interactions of the day. Encouraged by the carefully crafted questions of facilitators, they share their inner and interpersonal processes, new insights and connections. The model of facilitators as co-learners provides constant feedback as the facilitation team experiences the learning and discerns the needs of the community through their own processes and those of the participants. Throughout the program, facilitators observe interactions and listen to small and large group conversations. During the program, *Engage Difference!* staff engage in informal conversation with participants. The facilitation team meets each day, intentionally as well as informally, to evaluate each other's facilitation, group dynamics, and participant engagement of course content. These moments provide insight into the impact of the course content and design for the program facilitators and designers. As the course proceeds, this feedback shapes choices about content and methods of facilitation.

The program facilitation team meets after the program to review written evaluations and share their own observations as part of celebrating the impact of the program and their learning and to begin shaping the next program. Several of the denominations require their participants to meet to evaluate the experience and to support implementation of the learning. These denominations report the feedback to program designers and facilitators. Participants from future host groups include reflecting on the program experience a step in planning their local version of the program. New facilitators are program alumni who make the evaluation of their program

experience part of their shaping of the programs they facilitate. The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL) has a “Training for Transformation Working Group” with a mandate to evaluate programs in order to shape future programs. Prior to every program, the facilitation team carefully goes over and reworks the program, including rewriting the facilitators’ and participants’ binders of materials.

While this comprehensive evaluation is part of the delivery of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program, there has not been a measure of the impact on the participants and their communities. This Doctor of Ministry project undertakes to find out how the program is helping Canadian Christian communities discern God’s vision for living into the “emerging ecumenical paradigm” and how the program is creating inspired spaces for a vision of “Just Intercultural community.” Through the research design using Appreciate Inquiry (AI), this project also asks program alumni to participate in the ongoing development and reshaping of the program.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives ‘life’ to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. The Inquiry is mobilized through the crafting of the ‘unconditional positive question’, often involving hundreds or thousands of people. AI interventions focus on the speed of imagination and innovation instead of the negative, critical, and spiraling diagnoses commonly used in organizations. The discovery, dream, design, and destiny model links the energy of the positive core to changes never thought possible.²⁶⁸

The qualitative research methodology operative in the Action-in-Ministry of this Doctor of Ministry thesis is Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI is a method for studying and changing social systems. It involves a collective process of naming what is best in an organization as part of imagining what could be. As a process, it works to identify a compelling future state for the

²⁶⁸ David L. Cooper, Diana Whitney, and Jacqueline M. Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook for Leaders of Change. Second Edition.* (Brunswick, Ohio: Crown Custom Publishing Inc., 2008), 3.

organization. AI is a response to the centrality of problem solving in a number of fields, including corporate management studies, but also to the classical action research approach used in many Doctor of Ministry studies. David Cooperrider, the creator of AI, argues that we need forms of inquiry and change that are generative. The emphasis he proposes is to help us discover what could be, rather than to fix what is.²⁶⁹

Below is a brief overview of AI. The description of AI notes a number of parallels and similarities with *Engage Difference!* These connections between AI and *Engage Difference!* make AI an appropriate methodology for this study. Analyzing the program and involving program participants in that analysis, changes and shapes the work of FILL. AI provides a research methodology that does not contravene or undermine this work. Rather, the study and AI enhance the work of FILL.

Cooperrider resisted prescribing a method for AI, as he wanted practitioners to focus on the philosophy behind the approach instead of seeing it as a technique.²⁷⁰ This is similar to the approach of FILL. *Engage Difference!* seeks to support local communities in developing their own local theologies and praxes of intercultural ministry rather than prescribing a method for Intercultural ministry. Just as there are many different ways of doing AI, there are many different ways of doing Intercultural ministry.

Principles of AI were developed first, and a “4D model of AI” was created later. These principles and this model, described below, are the basis for the research methodology developed for this study.

Principles of Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

The initial principles for AI were that inquiry should begin with appreciation, should be collaborative, should be provocative, and should be applicable. Later, Cooperrider and Diana

²⁶⁹ G.R. Bushe, “The Appreciative Inquiry Model” in ed. E.H. Kessler, *Encyclopedia of Management Theory, Volume 1*, (Sage Publications, 2013): 41-44.

²⁷⁰ G.R. Bushe, “Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique”, in eds. David Boje, John Hassard, and Bernard Burnes, *The Routledge Companion to Organizational Change*. (Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2018), 87.

Whitney published a set of five principles that are used widely.²⁷¹ The *constructionist principle* proposes that through day-to-day interactions, people co-construct the organizations they inhabit. The purpose of inquiry is to stimulate new ideas, stories, and images that generate new possibilities. This resonates with the FILL understanding of culture as constructed through a collective set of meanings. Culture can be reshaped and new possibilities for relationship discerned and constructed. The *principle of simultaneity* proposes that the very act of asking about an organization changes it. FILL proposes change through a process of intentionally naming and describing culture and the dynamics of relationship. The *poetic principle* proposes that organizational life is expressed in the stories people tell each other, and the story is changing and being “coauthored.” This process enlivens and inspires the best in people. This echoes the *Engage Difference!* pedagogy that supports a process of creative imagination – or *poesis* – toward Just Intercultural community. In *Engage Difference!*, storytelling is to capture a collective story. FILL’s definition of Just Intercultural community assumes the need for attention to dynamics of power to allow this coauthoring. All community members shape each other from a position of being fully themselves as created by God. The *anticipatory principle* posits that what we do is shaped by our image of the future. AI uses an artful creation of positive imagery of what can be. Again, there is a parallel with the creative imagination process of *Engage Difference!* The world we discern that God wants is an image of what can be. Finally, the *positive principle* proposes that change requires positive affect and social bonding. Hope, excitement, inspiration, camaraderie, and joy increase creativity and openness to new ideas and people. In *Engage Difference!*, a learning community is created to share in the project of Just Intercultural community. The program acknowledges that the work often is difficult yet joyful. In the middle of this difficult work, there are moments of laughter and conversation that provide important components of learning and experiences of community. Participant’s program evaluations highlight the importance of the community built through the program and their feelings about their co-learners – social bonding and positive affect. This community of co-learners supports openness to new ways of community (ideas) and to diversity (people).

²⁷¹ Bushe, “The Appreciative Inquiry Model”, 41-44.

The 4-D model of Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

AI provides a four step, or “4-D” cycle labelled *Discovery*, *Dream*, *Design*, and *Destiny*.²⁷² The 4-D model as described by colleagues of David Cooperrider follows.²⁷³

Core to AI are the first two stages. The *Discovery* stage asks when, in the particular context, a system or organization is most “alive, healthy, and symbiotically related” to its context. The task of participants is to name what they appreciate of the organization. ‘What gives life?’ is a key question. Instead of analyzing deficits in the organization, participants name examples of success, good performance or satisfaction using storytelling. They name what in the organization they want to bring forward into a better organization. This is similar to the first, letting go stage of Victor Turner’s process of transition used in the design of *Engage Difference!* Participants describe their cultures and the resources of those cultures for Just Intercultural community. They let go of harmful components while maintaining and carrying forward helpful ones. Liberation theology’s hermeneutic circle is formative in the design of *Engage Difference!* Describing the organization, which is a part of the context, also can also be the *ver* or *to see* of the hermeneutic circle.

The *Dream* or envisioning stage asks about possibilities. A key question is ‘What might be?’ The organization envisions and gives clear statements of a preferred future. With AI in for-profit organizations, a question asked of participants is “What is the world calling for?” In faith settings, a better question would be “What is God calling for?” This is a core question of *Engage Difference!* as participants imagine God’s vision of Beloved Community. It is also the main question of the second part of the hermeneutic circle: *juzgar* or *to discern*.

In the *Design* stage, participants construct a future based on the discoveries of the first two stages. In this stage, participants develop concrete proposals, including naming the

²⁷² David Cooperrider, Diana Whitney, Jacqueline Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 5.

²⁷³ Jane Magruder Watkins, Bernard Mohr., Ralph Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination (second edition)* (San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer, 2011), 85-89.

organizational structures and actions needed to carry out the visions of the first two stages. In *Engage Difference!*, participants design concrete interventions they will use in supporting their local communities in intercultural ministry. This is *actuar* or the acting as active agents of change of the hermeneutic circle.

The *Destiny* stage is the ongoing enactment of proposals, shaped by the first stages. It is a collaborative process of the members of the organization and includes ongoing learning, discovery, and innovation as participants work together to create the organization they envisioned. *Engage Difference!* is not intended as a single course but a moment in the ongoing work of intercultural community. In *celebrar* of the hermeneutic circle, the community celebrates the change brought about through their participation and recommits to the ongoing process of participation in the world for which God is calling.

In each of these steps of AI research, participants decide the significance of findings and identify which move to the next step. An important difference between AI and many other research methodologies is that it does not use statistical significance to give weight to participants' answers and to correlate those answers. It is not always the most common answer deemed important or moved forward to the next stage of AI. It is the ideas and experiences that participants identify as life giving that are significant. In this important way, AI provides for the ideas and experiences of marginalized communities to shape the outcome. This makes AI appropriate to use with *Engage Difference!*, which also seeks to hear all voices, especially marginalized voices.

Why use Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in this Project?

This Doctor of Ministry project requires a research methodology that has integrity with the vision, praxis, and pedagogy of the *Engage Difference!* program. Ideally, the methodology used is a resource to Canadian communities discerning and co-creating, or constructing, visions of community and "local theologies." The very act of research is within the community studied, so shapes the community and larger project for Just Intercultural community. For these reasons, I

chose AI as a research methodology.²⁷⁴ It is rooted in social constructionism, a theory of the process by which humans generate meaning which resonates with the understandings of culture as communal frameworks for meaning used in *Engage Difference!*²⁷⁵ AI puts emphasis on the research participants as the experts about their community who are able to create a vision of new ways of relationship, an assumption shared by the approach of *Engage Difference!* AI is a collaborative system wide approach to enhancing the “life giving forces” in a system.²⁷⁶ This resonates with the objective of the *Engage Difference!* program to help the Church discern God’s vision for community.

Just as FILL resists providing techniques for ministry across diversity, David Cooperrider, the creator of AI, emphasised the philosophy behind AI instead of offering techniques. Just as the *Engage Difference!* program anticipates that each context will have its own way of doing intercultural ministry, there are many different ways of doing AI.²⁷⁷ The methodology is applicable in a large number of contexts. While many of those contexts are corporate for-profit, AI also is used by not-for-profit organizations, including, as in this research, faith based agencies.

As noted in the description of AI above, the principles and methods of AI resonate with those of *Engage Difference!* Both share a common understanding of culture and processes of change. Creative imagination, storytelling, and the participants’ ability to describe their community or organization and to discern the desired change are integral to both. At the core of AI used in a faith setting and at the core of *Engage Difference!* is asking to what God is calling us. Both trust that participants are able to design the interventions required to build a better organization or community and work together to sustain the change.

²⁷⁴ As described by Cooperrider, Whitney, Reed, Stavros, Watkins, Mohr, Kelly and others.

²⁷⁵ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly. *Appreciative Inquiry*, 38.

²⁷⁶ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly. *Appreciative Inquiry*, 22.

²⁷⁷ Bushe, “Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique”, 87.

This Doctor of Ministry project applies AI as a research methodology to the existing *Engage Difference!* program to test the assumptions behind the design of the program, to shape future program offerings, and to give wider ownership of the program within the Canadian context. This study comes at a transitional time in the life of the agency, as it more fully moves into the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and as new denominational partners participate. Describing the impact of the program to new partners will be important to bring them into ownership of shaping FILL and program. This study comes in the midst of significant funding cuts from partner organizations. Grants have made it possible to offer five-day programs without compromising the integrity of content. As the context changes, this research will help to clarify the core values and impact of the program to support new ways of resourcing intercultural ministry in Canada. Through this study, FILL continues to engage the creative process of discerning local theologies and praxes for resourcing Intercultural Ministry in Canada.

Other research methodologies break down or deconstruct organizations to find problems to solve. In contrast, AI assumes that organizations are greater than the sum of their parts. AI designers approach an organization as “a solution to be embraced” rather than “a problem to be solved.”²⁷⁸ Rather than prescribing solutions to problems, AI resources an organization or community to discern a new vision and ways of doing and being. In contrast to other research methodologies, AI is a methodology not based in an enlightenment methodology that makes participants and organizations objects to study. In other research methods, there are power dynamics in the relationship of researcher and objects of research. AI is a creative and collective process. All who participate, researcher and participants alike, actively shape the outcome of the research. As with the approach of *Engage Difference!*, the participants are active agents. AI emphasises collaborative ownership in which the participants are experts in the reality of an organization.²⁷⁹ This resonates with the *Engage Difference!* assumption that program participants

²⁷⁸ Cooperrider, Whitney, Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 5.

²⁷⁹ Cooperrider, Whitney, Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 4.

are the content experts who collectively generate ways of being church and community in the context as opposed to needing experts from outside the community.

The Doctor of Ministry methodology theorist, Tim Sensing, points out the implications of using AI. “Since AI is fundamentally not a problem solving form of inquiry, it requires re-conceptualizing the purpose of the DMin project thesis.”²⁸⁰ In this research, the application of AI is not limited to a strategy for conducting interviews. It is a wider resource that will shape the work of FILL. The application of AI will give a glimpse into the impact of and possibilities for the full project of *Engage Difference!* within the larger life of FILL. As they participate in the research, FILL community members learn about and apply AI as another tool for Intercultural Ministry. AI becomes part of the creative imagination of FILL and a shared process in which all voices are able to shape the wider community. AI becomes part of, and changes, the local theology and praxis of FILL.

AI was chosen as a research methodology because it is helpful in amplifying the transformative and life-giving experiences of *Engage Difference!* The program, through its emphasis on *conscientization*, is well rooted in deconstructing of culture. However, that is not an end in itself of the program. This deconstruction is directed at constructing something new. The program exists in response to a perceived need for Canadian churches to discover new theologies and ways of being. AI, rooted in social constructionism with its emphasis on process and potential meaning making, offers a way to name the new ways of being community discerned through the *Engage Difference!* program.

AI is a research methodology that resonates with the theology and pedagogy of *Engage Difference!* It is “based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well. And those strengths can be a starting point for creating positive change.”²⁸¹ As with *Engage Difference!* and its learner-centred and popular education approach, AI assumes that

²⁸⁰ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 175.

²⁸¹ Cooper, Whitney, Stavros. *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 3.

participants are the experts in their experience and contexts. *Engage Difference!* is not solution based nor prescriptive. Rather, it assumes that the emerging ecumenical paradigm requires Canadian Christians to discover and name theologies and praxes of Just Intercultural ministry shaped by their diverse contexts. *Engage Difference!* encourages participants to engage in a process of creative imagination or *poiesis* similar to what AI describes as “the art of the possible.”²⁸² The “4-D Cycle” of AI²⁸³ parallels Liberation Theology’s hermeneutic circle in its steps as well as the assumption of a process that is ongoing.

AI responds to the change of context that this study describes as the emerging ecumenical paradigm. The designers of AI describe this shift as moving “from Newtonian linearity to quantum relational theories [or] the ‘modernist’ era to the ‘post-modern era.’”²⁸⁴ AI offers ways to engage “changing mindsets and consciousness, addressing diversity and multicultural realities, and advancing new and different models of change.”²⁸⁵ Instead of the modernist approach of a Newtonian image of the universe that separates things into parts, including organizations into individual people or processes, and objectifies them, a postmodern approach recognizes a greater complexity in systems where the whole is more than the sum of the parts.²⁸⁶ The authors of AI are critical of a “deficit-based paradigm” for change as the default setting of Euro-Centric western culture.²⁸⁷ While this approach has been helpful in understanding the workings of the physical world, it can be problematic when it blurs or erases the interconnectedness of systems. A method beyond understanding individual parts is required for understanding context and organizational change. AI proponents argue that the approach of finding problems and fixing them does not generate systemic and sustainable change. As the Church moves into the emerging

²⁸² Cooper, Whitney, Stavros. *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 4.

²⁸³ Cooper, Whitney, Stavros. *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 5.

²⁸⁴ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry*, 40.

²⁸⁵ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry*, 4.

²⁸⁶ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry*, 11-15.

²⁸⁷ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry*, 17.

ecumenical paradigm, AI offers a model of change that is an alternative to the modernist and Euro-centric models.

Instead of a focus on evaluation, AI emphasises valuation.²⁸⁸ The *Engage Difference!* program focuses on already known glimpses of right relationship rather than on evaluating relationships. Just Intercultural community, right relationship, Shalom, or Beloved Community is aspirational. So also AI “[takes] the best of what has happened and [uses] it to create a collective image of a desired future.”²⁸⁹

Both AI and *Engage Difference!* recognize the power of story and its centrality to culture. Story is universal and used by all cultures to share knowledge, custom and learning. Story creates relationship. Story is memorable and transmits images and affect. Story is changeable. Stories have multiple interpretations. Story counters the modernist tendency to sort into rigid categories and interpretations. Story is alive and moves us to new possibilities.²⁹⁰

AI’s emphasis on story moves research away from the scientific method and closer to the Christian faith. Rather than a modernist formula, the Judeo-Christian Scriptures are the stories of people of faith experiencing and understanding their relationship with God, with each other, and with all of creation. Jesus, functioning in a pre-modernist world, often used storytelling, parables, to foster learning as a powerful alternative to giving formulaic answers. Story invites the listener into deeper learning. The listener is trusted to understand their context and to discern the teaching within the story. Learning through story also is the way of knowing of Indigenous and of many other cultures. In *Engage Difference!*, story is used as a counterbalance to traditional Western methods of learning.

The activities of the first days of the program focus on deconstructing understandings of culture (including privilege, power, the relationship between culture and theology, multiculturalism, and

²⁸⁸ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry*, 275.

²⁸⁹ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry*, 279.

²⁹⁰ Watkins, Mohr, Kelly, *Appreciative Inquiry*, 148.

more) as a step toward allowing something different to emerge. The Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism network used the image of “cracking open White identity”²⁹¹, or deconstructing White identity, in its racial justice work as an action toward “transformation.” This deconstruction serves the purpose of providing space for the construction of something new. The deconstruction of the dominant Canadian culture, to use an image from popular culture, points to its failings, or a “crack that allows the light to come in.”²⁹² The program, in its deconstructionist approach, provides a crucifixion or death narrative for the dominant culture. The use of AI helps to allow glimpses of the resurrection, of God’s vision of what is life giving. AI, as a constructionist approach, provides ways to name the glimpses of possible alternatives if the dominant culture is deconstructed. It allows a glimpse of the light or a discernment and naming of Just Intercultural community. AI offers a way to balance the deconstructive pedagogy and activities of the program with a constructionist dreaming of what could be. It allows the community to engage in “creative imagination” or *poiesis*.²⁹³

Appreciative Inquiry (AI): Ethics, Risks, and Antidotes

An AI research methodology does carry some risks that include reinforcing the very culture the work of FILL hopes to transform, as well as personal risk to participants and their communities. The approach and methods of FILL and the design of *Engage Difference!* mitigate some of this risk. There are also choices made in the design of this study to address risks. As part of the process of ensuring the ethics of this research and addressing risk, the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board approved the design (Appendix 1).

²⁹¹ Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network, *Cracking open White identity toward transformation*, (Toronto: Canadian Council of Churches, 2012).

²⁹² “There is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in”: a line from Leonard Cohen’s “Anthem” on the album *The Future* (Sony/ATV Music Publishing Canada Company, 1992).

²⁹³ The title for *Cracking open White identity* came about when a racialized member of the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network said, “I wish I could crack open the head of a white person and look inside to see what is going on.” *White identity* and *White privilege* are common terms in anti-racism work to describe the not always transparent systems that give and protect power and privilege based on skin colour. Instead of a violent act, the cracking open referred to here is similar to Leonard Cohen’s poetic image of the “crack that allows the light to come in.” Racial justice work and theory often provide a process of deconstruction but fail to provide what might emerge. This study is an attempt to point to imaginative alternatives once the “light comes in.”

The risk of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a profit-seeking method

As the most common location of AI use is in for-profit organizations, the needs and experiences of these organizations shape much of the literature. For participants in AI in for-profit organizations, a core question is, “What is the world calling for?” The primary motive for change is to make the organization more profitable, efficient, or able to respond to the customer. The faith setting of this study means motives are different. An alternative to the profit motive of many uses of AI is posing the question, “What is God calling for?”

In its origins, the purpose of AI is not to increase corporate profit, but rather it is an attempt to provide a method for organizational change rooted in social constructionist theory.²⁹⁴ The purpose of this research is not to make *Engage Difference!* more profitable or efficient. While it is fair to critique AI as shaped by profit motives, the methodology lends itself to the purpose of the project of *Engage Difference!* As a method of change, it supports the construction of new ways to respond to the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

In this study, a further counter to the corporate for-profit culture of AI is an emphasis on the spiritual aspect of AI, an aspect downplayed in academic and business writing and uses of the method.²⁹⁵ An important question in AI is, “What is life giving?” This is a theological question. The focus of this research is on transformative change that is life giving. This study reframed the questions of AI as theological questions. Participants describe glimpses of Shalom, Beloved Community, Just Intercultural Community, or a world the way God would want it. The study is not about a more profitable program, but about a program that helps reveal transformative glimpses of “a new heaven and a new earth.” (Revelation 21:1)

As noted above, Liberation theology’s hermeneutic circle is similar to the steps of AI. It provides a tool for ensuring a different set of motives shape the study. By consciously adapting the steps of AI to the parts of the hermeneutic circle, the motive becomes participation in God’s vision of the world. The *Discovery* stage has parallels to the *ver* of the hermeneutic circle. The main task

²⁹⁴ Bushe, “Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique”, 87.

²⁹⁵ Bushe, “Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique”, 101.

of *ver*, or to see, is to describe the context. This includes, as in *Discovery*, naming what is life giving. The question ‘what is God calling for’ is an important question of *juzgar*, or to discern, and makes the questions of the *Dream* phase theological. *Actuar*, or to act, is a reminder that this study’s purpose is not simply a more effective program (as shaped by the *Design* phase), but action as a community of faith. *Celebrar*, or to Celebrate, is a reminder that *Destiny* is more than implementation and profitability of a program but rather transformed communities that are able to become more sustainable Just Intercultural communities and better able to live into an ongoing process that again leads back into *ver* and *Discovery*.

The risk to theology of Appreciative Inquiry’s (AI’s) “Power of Positive Thinking”

AI’s connection with “positive thinking” ideologies potentially could create an “echo chamber” of self-congratulation and denial of pain and suffering. A common concern about AI is the possibility that the focus on the positive will invalidate the important negative experiences of participants.²⁹⁶ This is problematic in that the negative experiences of marginalized communities is a primary motivator for the alternative vision of Just Intercultural community. The tradition of the “power of positive thinking” has led to the aberration of the “prosperity gospel” and a denial of the Christian tradition of thinking through the “theology of the cross.”²⁹⁷ The power of positive thinking relies on an assumption that what we imagine becomes true, much as AI assumes imagining a better organization into being. At its extreme, positive thinking and the prosperity gospel lead to a theology that does not require God since we are able to bring about our salvation by our own human abilities to imagine. This is antithetical to the “Theology of the Cross” in which it is God’s coming to us and the suffering death of the Son, that provide salvation.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Bushe, “Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique”, 99.

²⁹⁷ As described in: Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²⁹⁸ Gerhard O Ford. “Luther’s Theology of the Cross”, *Christian Dogmatics: Volume 2*. eds. Carle E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 47.

The *Engage Difference!* program's vision of Just Intercultural community as God's vision of Shalom or Beloved community counters this issue of AI. The vision is not something we create by our own positive thinking, but rather it is a vision of God, which we glimpse and in which we participate. The research design addressed this issue by framing questions using theological language intentionally asking participants not what they created through the program, but what glimpses of God's vision they discerned through participating in the program.

A sociological risk of Appreciative Inquiry (AI): reinforcing the myths

Another risk is sociological. The AI emphasis on identifying the positive has the potential of reinforcing the myths the dominant Canadian culture holds of itself. Canadians can frame the peacemaker myth, the vision of the ideal British colony, and Canada's relationship to "The Great White North" as positive attributes. In doing so, Canadians ignore the harm of those myths and of unjust relationships across diversity in Canada. The research design addressed this risk through the program's immersion in identifying the unconscious elements of culture, including concepts such as perception and unconscious bias, and the harm of Canadian myths. The research design reminded participants of the deconstruction of those myths through the program and the research framed questions in terms of seeking the life-giving alternatives to these myths. AI does not ask, "What is best?" of an organization, but "What gives life?"²⁹⁹ Through the program, participants recognize that the myths Canada holds of itself are not always life giving.

The risk of the simplistic and Western-biased assumption of the enlightenment notion of progress

A third risk of AI is its potential to be shaped by Western-biased notions of progress and cultural relativity. AI might reinforce an enlightenment notion of progress. This notion of progress describes some cultures as more advanced, or superior to, other cultures. In only naming and enhancing what works well, members of the dominant culture might not do the difficult work of naming issues such as racism and dynamics of power and privilege. The research addressed this through the diversity of the program participants, many of whom are from racialized or other

²⁹⁹ Bushe, "Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique", 100.

marginalized communities who know well, as it is part of their lived experience, the negative impacts of racism and other abuses of power and privilege. AI, more than other research methodologies, is a process where “marginalized voices are more likely to be heard and received.”³⁰⁰ As noted above, it is not the statistically significant findings or most common themes that shape the outcome, but rather those that are identified as the most life giving. This allows less common ideas and experiences to be valued.

Risks specific to this project: researcher bias

AI requires the participation of the researcher. This carries the risk that the researcher will influence the outcomes. In this study, the researcher is not a neutral presence but one of the designers and facilitators of *Engage Difference!*. However, AI assumes that the researcher will shape the outcomes as one of the participants in the institution being studied and therefore a carrier of knowledge of the organization. The AI process mitigates undue influence because the researcher trains the participants in the AI process but then takes a less directive role as they work together through the process. Rather than the researcher alone, the participants develop and identify the results of the study. In this project, participant groups worked together to identify themes in their conversations and to distill them into sets of statements. Recording conversations through note taking has the potential of bringing in the note-takers bias and interpretations. In this study, the researcher did not take notes but, rather, used software to record and transcribe conversations.

Risks specific to this project: participant vulnerability

Finally, there are risks to participants in this study. The design of the study took into account potential vulnerability of or harm to participants and their communities. Many of the participants in *Engage Difference!* self-identify as coming from marginalized communities or as individuals marginalized within communities. This marginalization manifests in a variety of ways the participants are unable to participate fully in the dominant culture because of identities such as race, sexual identity, ethnicity, class, gender, skin colour, and others. *Engage Difference!*

³⁰⁰ Bushe, “Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique”, 96.

addresses this vulnerability through the intentional creation of a safe learning community that allows full participation and through which participants are able to empower themselves to name and confront marginalization. This safety carries over into the pool of research participants as they have a common understanding and commitment to full participation.

Most of the participants are in pastoral relationships or are in communities that are at the core of the stories they told in the study. Making these stories and insights public might be damaging to relationships and to the communities. To mitigate these risks, the researcher carefully described the research method, the purpose of the research, and the methods of reporting results. There was an invitation to participate in the study and participants only were part of the study if they volunteered. They were able to withdraw at any point during the research. In the publishing of stories, identifying names and descriptions were changed or made anonymous and original recordings and transcriptions destroyed.

This chapter focused on the principles and methods of Appreciative Inquiry and its suitability to the Action-in-Ministry of this Doctor of Ministry Thesis. It explored the risks associated with using AI and the mitigating actions taken in the research. The next chapter will examine the design for applying AI to the *Engage Difference!* program and the results of the research methodology.

CHAPTER 6 DESIGN AND RESULTS OF ACTION IN MINISTRY

Appreciative Inquiry applied to Engage Difference!

Purposes of the Research

The research design and application of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an opportunity to describe experiences and impact and to envision the future of the *Engage Difference!* program. It describes ways the program is helping Canadian Christian communities discern God's vision for living into the "emerging ecumenical paradigm" and how the program is creating inspired spaces for a vision of Just Intercultural community.

In addition to the goals of this Doctor of Ministry study, this research is an opportunity for the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL) to live out its mandate. That mandate is to work toward intercultural leadership development and ministry learning; engage innovative education and programming; reflect on contemporary issues; participate in dialogue about honouring diversity and God's unequivocal welcome; and provide networking and support for intercultural ministry.³⁰¹ The wider community of people engaged in intercultural ministry in Canada shape FILL programs. Through the research design, program alumni, facilitators, resource people and representatives of stakeholder organizations participated in the ongoing development and reshaping of the program and worked toward a shared vision of Just Intercultural community and ministry in Canada. The research design allows for relationship building that supports this community and equips it with additional tools for ministry. Alumni, resource people, and stakeholders from across Canada came together to meet for the first time or to reconnect, learn about each other's ministry and communities, and collaborate on a common project. With an experience of AI built into the research experience, participants had an opportunity to build their skills for intercultural ministry.

³⁰¹ Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning terms of reference, accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.interculturallleadership.ca/terms-of-reference>

Recruitment of Participants

The research engaged three groups: past participants of *Engage Difference!*, facilitators and resource people of the program, and staff of denominations and other program stakeholders. Engaging all three groups is important for a broad ownership of the emerging visions shaping future program and other work of FILL. It also provides triangulation of the results as each of the groups brings different perspectives from their location. Participants, and not the researcher, discern themes in the data. This mitigates the biases of the primary researcher and.

Participants were recruited through email and hard copy letter (Appendix 2). The program has been offered sixteen times in locations across Canada, and two-hundred and three alumni of these programs received an invitation to participate. Thirty-two program facilitators or resource people, many of whom are also alumni of the program, were invited. There were seven invitations to representatives of stakeholder organizations that provide grants, send participants or partner in offering program in a location. The recruitment letter invited participation in a one-and-a-half-hour focus group. The letter described the purposes of the research, which are to contribute to the researcher's Doctor of Ministry studies; to record and enhance the ecumenical resourcing of Canadian intercultural ministry; to raise awareness of the program; to contribute to Canadian theologies and practices of intercultural ministry; and to shape future program. In the letter, it was noted that participation in the research could contribute knowledge and skills to the participants for their ministries. There was a brief description of the focus group process and procedures in place to reduce risks and to maintain privacy. Also noted was participants' ability to withdraw from the research. To participate, participants were required to return a signed consent form by mail or email and to fill out an online poll indicating their availability for focus groups.

Focus Groups

A total of fifty-two people participated in seven focus groups. Thirty-nine alumni participated in five focus groups, eight resource people in a focus group and five stakeholder group representatives in another. The focus group members reflected the diversity of the cross-Canada program sites. There was diversity of gender, denominational affiliation, ethno-cultural

background, socio-economic status, lay and ordained, regions of Canada, and ministry contexts including rural, urban, congregational, and institutional. Documenting this diversity was beyond the scope of the research design, however the researcher knew the participants through their involvement in *Engage Difference!*, in which participants identify their social locations. As noted previously, this diversity, particularly the engagement of racialized and other marginalized communities, helped mitigate the risk of a White, Western enlightenment notion of progress and other values of the dominant culture alone shaping the outcomes of the research.

The focus group conversations used video-conferencing technology. Most participants were able to join by video using their computer, tablet, or phone. There were three participants who joined by audio only through their phones. Video-conferencing made it possible for each group to include participants from different geographical regions of Canada. It also supported other diversity, as many participants would not have had access to travel or the ability to take the time required for in-person gatherings.

Instruction and Preparation

The focus groups began with a short, pre-recorded PowerPoint presentation (Appendix 3) preparing the participants to lead each other through the conversation, introducing them to AI as a tool for their ministry contexts and to the focus group process and framing the conversation as theological. The voice over, written text and images of the presentation were shaped by the FILL pedagogy, recognizing the different styles of learning and processing information of participants. To ensure fuller participation in the conversation, principles of Universal Design communicated the content in a way that it could be “accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.”³⁰² Using PowerPoint ensured uniformity of the content communicated and consistency of interview questions, further removing the bias of the researcher. The presentation introduced AI and the four steps, or “4-D” cycle, of *Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny*.³⁰³ It also described the hermeneutic circle of

³⁰² National Disability Authority: The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, accessed July 25, 2020, <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>

³⁰³ Cooperrider, Whitney, Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 5.

ver (to see), *juzgar* (to discern), *actuar* (to act), and *celebrar* (to celebrate). The hermeneutic circle framed the four steps of AI as a theological process. The instruction noted that the core of AI, “What is life giving?” is deeply theological and reframed the dream stage question of “What might be?” as “What is God calling us to do and be?” There was a review of the definitions of Shalom, Beloved Community, and Just Intercultural Community used in *Engage Difference!*

After the PowerPoint presentation, the groups identified one member who would act as a “timekeeper” to make sure the group moved through the process of the focus group and a second to act as a “conversation facilitator” who made sure everyone had an opportunity to speak. The researcher listened but did not engage with the group, other than to present the next question and instructions for conversation. Questions for each segment of the conversation were shared verbally and through a PowerPoint slide. Instead of the researcher identifying important concepts in the conversations, participants discerned themes and highlights of their conversations to carry forward into next steps. This less directive approach of the researcher is part of the AI design that encourages the participants to shape the conversation and to own the outcomes. AI assumes that the researcher will shape the outcomes as one of the participants in the subject institution of the study and therefore as a carrier of knowledge of the organization. The AI process mitigates undue influence of the researcher through training the participants in the AI process so that they can work together through the research. An additional method for mitigating researcher bias was to record and transcribe the conversations electronically, as manual note taking has the potential of bringing in the researcher’s interpretations (Appendix 4). Deleting names and other identifying data from the transcripts mitigated risk to participants and their communities. Original audio recordings and transcripts were destroyed when the research was complete.

During the conversation, there was a reminder of the purpose of the research and of participants’ involvement: “This Doctor of Ministry project undertakes to find out how the program is helping Canadian Christian communities discern God’s vision for living into the “emerging ecumenical paradigm” and how the program is creating inspired spaces for a vision of Just Intercultural community. Through the research design using Appreciate Inquiry (AI), this project also asks program alumni to participate in the ongoing development and reshaping of the program.”

Discovery, *Ver*, or to See

Experiences of Engage Difference!

The Discovery stage of AI asks when a system or organization is most “alive, healthy and symbiotically related” to its context. This stage in AI is a naming of the context. This is the *ver*, or to see, of the Hermeneutic circle. Focus group participants were encouraged to use storytelling in this process. The task of participants is to name what they appreciate about the organization. ‘What gives life?’ is a key question. For the purpose of this research, participants responded to the question, “When can members of the community be most fully themselves?”

The focus groups of program alumni and facilitators and resource people identified glimpses of, or movement toward, Just Intercultural community during *Engage Difference!* These were described as moments when people can fully be themselves, have voice, and can shape the community. These were moments that were “life giving” or were glimpses of community the way God would want it. Staff and representatives of program stakeholder organizations focused on the impact of the program on individuals from their organization and moments that are “life giving.”

Experiences because of Engage Difference!

Program alumni and facilitators or resource people thought about their ministry setting, workplace or community and identified moments when the program helped them to see or to encourage Beloved Community. These moments were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it because of their involvement in the program. Staff and representatives of program stakeholder organizations thought about the impact on their organization or denomination. Two questions were posed: “After the program, have there been moments when involvement in the program encouraged Beloved Community in your wider organization?”; and “Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it because members of your organization or denomination participated in the program?” Groups were encouraged to use story in their answers.

In the responses to these two questions, there were comments that coalesced into the participants' themes and hopes identified in the next steps. Participants' descriptions of the impact of the program consistently support the recommendations of this thesis discussed in the next chapter. As stated in the thesis statement, *Engage Difference!* provides a process of conscientization of Canada's dominant culture and its impact on relationship, it is helping Canadian Christian communities discern God's vision for living into the new contexts of the emerging ecumenical paradigm, and it is creating inspired spaces to experience a vision of Just Intercultural community. While the AI design focuses on the themes identified by participants and their vision for the future of the program, I document the participants' comments from these initial conversations to describe the impact of *Engage Difference!* This thesis has several purposes. The AI design of this research generates next steps to deepen and enrich *Engage Difference!* and the work of The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL). The design also identifies recommendations for Canadian church communities toward living into the changing context. Documenting the ecumenical project of *Engage Difference!* is another purpose of this thesis. While outside the process of AI, toward this latter goal the comments and stories told by research participants provide important glimpses into the impact of the program. Several comments appear significant in that participants across research groups describe similar experiences that also resonate with the goals of *Engage Difference!*

Experiences: changed participants

The comments indicate that the program has brought about change in the participants. They self-describe as better able to recognize the complexity and intersectionality of issues and as having a "heightened consciousness" of the issues and dynamics of relationships across cultures, the ways they are shaped by culture and the impact on relationship of those ways of being. One participant observed, "[The program] ...helped to open my mind, my eyes, as to what my White privilege had entitled me to and was still entitling me to." Another participant remarked, "I think my eyes were really opened around privilege and my own unconscious, sometimes clumsy use of power." A participant described this as "a self-hermeneutic of suspicion." They feel they are "less presumptive" and more humble. In relating to others, they describe themselves as being more

intentional and “better able to stay with” others. They also describe having “learned how to listen” to others who are different. They are more trusting of the other and of process. They are better able to tolerate and stay with feeling discomfort, allowing themselves to be vulnerable and to be disturbed. The change goes beyond knowledge: “It’s about that thing that happens within us. Rather than the knowledge that comes into our heads... [it is the] inclination of your heart.” This change carried into the ministry and lives of the participants: “The thing I have been working on since the course is trying to figure out how to show up different...I am just wanting to be there and listen, and figure out what does it mean just to be present with one another.”

Experiences: hope and courage

Several participants who describe themselves as marginalized in the wider society or church describe the program and its participants as providing hope and courage in their communities’ struggles toward a more just world. One Indigenous participant commented, “To hear that there’s self discovery, especially about a deep issue like privilege, to be somebody who doesn’t walk around with all of that privilege, not experiencing that privilege, to hear that it is happening and people are making an effort is encouraging...We are believers in this and are pursuing it in our efforts in life. But, it’s just good to hear those things coming from other leaders. It makes me feel like I am not alone.” A racialized person described other settings in which they are “always experiencing moments when I feel I don’t belong.” The program is a place “where I encounter others who are committed to this work. I am reminded that I am not alone.”

Experiences: voices heard

Comments about “voice” run through the narratives. Participants felt their voices were heard in ways that were different from their usual experiences: “I felt more accommodated, more listened to and I felt like I get space to, to be able to express myself.” The program created confidence in speaking: “The program has emboldened me to use my voice in situations where previously I would have, consciously or unconsciously, been unable to speak. It gave me permission to speak up.” Participants whose privilege keeps them from hearing others spoke of changes that opened them to listen. A participant observed, “Just when the privilege thing can disappear, at least for

the moment, there's enough space in that thing to hear each other" and another said, "There are tools to allow us to learn how to listen to one another and not fear as much." One summed up the impact of the program saying, "On the last day, everybody found a place and voice to say something." Related to the importance of voice was a number of comments highlighting the space for stories to be heard: "It was the first time in a long time that I had sort of seen hope in the idea that there could be a diverse church and that there could be many voices, that there could be opportunity for sharing stories." Participants observed "willingness of people to actually listen to one another and to actually see each other."

Experiences: new understandings

New understandings and experiences of concepts were important. For example: "Clarification of what it means to be intercultural, perhaps rather than cross cultural or more multicultural was a very helpful clarification and frame for us." There was an internalization of concepts through experience: "[It was] a real experience of intersectionality." There was a reframing of concepts. A participant described how their experience of Beloved Community changed their understanding: "It was for me one of those moments of just growing a bit in my understanding of hospitality."

Experiences: faith and spirituality

For many participants the program was an experience of faith and spirituality. They indicated: "The retreat format was important. It gave the program a spiritual undertone;" and "I found the active being in ceremony with each other to be a really sacred space." Another claimed, "I have gained understanding of my own spiritual journey through the lenses of intercultural ministry...I have learned theologies and language discourse through participating with other people."

Experiences: process

Participants affirmed the intentional process and length of the program: "We trusted each other, and we trusted the process." Another said, "What I found life giving was the pace...that we had time to be together; we never felt rushed, and there was space and time to, to really listen to what other people were saying."

Experiences of community

Many of the stories told by research participants described profound experiences of community in and because of the program. One described it as, “a real experience of being able to be who you were created to be.” It was “a space that really had that foundation of trust and welcoming of the vulnerability” that allowed “the space that people need to have some dignity and some opportunity to get to be who they need to be.” There was a “joy in being together.” One participant told the story of a moment of joy in the program: “I remember looking around the room and seeing everyone is laughing and everyone’s smiling and feeling quite joyful.”

In the final conclusions of this research an overarching theme will be that a wider community share the experiences of *Engage Difference!*. As research participants describe the impact of the program, they begin to provide a vision of church communities that are also sources of hope, courage, change and experiences of Just Intercultural community.

Themes Identified by Focus Group Participants

Rather than the researcher identifying themes, participants identified important themes from the stories generated by the first two questions. These might be themes common to several stories or emerging from a single story. This is one way in the AI process where “marginalized voices are more likely to be heard and received.”³⁰⁴ As discussed in the previous chapter, it is not simply the statistically significant findings or most common themes that shape outcomes. Rather, it is those identified as the most life giving. This allows ideas and experiences that are less common to be valued.

In the Appreciative Inquiry design of this research, these first conversations lay the groundwork for the Dream, Design and Destiny steps, which will shape the future of *Engage Difference!* and other work of FILL. Before moving on to the next steps, the process pauses to allow participants to describe the themes of their sometimes-profound encounters of Just Intercultural community. While there were common themes across the focus groups, each had its own distinct

³⁰⁴ Bushe, “Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique”, 96.

conversation. These themes help shape the description of Canadian church communities that emerge as the vision of the Church, recommendations, and invitations of this thesis.

Theme: space for intersectionality and diversity

The first focus group described the program as an experience of intersectionality and diversity. They named as significant the “variety of different kinds of intercultural experience and backgrounds” brought together that allowed for “addressing complex problems or issues and not just avoiding them.” The first days of the program helped them name the institutional, historical moments, policies and practices shaping relationship across difference in Canada. Later days of the program moved them beyond just asking “how they get along with each other” into taking stock of and responsibility for the history and to “lean into the discomfort...with intention and tools, resources, and understanding to move forward and do something about it.” They described as important “learning how to listen,” humility, and “learning a new way.” They valued taking time to “really listen to others and to allow people the space and the time they need” to sort through and absorb the course materials and challenges and to “reflect constructively.” They felt that an important part of the program was that it encouraged an “honouring of experience.” Important in their journey toward intercultural community was the program’s “intentionality of creating a space” where they could experience “trust and vulnerability.”

Theme: encouraged by glimpses of Just Intercultural community

The second focus group was composed of program designers, facilitators, intercultural mentors, and other resource people. This group named the program and being with the groups of participants as a glimpse of Beloved Community or Just Intercultural community. They stressed the importance of “being with others who are really committed to creating spaces where all belong.” They were encouraged by knowing they are not alone in this work and “that there are others who are committed to this work and who are doing this work.” This is a significant motivation for their participation in the program and energizes them in their work toward a vision for the Church and society that sometimes feels lonely outside the program. Those from marginalized communities noted the importance of encountering people from the dominant

culture who were committed to the work. They saw glimpses of Beloved Community in the nature of the learning communities created in the program. Many of them are from marginalized communities, or experience marginalization in their church communities. In their own words, in the program, they are “seen and heard.” They feel “safe to be seen and heard and to speak [their] truth or to push back.” The program “gives a voice to speak for people who feel marginalized.” As Martin Luther King Jr. conceived Beloved Community, it includes conflict and the potential for having to struggle with difference.³⁰⁵ This group described the experience of conflict within the program as glimpses of Just Intercultural community. They described, “sitting with discomfort and staying with it” and experiencing “tensions and disagreements” as an indicator that groups were able to be open and trusting enough to express their full selves and to do the hard work of intercultural community. In the programs, they experienced and heard others describe, “belonging and kindred-ness,” “trust in relationship” between people of different backgrounds, and “feeling welcome.” They observed the development of attitudes and skills for intercultural ministry as “willingness” and “developing sensibilities to listen to the story of another.”

A Spanish speaker described a significant theme for this group as *puede* or “possibility.” There is an “openness to change” and having “perceptions changed.” They celebrated the “possibility of discovering something or seeing something in a new way.” At the end of the program, participants share an “enthusiasm...to spill out into their contexts.” This invokes an image of participants returning to their communities as agents of change. They are enthusiastic about the program in its potential or possibilities. It has the potential to bring significant change to and beyond the church.

Theme: hope in telling your story

The third focus group was composed of program alumni, several of whom participated in the Vancouver or Montreal programs. Many of this group also are in ministry in multi-lingual settings. They identified a key theme of language. Programs in Montreal are bilingual and the

³⁰⁵ King, “Facing the Challenge of a New Age”

program in Vancouver included a significant number of people who were recent immigrants to Canada uncomfortable expressing themselves in English and for whom a Chinese language was a first language. A facet of these programs has been to strive for intentional Just Intercultural community through working hard to hear all voices and overcoming the reality of not sharing a common comfortable language. They identified as important “being able to tell your story in the language that you know, as your first language or the language you feel most comfortable with.” This group also talked about the program creating a “narrative of hope” and drawing on the energy and hope of the people involved. One participant describing the program participants as “like-minded deviants huddling together against the sense of despair.”³⁰⁶ This group felt that after the program, “we are well equipped for the working in our communities.”

Themes: the art of intercultural ministry and the power of story

The fourth focus group described experiencing Just Intercultural community as a “working of creativity,” reflecting the description of the program described previously as preparing participants for the “art of intercultural ministry.” They highlighted the creation of a safe learning community in the program where participants “can expend energy in supporting or, or actually leading programs... [and] to bring some goodness to the world.” They noted a movement from seeing difference as a problem to seeing it as an opportunity to bring about something new. This echoes the *puede* or possibility of the program to bring significant change to and beyond the church. They also described the power of storytelling in the program. Again, emphasising safety, they described the need for creating safe spaces where people can tell their story.

Theme: new tools

The fifth focus group described the program as providing new tools, language, learnings and understandings. They experienced intercultural community in the struggles faced when trying to engage across cultures and, “how it is in those struggles that we move forward.” In these

³⁰⁶ This appears to be a paraphrase from Peter L. Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (Doubleday, 1970).

struggles, the program “invites engagement rather than defensiveness.” As with other groups, they described a process of “finding voice.” Several of the themes they identified are processes of conscientization. They recognized White and other privilege and “a hermeneutic of suspicion of my own exercise of power.” This group also echoed other groups’ naming of glimpses of “possibilities” for the church, their communities and themselves because of their participation in the program. This possibility to bring significant change to and beyond the church is an important theme in the recommendations and invitations emerging from this research.

Theme: the joy of intercultural community

The sixth focus group described experiences of joy as glimpses of Just Intercultural community. They experienced this through laughter and feeling comfortable being in relationship with the diverse group of program participants. The program was a “celebration of difference.” They described the program as an intentional “stepping out” and “looking at things through different lenses.” This was through self-awareness that allowed them to “make space for each other” and to “give voices opportunity to be heard.”

Theme: the potential of the program to change institutions

The final group was composed of stakeholder organization representatives. They focused on change they saw in participants from their organizations and the potential of the program to move their church institutions, denominations and theological colleges toward Just Intercultural community. They described the program as part of “heading down the road of what looks like a paradigm shift for the organization...in both the idea and behavioural level.” One of the participants in this group, who would identify as being from a marginalized community, noted, “We are encouraged along in this work, by the DUIM and by the stories of what is happening.” They describe program participants as becoming more thoughtful, less presumptive, feeling equipped, more confident, and thoughtful, disturbed, and changing themselves. While the program content is important, they note the significance of community of people brought together by the program who can spark organizational change. For this group a significant theme is “that intercultural leadership and learning is in this particular context, also, a deeply theological and spiritual question” in the approach of the program.

Dream, *Juzgar*, or to Discern: “What is God Calling for?”

The Dream or envisioning stage of AI asks about possibilities. A key question is, “What might be?” For this research in a faith setting, the question shifted from what the participants envisioned to discerning God’s vision for the *Engage Difference!* program. This is the *juzgar*, or to discern, stage of the hermeneutic circle. Participants reflected on “What might be?” or “What is God calling for?” This also is a core question of *Engage Difference!* They shared their hopes or vision for the future of *Engage Difference!*

Participants’ Highlights

The final step in all the focus groups was to decide together which hopes were important to highlight and to carry forward into next steps of the process. They were asked which five hopes from the previous conversation gave “the most energy, or hope for the future, or which might have an important impact toward moving the church toward Just Intercultural community?”

Hope for greater participation in the program

Participation in the program by more people and communities was the most substantial hope that emerged from program participants: “I hope to see this program bigger [and] accessible to as many people as possible.” Focus group participants most clearly identified three interrelated issues as hopes. The program must be financially sustainable; the program needs to be accessible to larger group of participants; and, while participants are diverse, there is a need for even more diversity of participants.

Toward this, they desire more funding and support from denominations to continue offering the current program in its current form and to make content available in other ways. This support includes making it part of seminary training and continuing education opportunities for clergy and other leaders. They would like to see participation in the “program mandated like anti-racism or boundaries training in some denominations.” They see the denominations supporting the program by recognizing it as a tool for other areas of life of the church such as the process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. They hope that denominations would see it as a tool for multiple areas of life of the church. As examples, they described the application of *Engage*

Difference! content in the merging of congregations and in an exercise to improve the working relationship between denominational departments. Facilitators of these applications experienced the different congregations and the different departments as having cultures that were helped to relate in more just ways. There is a hope for change through churches and other communities that adopt the program more fully. The program can be a method for anti-racism work and for “making people aware of things like White privilege.” A significant number of participants are clergy or other paid church workers, and there needs to be more lay participation. The program has potential to be an important tool to help new immigrants understand their relationship with Canadian Indigenous peoples and to reflect on their settler privilege in Canada. Focus group participants hoped the program could undo the ways people in the church see themselves, or are seen, from a single identifier such as immigrant. They hope that the program can help groups explore their multiplicities of access to privilege and experiences of oppression including looking at patriarchy, heteronormativity, etc.

Hope for a place for listening

The groups also identified the fragmentation in church and society causing groups of people to cease listening to or interacting with each other. They hope that the program can help the church to be a place of “hard, spiritual listening to one another.”

Hope for a greater diversity of participants

They expressed a hope for accessibility through additional funding and alternate methods of delivery. At the core of this hope, is a desire to encourage diversity of participants. One group described this as making the program “economically invitational.” They also encourage the program to “experiment with some different models that that encompass more and different people.”

Accessibility includes “widening the circle” beyond the church. They named including interfaith and secular organizations and making the program intergenerational by including children, youth and young adults. They recognize that widening the diversity of participants will shape and

enhance the program. They named specific examples such as including prayers from different faith traditions led by participants.

Hoped for adoption of the vision of Just Intercultural community

There is a hope for more adoption of the vision of Just Intercultural community by local communities. Additional funding will allow more people, instead of just one or two, to participate from each community to build teams of people who can move the work forward. They also identified a need for more easily locally led activities “to open the program to congregations.” They long for alternate program designs to make it accessible “beyond the kinds of people who have a whole week, to leave their home context to go to different place” for a program and to “include people who would find time and cost major obstacle to participation.” They suggested specific examples of alternate delivery such as video, online resources and breaking the program into self-guided shorter workshops. They see equipping and giving confidence to alumni to design, facilitate, and lead programs as important both to expanding the offering of the five-day *Engage Difference!* and to offering intercultural workshops and other engagements in local communities.

A hope that more will experience Just Intercultural community

Focus group participants long for many others to share their experiences of the program. They talked of the utility of the program in helping them “explore talking about intercultural community theologically.” They realized that most people do not imagine, think, or know about experiencing intercultural communities as a possibility. They describe the program’s potential to “open people up to the possibilities of the intercultural reality.” As we shall see later in the research process, they describe the Canadian churches, just like the wider Canadian society, as embracing multiculturalism. As described previously, this embrace of multiculturalism is a barrier to Just Intercultural community as it fails to recognize imbalances of power and privilege that stand in the way of right relationship and all members of the community being able to be fully themselves. One focus group participant was emotional while describing her experience of the program, “I learned from the DUIM that culture is not just about [being] geographically from

different locations. [It] is about.... personal habits, lifestyle, everything.” The program has led her to facilitate intercultural encounters for others, which she describe as being more of a benefit to her to those whom she facilitates: “I became very active in organizing [intercultural encounters] ... but I feel like I am the person benefitting because now I am able to talk to people of different cultures. ”

A hope to connect program alumni

A final hope voiced throughout the focus groups, fueled by the energy and content of the focus group conversations, is to keep alumni connected. They named this as “making sure that participants in the program have a chance to come back together or almost, I would say, forced to come back together...in this kind of conversation.” They also hoped for a widening of the “circles of connection” that they are part of through the program.

A hope for individual, organizational, and societal change

Representatives of stakeholder organizations and program resource people and participants identify similar hopes. Their conversation encompassed hopes for bringing significant change to the church and wider Canadian society. They identified a hope for individual and organizational change asking, “How do we actually mainstream intercultural in everything?”

They value the program as an important resource needed by the churches in the current Canadian contexts. Several of their hopes centre on bringing the program to a wider audience and on changing Canadian churches more deeply. They identified the need to “grow the circles of voices and champions, and not in a way that creates heroes out of them, but this is like a pantheon of wrestlers that can help us slowly push this thing up the hill and actually decolonize the Gospel and so on.” They hope the program can reach a wider ecumenical audience, secular circles and other language and cultural groups. They wonder how to break down the resistance, from the micro resistance to participation the program, to the macro a resistance of the church to becoming intercultural, to decolonization, to conscientization and to becoming Beloved Community? One suggestion was to invite “change-makers” or people with institutional power to create wider ownership of the program by stakeholder denominations.

Solid theological understanding of intercultural community

They named a need for more and deeper work toward “a solid theological understanding” of intercultural ministry. They recognize a problem with the narrowness of understanding of intercultural in the church and hope to encompass “full justice work” so that the Church, in all that it can do, embodies Beloved Community and Shalom.

A hope to deconstruct the valuing of multiculturalism

They value the program’s ability to bring about concientization and hope that it can help the Church deconstruct its valuing of multiculturalism and move toward interculturalism. They stated that even though the Church is “multicultural in many settings, it doesn't solve the issues” of relationship and community faced by the Church. They expressed a hope that the program’s process makes this conscious so that “intercultural permeates who we are” in a way that it “becomes unconscious again, but in a far healthier form.”

Design, *Actuar*, or to Act

In the Design stage of AI, participants construct a future based on the discoveries of the first two stages. Participants develop concrete proposals to carry out the visions of the first two stages. This is *actuar* or the acting as active agents of change of the hermeneutic circle. Oversight of program and other activities of FILL are the responsibility of a reference group composed of denominational representatives and members at large who have an interest in Intercultural ministry. Many of the members of the FILL reference group also are program alumni, facilitators or resource people, and representatives of stakeholder organizations. Many of them participated in focus groups for this research. Their engagement in this research is important for the design and destiny stages, as they will need to have ownership of the results and commitments for the ongoing work of implementing and sustaining the vision and program that emerges.

Prior to meeting together, members of the FILL reference groups reviewed several documents: the focus group transcripts (Appendix 4) and an initial summary of the focus group conversations (Appendix 5) created from the transcripts by the researcher. The summary documented the themes that participants identified from their glimpses of Just Intercultural community in and

because of the program. It also documented the hopes for the program that participants identified as giving them the most “energy” or those they would highlight as moving the Church toward Just Intercultural community.”

The FILL reference group met by videoconference. They began by going into small break out rooms of four or five people and reflecting on the transcripts and summary with the question, “What are we doing that is most life-giving?” They then had a conversation in the small group video break out room about, “What does this point us to for future work for FILL?” Each group reported to the larger group by making three recommendations. This large group conversation was recorded and a transcript produced using transcription software (Appendix 6). The FILL reference group identified several recommendations that will shape the future of *Engage Difference!* and other work.

FILL as a Coordinating Body and Community

Intercultural ministry, and the resourcing of intercultural ministry, also happens outside the work of FILL. That work needs a body that can connect the many people doing the work to “support one another...connect with one another, learn from one another, and be aware of some different initiatives that are happening.” FILL can coordinate training and networking for intercultural ministry in Canada. The FILL reference group recognized the need for training for the technical skills for intercultural ministry but also the need for “an emotional or personal space.” Beyond just a coordinating body, FILL also functions as a community. There is a need for the training in the tools and resources for Just Intercultural community. Participants who are often the only person engaging local contexts toward Just Intercultural ministry need a space that can be an experience of Beloved Community and a source of strength and support.

The FILL reference groups named the importance of working with institutions of ministry leadership training. FILL will develop closer relationships and collaboration with theological colleges and other ministry training centres. They identified training in intercultural ministry as necessary for leadership in the Canadian context. It needs to be part of the professional training as well as ongoing learning or continuing education of professional and lay leadership. This

includes learning about current work in these institutions on intercultural issues and connecting as a resource to the wider church; supporting and enhancing the work; and shaping FILL's work.

Continue Offering Engage Difference!

They affirmed the need to continue offering *Engage Difference!* as a face-to-face intensive multi-day program. There is a need for “intensive retreats where there's enough time and space to get to really know people of different cultures and to have the community building that gives the sense of belonging and the sense of not being alone and the common understanding of what intercultural or just intercultural means or could look like.” The *Engage Difference!* experience provides a model of Just Intercultural community transferrable into local contexts. The program provides an opportunity not just to learn theories, models, and tools, but also to experience them and to experience “becoming intercultural in that particular moment.”

Provide Training and Pedagogy

FILL will do more to train facilitators of *Engage Difference!* and to train in the local context. The program facilitators model how to do this work, and there is intentional mentoring of new facilitators in every program offering. However, program alumni continue to struggle when they design and facilitate workshops on intercultural ministry in their local contexts. In *Engage Difference!* they gain experience facilitating groups that have chosen to gather to work toward Just Intercultural community. They struggle with how to invite their home communities, who may not be seeking the learning, to the sometimes-difficult work of becoming Just Intercultural communities and becoming the kinds of learning communities experienced in *Engage Difference!*. Further FILL training, workshop design, and description of the vision of Just Intercultural ministry will do more to support people to facilitate this local learning.

Related to this, FILL will provide training in the process and pedagogy it has developed in offering *Engage Difference!* The pedagogy developed through the program and described in this thesis will support what the reference group described as providing “community empowerment” and “building a sense of agency...toward a more Just Intercultural society.”

Invite More People to the Vision of Just Intercultural Community

The FILL reference group named the common definition, understanding and experience of Just Intercultural community shared by participants as an important outcome of the program. They did not develop specific concrete actions but clearly articulated that FILL needs to do more to connect more people. They note that the program “has provided tools and attitudes” but needs to do more toward “transferring those two and inviting local communities.” One member of the reference group described it as drawing people in through feelings of “wow, I want to find out more about this Beloved Community thing and this course.” To generate interest in the program, there needs to be initiatives to document and share their understanding of Just Intercultural community in ways that do not require participation in a full program. They feel that the Canadian churches need this program and common understanding of its value, but there are many “people who don't see the need for the program or don't yet have like a glimpse of what Just Intercultural community looks like.” They felt that FILL needed to move away from seeming to provide “diversity skills or intercultural training.” They sense resistance to an approach that people interpret as saying they are lacking in skills. They encouraged exploration of how to invite people into something in which they want to be part. People need to be motivated to experience the discomfort and vulnerability that is part of Just Intercultural community. There needs to be an offering of the social, societal and spiritual benefits of Shalom in a way that draws people in.

Theology and Language of Just Intercultural community

Finally, the FILL reference group proposed more work toward a well-articulated theology and language of Just Intercultural community. This connects with the theme of inviting more people and communities into the work. They named that different language to connect with the Canadian ecumenical community is required. Different ways of describing Just Intercultural will resonate with the language and theology of different churches. They named potential alternate terms that connect differently with communities, terms like intentionally open, Shalom, peacemaking, hospitality and being a welcoming church. While not identified by the reference group, there also is a need to translate liberation theology terms used to describe the pedagogy

and process of Engage Difference!. Using these terms will create resistance in some communities. Processes such as *conscientization* and the hermeneutic circle can be described in other ways that resonate with the language and theology of different churches.

Destiny, *Celebrar*, or to Celebrate

The Destiny stage of AI is the ongoing collaborative process of the organization and includes continued learning, discovery and innovation as participants work together to create the organization they envision. In *celebrar* of the hermeneutic circle, the community celebrates the change brought about through their participation and recommits to the ongoing process of participation in the world for which God is calling. In this research design, the FILL reference group began the Design stage. The final chapter of this thesis continues this stage and envisions movement into the Destiny stage as it summarizes the learning of this research and proposes possibilities for Just Intercultural community in the context of Canadian churches.

The participants in the focus groups and the FILL reference group continue to be part of this process. As promised in the recruitment process, participants will receive a written report of the research. There also will be a webinar advertised to the wider network of *Engage Difference!* alumni and others with an interest in Intercultural ministry in Canada to report findings and to engage webinar participants in the design and destiny stages of AI, celebrating the impact of *Engage Difference!*, and in the ongoing work of resourcing Intercultural ministry in Canada. Research participants will receive a copy of this Doctor of Ministry thesis.

Engage Difference! is not a single course but a moment in the ongoing work of Just Intercultural community. The work of this thesis is one part of the larger communal project of churches in Canada as they discern their contexts in the emerging ecumenical paradigm and develops local theologies and praxes to be the Church in this change of era.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

As discussed previously, Canadian Christianity is moving into a new era, one that requires new tools for different ways of being Christian. The *Engage Difference!* program provides participants and their communities tools to understand their own cultures and to discern what “Just Intercultural community” looks like within their own contexts. Instead of prescribing those new tools, *Engage Difference!* provides a creative space for imagination that allows local communities to describe their contexts, discern local theologies, and develop and discover tools and ways of being faithful in those contexts.

Appreciative Inquiry, as examined in previous chapters, involves research participants in the analysis and application of study results. In this concluding chapter, I use the same hermeneutic circle of *ver*, *juzgar*, *actuar*, and *celebrar* that shapes the program to expand on the themes identified by participants, to explore further their hopes and recommendations, and to describe significance for theology, the church and society and for others engaged in ministry in Canadian contexts. In the first section, *Ver*, or to see, this chapter describes the context at the time of writing as it shapes the recommendations of the study. In *Juzgar*, or to discern, I expand on the hopes of research participants as recommendations for Canadian churches. In *Actuar*, or to act, the recommendations of the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL) reference group frame concrete actions indicated by the study for FILL and for Canadian churches. Finally, in *Celebrar*, or to celebrate, I describe the change and participation in God’s transforming action brought about through the program.

Ver or to see: The context

The final chapter of this thesis is being written in 2020. In this moment, a change of era is evident. The events of 2020 are also reminders that change can come not as a long slow steady progression of history but rather as lurches and unpredictable shifts. The COVID-19 epidemic has combined with global socio-economic and political forces to bring about rapid, significant change.

There is an altered understanding of the context. In Canada, there is a changed awareness of issues of power and privilege, including racism. After tracking Canadian attitudes for decades, Environics Institute research in 2020 discovered a shift.³⁰⁷ Significantly more Canadians think racism against Black and Chinese Canadians is a problem. Over the past decade, Canadians also have grown more supportive of racial minorities. A growing proportion agree that it is more difficult for non-White people to be successful in Canadian society, while fewer feel that ethnic and racial groups need to take more responsibility for solving their own economic and social problems. While both White and racialized Canadians show these changes in attitudes, differing levels of trust of police by these groups point to a need to interrogate the depth of those attitudes and whether they point to actual change in behaviour.

Old patterns of behaviour and ways of being in relationship have adapted to the physical distancing required to slow the spread of the virus and, indeed, for many, to ensure survival. The pandemic profoundly altered ways of being or doing church, the praxis, as communities are unable to assemble for in-person worship, participate fully in the sacraments, be present in their local community, gather for meetings, engage in service projects or to socialize together, build relationships and support each other. The moment also lifts a veil on previous misunderstandings of the context. The rallying call, “We are all in this together.” quickly rang hollow as the pandemic exposed pre-existing access to power and privilege and experiences of oppression and marginalization named in *Engage Difference!* For example, some remain employed by shifting work to home. For others, the pandemic created unemployment. For others, employment requires dangerous commutes and exposing themselves to the virus. Employment in health care exposes workers to the virus, and other service workers risk infection interacting with the public. Infection rates are higher in racialized, lower income, and new immigrant communities.³⁰⁸ The

³⁰⁷ Andrew Parkin, *Canadian public opinion about racism and discrimination (Executive Summary)*. (Environics Institute, October 24, 2020), accessed October 25, 2020, <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/canadian-public-opinion-about-racism-and-discrimination>

³⁰⁸ City of Toronto, *News Release: Toronto Public Health releases new socio-demographic COVID-19 data*, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.toronto.ca/news/toronto-public-health-releases-new-socio-demographic-covid-19-data>

elderly are much more likely to die when infected with COVID. Failures in systems to care for the elderly, such as in nursing homes, compound this issue.³⁰⁹ Some groups are more vulnerable to the mental health impacts of COVID-19 and those with a pre-existing mental illness are likely to may be at greatest risk of negative mental health impacts.³¹⁰

Also exposed are more global economic and socio-political changes and shifts. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global sense of shared vulnerability.³¹¹ Already in process, the pandemic exacerbates issues of the failing global system of treaties and agreements as the United States and other nations pull out of multi-lateral treaties. There is an intertwined crisis in access to resources, armed conflict, climate change, forced migration and other issues.

Other impacts of COVID-19 are positive. For example, already simmering issues of racial justice have burst into prominence and wider consciousness. In Canada, groups have taken to the street and to social media and have used the heightened interest to call for change. Many of these groups recognize intersecting axes of power, privilege, and oppression. Food security, racism, migration, affordable housing, migration status, policing, and Indigenous land rights are just some of the issues drawing attention. Civil society, through the Just Recovery for All Campaign, is calling for a more just society to emerge after COVID-19.³¹² This includes renewed interest in a just transition to a green, low carbon economy and growing support for Guaranteed Basic Income for all Canadians.³¹³ Long standing movements like Black Lives Matter, No One is Illegal and Idle No More have grown and have joined with other movements. There are strong calls to abolish, defund or reform policing and to end racism in employment, schooling, food

³⁰⁹ Public Health Ontario, *Enhanced Epidemiological Summary: COVID-19 Case Fatality, Case Identification, and Attack Rates in Ontario*, accessed November 8, 2020, <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/epi/2020/06/covid19-epi-case-identification-age-only-template.pdf>

³¹⁰ The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), *Mental Health in Canada: Covid-19 and Beyond: CAMH Policy Advice* (July 2020), accessed November 8, 2020, <http://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/pdfs---public-policy-submissions/covid-and-mh-policy-paper-pdf.pdf>

³¹¹ Project Ploughshares, *The Ploughshares Monitor*, Volume 41, Issue 3 (Autumn 2020): 3, accessed October 13, 2020, <https://ploughshares.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PloughsharesMonitorAutumn2020WEB.pdf>

³¹² *Principles for a Just Recovery from COVID-19*, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://350.org/just-recovery/#letter>

³¹³ *Basic Income Guarantee*, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://www.basicincomecanada.org/>

systems, and housing. The 1492 Land Back movement and other Indigenous movements are pushing Canada forward in reconciliation. Many of these movements recognize intersectionalities of issues and of power, privilege, oppression, and resistance. These voices have long been present. However, in this moment, it is not because those with power and privilege are giving them space, but rather that they confidently and loudly are taking the space.

Similar movements are shaping churches. Where previously churches allowed controlled space, marginalized voices boldly are making and taking the space. Well organized before the pandemic, groups like Black Anglicans of Canada and the Black Clergy Network of the United Church, have gained prominence. In several denominations, Indigenous communities continue to gain autonomy and to come to conversations shaping churches and policy as partners. In the work of the Canadian Council of Churches, this has led to statements on racial justice, engaging the International Decade for People of African Descent, and supporting the federal government's promises to introduce a legal framework for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These developments in churches are local theologies, as groups of people name their experience of the context of their church and call for a praxis and theology shaped by their experiences.

It is important to note that experiences of oppression, power, privilege and movements of resistance and solidarity are not new in the Canadian context and certainly not in the global context. What is changing is a wider range of people who now are either aware of or sharing in the experience in Canada. In the 1990's, I was privy to informal conversations with Latin American economists discussing the global economy's need for only a small number of wealthy elite and relatively small number of consumers and producers while the rest of humanity was disposable. They argued at the time, that most of the consumers were in the North, but that the system was fickle and not loyal to those populations. Though beyond the scope of this paper to investigate, it is of note that part of the current context and disruption is a shift away from the privileged position of those in the North as the consumers needed by the system of global capital. As discussed previously in this thesis, as the context changes, the local theologies and praxes of communities across Canada, and those carried by newer migrants to Canada, some from contexts

where many people are considered “disposable” to the economy, offer a wealth of resources for responding to the new context that perhaps will be necessary for the survival of churches in Canada..

The context also includes changing resources of national Canadian churches including reductions in staff and financial support for ecumenical work like that of The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning and *Engage Difference!*. At the time of the writing of this chapter, two of the FILL member denominations announced cuts to staff and to national budgets. These were not the first reductions I observed in my fifteen years of ecumenical work. In 2017, funding cuts reduced staff support for *Engage Difference!* and the work of FILL from a full-time to a half-time staff position. For decades, FILL and its predecessor organizations have responded creatively to shrinking resources and capacity. It is important to note that the finances of the denominations pre-COVID 19, as they continued a decades long decline, necessitated the cuts. It is not yet known what impact the pandemic will have on charitable giving, budgets and interest and ability to support ecumenical work of the denominations.

Another impact of the pandemic has been the suspension of *Engage Difference!*. The design of the program centers on bringing together people for an in-person, intense, usually residential, experience. Staff travelling across Canada support facilitation of the program. Both air travel and the face-to-face in-person programs are not possible during COVID-19. FILL has offered some on-line learning through participatory webinars, virtual meeting based discussions, reflection papers, and resource lists, but it provides a very different experience, one lacking living in community, the moments of discomfort, and the gathering of people committed to Just Intercultural community – all elements identified as transformative in the focus group conversations. It is uncertain how people will be able to gather after the pandemic. Changes in attitudes to gathering, access to travel, finances of church communities, and the financial failure and shutdown during the pandemic of many of the retreat centres and other spaces used for these gatherings will all be factors.

Juzgar, or to Discern: “What is God Calling for?”

This context is different than during the pre-pandemic gathering of the focus groups. So also, it will be a different context post COVID-19. During the pandemic, it may be tempting for the Church in Canada to look forward to when things will return to normal. However, our Christian hope is not in one who promises that all things will return to normal, but in one who promised, “See, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:5). The new context calls for new tools, theologies, and praxes for different ways of being Christian. A strength of *Engage Difference!* is in that it does not prescribe tools but provides a creative space for local communities to describe their contexts, to discern local theologies, and to develop and discover ways of being faithful in those contexts. In completing this study I am convinced that in this moment of significant change, *Engage Difference!*, the community of program participants, and the program’s ways of creating spaces, are important resources for Canadian churches as they seek to understand and respond to the context.

An Indigenous *Engage Difference!* alumna and cultural mentor shares the story of bringing the learnings of the program into her local church context. A group of program alumni and others formed an intercultural caucus in their region of a denomination. As they worked with the region to apply intercultural practices to its meetings, ways of doing business, and being in relationship, they discovered something. As a group, they had asked their denomination to become intercultural, and the region eagerly committed to respond. However, this group realized, “We asked them to be intercultural, but they didn’t know what we were asking.”

Another alum and a gifted designer and facilitator of the programs describes the difficulty of bringing the learning of the program into her home congregation. They are not interested or motivated to move from multiculturalism to Intercultural community. She advocates for introductory workshops to introduce communities to Just Intercultural community to invite them to learn about and to move toward this vision of community.

Several racialized alumni share experiences of their churches inviting them to positions of leadership only to discover that their church does not value their different ways of thinking and

doing and the unique resources they bring from their experiences as racialized persons or the resources of their ethno-cultural community. One commented, “They want me there for the colour of my skin, not who I am.”

As the language of “intercultural” and “interculturalism” become more common, including across churches, the FILL community identifies a need to define these terms and to articulate the vision of Just Intercultural that emerges from *Engage Difference!* and other work of FILL. For example, The Canadian Council of Churches, in part due to the presence of FILL, has adopted Just Intercultural community as an operating principle for its 2021-2024 triennium.³¹⁴ However, the operating principle also calls on The Council to define what Just Intercultural community could mean and to identify what the organization will do to move toward becoming a Just Intercultural Community.

The research focus group process included discernment or *juzgar* through the question, “What is God calling for?” What emerged is a radically different vision of the Church that builds on glimpses of Just Intercultural community already present. Research participants demonstrate a commitment to the Church and an optimism about its potential. Through their participation in the program, they have a clearer vision of what churches in Canada could be.

Juzgar: A Broader Experience of Just Intercultural Community

This research suggests Canadian churches can do more to be places where more people can experience Just Intercultural community, and they can provide the tools to describe and to facilitate that vision. Research participants hope more people experience the *Engage Difference!* program. They named ways that the program can be more reflective of the Just Intercultural community. They call for an even more diverse group of participants with greater involvement of people at the grassroots level or local communities. This would include having more lay leadership as a locus for change in churches to counter issues of power and privilege of clergy and other church leadership. They also envision engagement beyond churches as the program has

³¹⁴ At the time of writing, adopted by the Governing Board of The Canadian Council of Churches at its May 2020 meeting but not yet published.

something to offer the wider society to, in the words of a program participant, “counter division and fragmentation in the society.” Their optimistic vision for the Church includes it being a place of “hard, spiritual listening to one another.” They offer concrete proposals for doing this through *Engage Difference!* They recommend better funding from denominations to make the program more financially accessible and creativity in designing less expensive ways to offer the program. The research asked participants to identify their hopes for the *Engage Difference!* program. In the *actuar* or action section of this chapter, I invite churches to consider other possibilities for providing the “content” of the program to a wider community. An insight gained from this project is that the content and transformative impact of *Engage Difference!* is rooted in the facilitation of an experience of Just Intercultural community, including a gathering of people negotiating their way of being together to bring about that vision, rather than simply providing tools and techniques.

Juzgar: Radically Transformed Communities

This research suggests if Canadian churches allows it, a vision of Just Intercultural community can transform the churches radically. Program participants hope that the program will permeate throughout churches in Canada. They identified a need for it to shape the leadership of churches more fully through seminary and other clergy and lay leadership training and that churches mandate training in Just Intercultural ministry as many denominations mandate anti-racism and boundaries training for leadership. Instead of seeing intercultural ministry as a single program area, it will shape all areas of the life of the churches. At its core, this is a call for a Just Intercultural vision to shape ministry and all the relationships and structures of churches. At a more specific level, they named the program as a resource for reconciliation with Indigenous communities and a source for practices for identifying White privilege, engaging anti-racism, and recognizing the ways that power and privilege marginalize communities and groups of people in the church. Such actions would contribute to breaking down of patriarchy and structures of racism, heteronormativity, ageism, and other ways churches in Canada marginalize members. It would create a more inclusive church. They also see potential for programs to create “Welcoming Churches,” to help facilitate the merging of congregations, and to equip churches to

engage the local community outside of their church walls. More than the shaping of programs, they hope for adoption of the vision of Just Intercultural community by local communities. They identified the need to work toward a deeper theological understanding of intercultural ministry to bring about this full adoption of a Just Intercultural vision. As with the hope for wider participation in the program, the hope for a wider adoption of Just Intercultural community is more than *Engage Difference!* and the work of FILL. It might also be in identifying and amplifying the many spaces in churches that are already living into visions of Just Intercultural community.

Juzgar: Undoing Barriers to Just Intercultural community

In Canadian churches and wider society, there are barriers to Just Intercultural community. This research supports the potential of *Engage Difference!* to inspire churches and help them find the tools to name and discern remedies to those barriers. Helping participants to identify and counter barriers to Just Intercultural community is an intention of *Engage Difference!* Focus groups used the language of “breaking down resistance.” At one level, a hope is to break down resistance to participation in and wider adoption of *Engage Difference!* This is a hope to find ways to counter what prevents more people from churches across Canada from participating in the program. Participants describe a resistance in churches to becoming intercultural. Participants connect this to a need for continued decolonization and conscientization for becoming Beloved Community. They name a hope to move churches beyond commitments to and valuing of multiculturalism toward a vision of interculturalism.

Participants make a distinction between “head knowledge” and “heart knowledge” or a change of heart and attitudes. While there is conversation within the Canadian churches and wider society around issues such as inequality, systemic and personal racism, multiculturalism, and sometimes even interculturalism, there is a disconnect, or barrier to authentic change. While there is knowledge of concepts, including the academic critical language often used toward Just Intercultural community, there is not transformative change. This occurs at the level of denominations making commitments to becoming intercultural but their members not knowing what these commitments ask of them. It also occurs on the interpersonal level when individuals

want to be in right relationship, but are unaware of how their culture and behaviour undermines relationship. *Engage Difference!* provides definitions of commonly used analytical terms in the work toward Just Intercultural community and ministry to give participants common language. Importantly, the program also provides experiences and a learning community that engages those terms holistically. Participants experience what the terms describe, encounter the experience of others, including the oppressed or marginalized, and see the terms not as concepts but descriptions of real relationships.

As with the other hopes of the participants I propose looking beyond the work of FILL. There is also a need to celebrate and to encourage other ways and places the Canadian churches are moving beyond multiculturalism, including, but not limited to, challenges to churches to become anti-racist and to the journey of reconciliation with Indigenous communities. In this, churches have great potential to be catalysts to move the wider Canadian society beyond multiculturalism.

The focus groups identified program alumni as important resources to churches in countering this resistance. They call for building the community of alumni as both a space to continue experiencing glimpses of Just Intercultural community and as a group of people to work within churches to counter resistance. Toward this, they identify a need to equip alumni and to give them confidence to design, facilitate, and lead programs, workshops, and conversations that invite others into the vision of Just Intercultural community. In their home communities and ministries, they bring the tools and vision to work with others to name local contexts and to discern local theologies and praxes. It is important to bring alumni together to connect them and to build community. The hope is that this community continues to be a space where they support each other, continue the process of being a learning community modeled in *Engage Difference!* and continue developing, naming, and experiencing a vision for Just Intercultural community. It is significant that many alumni responded to the invitation to participate in the research focus groups. This indicates a commitment to building the community motivated by a positive experience of the program and a shared vision to build on this experience. There is a significant community of people committed to the program, and, more importantly, a vision of Canadian churches as Just Intercultural communities. The focus group gatherings were one place where

this project of building the community occurred. Through the focus group conversations, there was a shared ownership of encouraging a vision of Just Intercultural community in Canadian churches. There is an optimism that this community might, in the words of a research participant, “grow the circles of voices and champions, ‘a pantheon of wrestlers’ that can help us slowly push this thing up the hill and actually decolonize the Gospel, the Church, the society.” Beyond the hopes for the alumni identified by the focus groups, I posit that the alumni community needs a wider vision of itself. It needs to be a Just Intercultural community shaped by others. It is not only the alumni of *Engage Difference!* that do this work in Canadian churches. The alumni can seek out, support, and learn from and with others in churches who are doing similar work and who share a similar vision.

Actuar or to Act: Actions Identified by the FILL Reference Group

The FILL reference group is comprised of denominational appointments and members of the alumni network. Its membership has significant knowledge of the *Engage Difference!* program, national and regional denominations, and local ministry contexts across Canada. The reference group used the themes and hopes from the focus groups, in combination with their own understandings of the program and needs of the wider church, to propose action for FILL. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) assumes that participants in the process are the experts in their experience and contexts of the program and of Canadian churches. These experts proposed concrete interventions shaped by the focus groups’ hopes for the program and what they identified as life giving. Rather than only a redesign or ways to improve *Engage Difference!* they envisage more ways in which FILL can shape churches in Canada.

Actuar: FILL Invite Church Communities to a Vision of Just Intercultural Community

A discovery of this research was that the core content of the program was not the tools and skills or head knowledge to facilitate Intercultural community but rather the creation of glimpses and experiences of Just Intercultural community through gathering of people negotiating their way of being together to bring about that vision. The reference group’s recommendations reflect this discovery. They proposed several actions that position FILL as a locus for inviting churches into

a vision of Just Intercultural community and for supporting and resourcing communities to describe their contexts and to discern local theologies and praxes. I propose that if FILL does not provide this locus, the research suggests Canadian churches will need to create spaces for this work and to find and engage other spaces where similar visions are emerging.

The reference group committed to continue offering *Engage Difference!* as a face-to-face, intensive, multi-day program. The program provides an opportunity not only to learn theories, models, and tools, but, more importantly, a chance to have a lived experience of Just Intercultural community. The current pandemic context makes this kind of face-to-face encounter impossible, but COVID-19 provides an opportunity for FILL to explore alternative ways to deliver transformative learning encounters.

The importance of the five-day, face-to-face, intensive experience invites the wider church to discern where church communities are experiencing or creating these kinds of encounters elsewhere. Celebrating and promoting these expressions of community can inspire and support Just Intercultural community in other contexts. Where local expressions of church are not living and experiencing this vision they can be inspired to ask what it is about the theologies and praxes of the local congregation or other expression of church that are barriers to Just Intercultural community.

For the FILL reference group and *Engage Difference!* participants, there is an absence of spaces in Canadian church communities where they experience the vision of Just Intercultural community or where they encounter others committed to the vision of Beloved Community. Their recommendation is to continue to work toward FILL as a Just Intercultural community. While there is need for training for the technical skills for intercultural ministry, they describe an even greater need for “an emotional or personal space,” a place where there are experiences of Just Intercultural community and the experience emboldens, supports, and strengthens participants to take it into their communities. This research project finds that *Engage Difference!* and the alumni community create opportunities for people to experience the Just Intercultural community that is possible for church communities. The strategy flowing from this insight is that until Just Intercultural communities are more common in Canadian contexts, FILL should

provide *Engage Difference!*, strive to be a Just Intercultural community itself, and work more widely to help church communities to move towards more authentic expression of Just Intercultural community.

Actuar: Sharing FILL's Pedagogy

The FILL reference group recognizes that, through the offering of *Engage Difference!*, it has developed a unique process and pedagogy that it can share. The reference group recommended FILL do more to train designers and facilitators of *Engage Difference!*. For Canadian churches, the programs can be a laboratory where a pedagogy has developed. Just as local communities develop local theologies and praxes, the churches might discern how it supports local communities in developing pedagogy that responds to their context and the emerging era. The pedagogy of FILL developed out of its community of program designers, facilitators, and participants from a multitude of cultures. Indigenous ways of knowing and the ways of learning brought to Canada by migrant communities shaped the program and are resources to Canadian churches. Canadian church communities can ask how they can listen to, learn from, and allow these communities to shape experiences of church in Canada.

The reference group recognized that work toward Just Intercultural community is happening in many places across Canada. Since this work often is not in the mainstream of church experiences but manifesting in nascent visions in local communities or in communities that experience marginalization in church contexts, the reference group identified the need for a coordination role for FILL to act as a hub to connect, support, resource, and encourage the many initiatives toward Just Intercultural community across Canada. Related to this, the reference group named a need for more collaboration with institutions of ministry leadership training. It identified training in intercultural ministry as necessary for leadership in the Canadian context. FILL can help encourage and resource this training in Canadian institutions as well as learn from and help disseminate the learning of those institutions as they also respond to the need to resource the church in the emerging era.

Actuar: FILL Defining Just Intercultural Community

Program participants named as important a common language for Intercultural ministry and an ability to discern the difference between it and other visions such as multiculturalism. A FILL member whose denominations was surveying its members for understandings of intercultural ministry reported that a denominational staff observed participants in *Engage Difference!* understood better and were more articulate in describing intercultural ministry. The FILL reference group named a common definition, understanding, and experience of Just Intercultural community shared by participants, as an important outcome of the program. This research invites more work, both at FILL and in the wider church, toward hearing and developing definitions and understandings of “intercultural.” The research findings point to a need for more work toward well-articulated theology(s) and language(s) of Just Intercultural community. The multiplicity of Canadian church communities suggests the development of a single, all-inclusive definition is not helpful. Rather, as this work happens in multiple Canadian contexts, there will be multiple local definitions shaped by those contexts.

Canadian churches also can explore how visions of Just Intercultural ministry shape all aspects of the life of the church. In different parts of the church, there is other language that describes these visions. As the vision of Just Intercultural community develops, it will lead to identifying other related terms and ideas used by churches such as intentionally open, Shalom, peacemaking, hospitality and being a welcoming church.

Actuar: FILL Maintaining the Integrity of the Program in a New Context

A final action recommended by the reference group resists the appeal of solutions or tools that are universal to the wider society and churches. FILL receives regular requests for short workshops or easily packaged and reproducible programs. A significant number of organizations and consultants offer packaged, and often trademarked, programs in intercultural competence and diversity. While these usually offer good and useful content, the FILL reference group recognizes that it is essential to Just Intercultural ministry that communities do the work of describing their local contexts and discerning local theologies and praxes. Instead of the comfort of solutions, the vision of Just Intercultural community will motivate people to do the hard work

needed and to experience the discomfort and vulnerability that is part of Just Intercultural community. The reference group recommended that FILL move away from seeming to provide “diversity skills or intercultural training.” Instead it encouraged exploration of how to invite people into something in which they want to be part. This is also an invitation to other expressions of the church to avoid seeing Intercultural ministry as another program or emphasis, but rather as a way of being church.

The changing Canadian awareness of power, privilege, and oppression, including racism, will shape future programs. The program assumes that some participants from the dominant culture are not aware of their own power and privilege, so there are program activities that allow participants from marginalized communities to share their experiences of marginalization and oppression. Research focus groups identified the naming and awareness of privilege as important, and there was a hope that the program can help groups explore their multiplicities of access to privilege and experiences of oppression. However, one cannot assume that greater awareness leads to change. Instead, it may have the opposite effect, as reflected in Susan Sontag’s observations that awareness through exposure to images made people less moved by the atrocities of war.³¹⁵ This research project and the experiences the participants report of the program indicate that program participants’ encounters with real people and their experiences, and the carefully designed pedagogy that encourages reflection on experience within community, do not evoke the indifference Sontag describes, but rather a deepening of awareness that leads to deeper empathy and changed attitudes and behaviours. In program evaluations, conversations with participants, and the findings of this research there has not been an indication of indifference but instead overwhelmingly the opposite. The program designers and facilitators will look at how to move beyond the awareness in the wider culture of power, privilege, and oppression, and the possibility of it creating indifference, to ensure actual transformation.

³¹⁵ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003).

Actuar or to Act: Invitations to Canadian Church Communities

Building on the focus group participants' and FILL reference group's recommendations for action and the themes explored in this thesis project, there are several implications for Canadian church communities and ministry in Canadian contexts.

Actuar: An Invitation to Recognize and Respond to a New Era

As described in this project, expressions of the church in Canada are living into a new era. The change around and within them can compel church communities to recognize this change of era and its impact on the context in which they find themselves. More than recognize, it requires that churches contemplate how responding to the new era may permeate every aspect of the life of church communities and expressions. The change of context invites naming the context, or rather contexts, in which churches find themselves across Canada. This new context requires new tools for different ways of being Christian and of being church. The new era calls for reflection on the churches' cultures and ways the previous era has shaped the theologies and praxes of churches. This requires a process of discernment. Some of the previous tools, ways of being and doing, and theologies may stand in the way of responding to new contexts. Others may be resources for faithful ministry. Toward this, Canadian expressions of church can help equip communities with the tools to engage this process confidently. In addition to equipping local communities, churches in Canada might seek out, listen to, and learn from communities engaged in this process as examples and sources of the needed tools. As there is no formula for this process, shaped differently by different contexts, it is an ongoing project.

Actuar: An Invitation to Encourage and Identify Local Theologies as Resources

In the emerging era, this research suggests Canadian church communities can see in Canada's Indigenous communities, migrant communities, and communities shaped by ethno-cultural and other diversity as gifts and as sources of theologies and praxes that will help church communities respond to their contexts, survive, and remain faithful. Local theologies and praxes developed by European descent communities are also potential resources, including contexts where conversations with traditionally marginalized communities shape them. The new era invites

Canadian communities of faith to describe their contexts, discern local theologies, and develop and discover the tools and praxes, or ways of being faithful, in those contexts. The context invites churches to do the work of setting aside the theology they have inherited and discerning theologies for Canada's diverse contexts. One of the goals of this work is to equip Canadian Christians to do contextual theology or to discern their local theologies and praxes as they move into the new ecumenical paradigm. Churches do not need to invent these processes. The diversity within church communities, the spiritualities of Canada's Indigenous peoples, and the faith of migrants to Canada are all resources. This research on *Engage Difference!* indicates this requires these communities having the skills and attitudes to listen to and learn from each other, so they may be mutually shaped. *Engage Difference!* offers a template for these kinds of relationships. Expressions of church in Canada can also seek out and find inspiration in other places across the church where such relationships exist.

Actuar: Recognize the Multiplicity of Intersecting Axis of Privilege

The resources for this project lie not only in relationships across cultures. Providing programs for ministry across diversity led to a much broader understanding of diversity that includes the intersectionality of many ways that power, privilege, and marginalization are experienced and shape ministry in Canada. Canadian churches are in a society that is both becoming more diverse and recognizing the diversity that had long been present. The process of reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples challenges assumptions about the nature of the Canadian society. Voices from migrant and racialized populations and from diverse gender, sexual orientation and identity, class, ableness, citizenship, education, urban-rural location, and other diversities challenge assumptions about Canada's culture. In a culture shaped by and aware of this diversity, there is a call to Canadian church communities to examine whether they will be, in their national and local expressions, a homogenous church, a diverse church, an inclusive church, or a community where all present experience belonging. This research suggests churches in Canada need to examine how members experience relationships and issues of power within their expressions of church. This thesis and research urge church communities to ask, "what is God's vision of community and relationship?"

Canadian churches can provide examples of relationship and just community and speak to the wider society as it negotiates diversity. Churches often try to be moral, ethical voices as they speak out on issues of government domestic and foreign policy, politics, and laws. Perhaps instead, churches might embrace a role as examples of right relationship and as models of Just community. The vision of Just Intercultural community emerging from the *Engage Difference!* program can inspire the development of visions of interculturality that will shape these models.

The current pandemic revealed inequities and raised awareness about marginalization in Canadian society caused by issues such as racism and poverty. There is a growing awareness of Canada's ongoing failures at reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. As COVID-19 impacts communities differently, awareness of the disparity in access to power and privilege in Canada increases. Climate change remains an ever present and increasingly pressing issue that exposes a broken relationship with all of creation. This context is a call to examine how inequality and broken relationship shape church communities, how they can respond, and how they might speak to the wider society both during and in the transitions out of the pandemic. Power and privilege shape both the formal and informal structures of Canadian churches and the wider community. The *Engage Difference!* program provides an invitation to expressions of church in Canada to the self-reflection and humility required to change the attitudes and behaviours of those with power so that they can name these broken relationships and allow the competencies already present among the marginalized to flourish as gifts that shape the community.

Actuar: Exploring Understandings, Definitions, and Experiences of Interculturality

Recognizing the multiplicity of axes of privilege, the diversity within and outside church communities, and the plurality of cultures, theologies, and praxes found in the churches draws the Canadian churches to understand the nature of these relationships and to discern God's visions for right relationship with each other and with all of creation. As churches move beyond a framework of contextual theologies defined in relationship to a dominant Western, European

theology, they can understand Christianity in Canada as a collection of local theologies.³¹⁶ This requires a new question for the churches to ask of themselves: What is interculturality and how does it shape theology? FILL and *Engage Difference!* represent some of the ways Canadian church communities are wrestling with this question. Evolving understanding and definitions of Just Intercultural community are an important part of this project. The diversity within and across churches means many of their members have lived experience of relating across difference and have understandings of interculturality. This research suggests churches need to hear those experiences, stories, and understandings as they are in dialogue toward definitions of interculturality. To do this, churches are invited to deconstruct the ways they value multiculturalism and move toward interculturalism.

Actuar: An Invitation to Discover and Develop Pedagogies for the New Era

The pedagogy of FILL evolved and developed as it responded to the diversity of the *Engage Difference!* participants, designers, facilitators, and resource people. The experiences of migrant, Indigenous, and a variety of ethno-racial participants shaped the pedagogy. The lived experiences of power, privilege, marginalization, and resistance brought together by the program necessitated new ways of learning in community. The program design evolved to create methods and ways of being that created a pedagogy for Just Intercultural community.

The participants were the primary shapers of this evolution. The design of the program allowed them to identify when they and others in the learning community were not able to be fully themselves. It allowed them to resist program design and activities that worked against Just Intercultural community and to reshape the program as they participated. The intentional ways facilitators and designers of the program reflected on and responded to the program experience during and after programs allowed each program to shape the next program offering and the overall pedagogy. The program required ways to develop safe spaces to not just listen but to hear each other, to learn, and to collaborate in pursuit of Just Intercultural community. What

³¹⁶ Kondothra M. George, "Cross-Cultural Interpretation: Some Paradigms from the Early Church," *International Review of Mission* 85 (1996): 220.

developed moved even further from a prescriptive pedagogy to ways of being for facilitators and ways of being community that allowed and encouraged a very different approach to learning and to collaborating for the program designers, facilitators, and participants shaping the program. The vision of Just Intercultural community demands such shifts in pedagogies.

Just as the emerging era requires local theologies and praxes, it requires local pedagogies.

Engage Difference! provides a pedagogy that is useful to church communities in Canada toward developing relevant praxes for learning and for being in relationship. The specific activities of the program may be useful, but the underlying approaches or overall local pedagogy that led to the creation of those activities provides a way to develop other local pedagogies. It invites expressions of church in Canada to create and support spaces where church communities can develop pedagogy shaped by faith, specifically the faith vision of Just Intercultural community. It invites churches to recognize that they have resources outside of Western pedagogies.

Indigenous ways of knowing and approaches to learning that emerge from migrant communities and other cultures are helpful in developing Just Intercultural pedagogies. It will be helpful to church communities to recognize these other places where local pedagogies are emerging and developing.

This is an invitation to church communities to value the facilitation of learning as an art and the need to support the creation of Intercultural ministry pedagogy design and facilitation artists as an alternative to the strategies, workshops, and formulas often used in current Christian education. The goal of Just Intercultural pedagogies and practitioners is not the transfer of information and specific skills but transformation and supporting the development of local theologies and praxes that allow glimpses of Beloved or Just Intercultural community.

Churches might see pedagogy not as a set of tools, but as *poiesis*, unleashing the full potential and gifts of people able to live fully themselves as created by God. As with *Engage Difference!*, church communities might provide creative spaces for imagination or “the art of creating what does not exist.”³¹⁷ In creating pedagogies that value “being” over “doing” and the process of

³¹⁷ Legge, “In the Company of God and One Another”, 46-62.

learning over the content of learning, church communities can move toward change of heart, right relationship, and sustainable community in which all can participate fully. This is an invitation to Canadian churches to create and discover pedagogies that allow the hearing of other voices and receiving of their gifts to shape the community. It calls churches to embrace pedagogies that provide spaces where the community can create the tools and ways of being that serve Just Intercultural community and that respond to the new era and contexts. Perhaps this can include rediscovering or lifting up traditional spaces of *poiesis* including liturgy's engaging of all the senses, music, art, and story-telling.

Actuar: An Invitation to Become Just Intercultural Communities

This research asks a question of Canadian churches: Why are they not already Just Intercultural communities? Participants experience a glimpse of the way church communities could be in *Engage Difference!*, In the program they experience glimpses of Shalom, Beloved Community, or Just Intercultural community. In the program participants can be more fully themselves as created by God. The community honours the voices, experiences, stories, and wisdom of all and those voices shape the community. Why do participants seek Just Intercultural community in a program like *Engage Difference!* instead of in their local congregation? They struggle with how to bring this vision back to or encourage it in their local contexts. In this question is a challenge to Canadian churches to identify barriers to Just Intercultural community and to discern local theologies and praxes, including pedagogies, that move the Canadian churches, in their local, regional, and national expressions, to Beloved Community. Church communities in Canada can be places of right relationship with each other, with God, and with all of creation. This is a challenge to Canadian churches to be places of Shalom or Just Intercultural community. This question reveals optimism and a glimpse of possibility for the churches. In this question there is a real hope that churches might be Just Intercultural community, hope that moves us to *celebrar* in the hermeneutic circle.

Celebrar or to Celebrate: Participation in God's Transforming Action

The next moment in the hermeneutic circle is *celebrar*, or celebrating participation in God's transforming action. This begins the naming of a changed context, leading again to *actuar*. The final action in the Eucharist is the sending out as a changed people to "go in peace, serve the lord." The closing action of the five-day *Engage Difference!* program is a worship that sends the participants into their home contexts as changed people where the work of the program continues. *Engage Difference!* has brought about change in participants, their communities, and their churches. The program has changed the world, and there have been experiences of a more just world. Through the program and the community gathered, there are glimpses of God's vision for the world and movement toward Just Intercultural community. Program participants report change in attitudes including how they can listen to and be with others in community. Stakeholders observed change in their organizations or institutions through those who participated. A growing group of people have grown in their skills to design and to facilitate, and to resource communities in discerning local theologies and praxes. They experienced, developed, and practiced new tools, language, learnings, and understandings. There was movement toward common understandings of intercultural. The communities that gathered and common projects to make it possible for all to be fully present were works of creativity. Participants engaged in the "art of intercultural ministry."

Engage Difference! is a source of hope and encouragement as communities struggle for a more just world. Those who experience marginalization in the wider society or in churches in Canada describe the program and its participants as providing hope and courage in their communities' struggles toward a more just world.

Beyond what has happened through the program, there is an anticipation of more to come. Participants named "possibility" as an important theme in their experience of the program. Their glimpses of Just Intercultural community provided a clearer vision of what could be and how they are part of its manifestation. Just Intercultural Canadian churches are possible. Participants in this project have a clearer sense of God's vision of a more just world and how they have been and will be active agents in living into this vision.

Perhaps the greatest impact of *Engage Difference!* is the profound experiences of community. There is a valuing of all members of the community, an honouring of their experience, an intentionality of creating a space for all in a community where there is trust, vulnerability, and safety. Participants experienced joy as they engaged in a collective experience that resulted in glimpses of Just Intercultural community and the possibility of Canadian churches as Just Intercultural communities. Just as all the hermeneutic circle is rooted in experience and community, *celebrar* is an act of community. Participants experienced joy because they were in community. When naming this joy, participants described it as evoked by smiles on the faces and in the disposition of their companions. It was joy, moments of *celebrar*, at new ways of being in relationship in community.

Originally envisioned as a process of conscientization of Canada's dominant culture and its impact on relationship, The *Engage Difference!* Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program has brought together a more diverse community in a common project. This process is helping Canadian Christian communities discern God's vision for living into a new era and the changing context of Canadian churches. Central to this work is the desire to create inspired spaces as a vision of Just Intercultural community.

Engage Difference! challenges expressions of church in Canada to live Jesus' promise of Shalom, "Peace be with you." In the words of Archbishop Mark MacDonald, "In seeing the reflection of Glory, we see ourselves and our neighbours as we were meant to be, no longer veiled by death...It is our life and our joy to be sinners who are being transformed by grace; it is our vocation...to be restored to wholeness of human community, with each other and with God."³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Archbishop Mark MacDonald, "What's at Stake for Truth and Reconciliation?" in *Cracking open White identity towards transformation: Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network Examines White Identity, Power and Privilege* (Toronto: The Canadian Council of Churches, 2012), 12.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Approved Thesis Proposal

Living into the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm:
A Process of *Conscientization* and discernment toward
Just Intercultural Community for Christianity in the Canadian Context

By

Jonathan Schmidt

A DMin Thesis Proposal
Submitted to the DMin Thesis Proposal Committee
Toronto School of Theology
In partial fulfillment of the
DMin Thesis Proposal Evaluation and Defence

September 11, 2018

Background and Context of the Applied Research Thesis

In 2012 the Canadian ecumenical agency, The Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries (CCFGM), engaged a process of consultation and discernment with stakeholders to shift its mandate as a response to the current Canadian context. Begun in 1921, as the Canadian School of Missions, for most of its history the agency's activities were related to Canadian global missions and resourcing its member denominations including programs of training of Canadian overseas mission personnel. The first decade of the twenty-first century saw a significant decrease in the number of overseas personnel so the agency was forced to question its purpose and viability. This process led to identifying need for resourcing Canadian denominations as they respond to the actual increasing diversity within Canada and a growing awareness of diversity already present within the culture.

The process of consultation and discernment also led to the agency becoming part of The Canadian Council of Churches where it could engage the Council's 26 member denominations. In 2017 CCFGM became The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL), a reference group of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Core to the new mandate was the development of the 5 day intensive, "Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry" (DUIM) program. A group of facilitators and designers gathered in 2012 to design the pilot version of the DUIM program. DUIM has since been offered in and shaped by contexts across Canada; including Vancouver, Saskatoon, Manitoba (with the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre), Winnipeg, Toronto, Barrie Ontario, and Montreal (as a bilingual program) with almost 200 participants in the program to date. The program was designed with the assumption that understanding one's own culture is

necessary to be in relationship across difference and toward creating a just intercultural community and church.

During this process I was the director of the CCFGM and am now The Canadian Council of Churches Associate Secretary: Intercultural Leadership; Justice and Peace. I had primary responsibility for the transition into the new mandate, structure of the agency, and development of program. The process of discernment and program development resonated with my own career and faith journey of justice seeking. In particular, I am interested in finding approaches to and systems of faith based justice that go beyond responding to individual injustices or issues of justice. The vision of just intercultural community as defined by right relationships between people, with all of creation, and with God provides for me a broad overarching understanding, theology, and praxis of justice.

The pedagogy of FILL program resonates with and is shaped by my own pedagogy, including Liberation Theology's Hermeneutic Circle of *ver* (to see), *juzgar* (to discern) *actuar* (to act) and *celebrar* (to celebrate). The program's emphasis on process and engaging participant's holistically resonates with my Lutheran liturgical faith tradition. Its reliance on the experience and wisdom of participants is resonant with the Lutheran notion of the Priesthood of all believers.

Thesis Statement

A process of *concientization* of Canada's dominant culture and its impact on relationship, as experienced through the "Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry" program, is helping Canadian Christian communities discern God's vision of just intercultural communities. Just intercultural community is necessary for the Canadian Church to

live into the emerging ecumenical paradigm within its contexts. This study will record the development and learnings of the program, tell the story of its impact, evaluate the program, and envision next steps for the program and the work of FILL.

Theoretical Framework and Assumptions Involved in the Study

Canadian Christianity is moving into a new era that requires new tools for different ways of being Christian in the context. The “Engage Difference!” program was designed to provide participants and their communities tools to understand their own culture and to discern what just intercultural community looks like within their own contexts.

David J. Bosch argued Christianity is in a paradigm shift away from the “enlightenment” or “modern” paradigm¹ to the emerging ecumenical age or the emergence of a postmodern paradigm. Instead of Western European Christianity and culture being the norm, full ecumenism recognizes the validity of the full breadth of human experience, context, and culture. Bernard Lonergan would describe this paradigm shift as a movement from a “classicist notion of culture” to an “empirical notion of culture.”² Karl Rahner spoke of the current era, only just begun and observable officially at Vatican II, as the beginning of the third great epoch in Christian history³

¹ Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books. 1991. 249, 368-510

² Dadosky, John D. “Methodological Presuppositions for Engaging the Other in the Post-Vatican II Context: Insights from Ignatius and Lonergan.” *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue* (March, 2010). 11.

³ Rahner, Karl, SJ, “Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II.” *Theological Studies*, 40:4 (1979: Dec.). 721.

in which Christianity sees the possibility of being shaped by the contexts and cultures it encounters.

For Canadian Christianity, a formative “event” that calls it to be aware of this emerging era has been the recognition of Canadian social and religious attitudes toward and treatment of Indigenous cultures and Aboriginal spiritualities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada⁴, the naming of what was done through the Indian Residential Schools, and the apologies of a number of Canadian denominations⁵ for their roles in the Indian Residential School have forged this recognition. Voices out of this process, such as those of the Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools, name the complicity of Canadian Christianity and theology in historical violence and injustice against Indigenous peoples and call for critical reflection and rethinking of western Christianity.⁶

Indigenous spirituality and theology provide examples within the Canadian context of the possibility of theologies different than those of the historic western European and Canadian theologies. From the North American, or Turtle Island, Indigenous context Vine Deloria Jr⁷ provided a framework and authors such as Jacobs, Kidwell, Tinker, Treat, Twist, Warrior, and

⁴ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada <http://www.trc.ca> (accessed December 18, 2017)

⁵ Anglican Church of Canada (1993), The Presbyterian Church in Canada (1994), The United Church of Canada (1986), The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (2001)

⁶ The Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools. *Reflections to Spark Conversation on Christian Theology*. April 2015.

⁷ Deloria Jr., Vine. *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing. 1973, 1992, 2003.

others have continued exploring, explaining and refining its themes offering a critical reflection on Western thought and culture.

At the core of the “Engage Difference!” program is the seeking of just intercultural communities. Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda argues that the notion of justice grounded in Hebrew scripture is right relationship with God, self, others, and the earth.⁸ Essential to this is countering a “systemic exploitation of others and of the earth that are intricate *and cleverly hidden*”⁹

The understanding of culture of the DUIM programs acknowledges culture can be carriers of systemic and often unconscious, or *cleverly hidden* injustice. The program’s understanding of culture is shaped by a school of definitions of culture described by Michael Paul Gallagher as a *political and moral* sense of culture as conditioning human choices and actions therefore as having unconscious power over human behavior.”¹⁰

The program identifies and reflects on the *dominant culture* which determines the norm or the centre.¹¹ It has the power to define the “other”¹² and it is the privileged culture capable of

⁸ Moe-Lobeda, Cynthia D. *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*. Fortress Press. Minneapolis. 2013. 176.

⁹ Ibid. 2.

¹⁰ Gallagher, Michael Paul SJ. *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture*. New York: Paulist Press. 1997.24.

¹¹ Coleman, Daniel. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*. University of Toronto Press. Toronto. 2006.5.

¹²Mukasa, Kawuki. *Belonging: Constructing a Canadian Theology of Inclusion* .Kamu Kamu Publishing. Toronto. 2005. 53.

carrying forward its vision to the present generation and determining appropriate responses to the current context. The dominant Canadian culture shapes Canadian institutions, including the churches.

While US writers such as Stephanie Spellers¹³, Letty Russell¹⁴, and Eric Law¹⁵ suggest fear as the primary barrier to Just Intercultural community I argue that in the Canadian context the primary barriers are the myths the culture holds of itself. I use myth to mean the shared beliefs and stories around which a culture understands itself. Daniel Coleman named the myth of White civility as the Canadian myth of itself as the ideal civilized British Colony.¹⁶ In *Unsettling the Settler Within*¹⁷ Paulette Regan argues the Canadian myth of the peacemaker is a barrier to reconciliation. In *Rethinking the Great White North Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*,¹⁸ Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi connect Canadian racism and notions of Whiteness to Canadian myths about our relationship to the land as central

¹³ Spellers, Stephanie. *Radical Welcoming: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation*. New York: Church Publishing, 2006.

¹⁴ Russell, Letty M. *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

¹⁵ Law, Eric. *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000

¹⁶ Coleman, Daniel. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

¹⁷ Regan, Paulette. *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press, 2010

¹⁸ Baldwin, Andrew, Laura Cameron, & Audrey Kobayashi. *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*. University of British Columbia Press, 2011.

themes in our identity that stand in the way of reconciliation and shape our relationship with others.

Within the programs of FILL it is recognized that the differences being negotiated are more than ethno-cultural. Drawing on feminist thought, naming intercultural means naming how power and privilege work as well as naming one's own social location.¹⁹ Just Intercultural community is in contrast to Canada's official policy of multiculturalism that increasingly has been critiqued by those outside the dominant culture as being part of the maintaining of that dominant culture.²⁰

Beyond deconstructing of the dominant culture, the church requires a process through which communities can discover and co-create God's alternative vision. In the liberation theology hermeneutic circle the "juzgar" or "discern" phase asks to what is God calling us? Canadian faith communities are called to imagine transformative possibilities. This requires *creative imagination*.²¹ Charles Fensham describes *poiesis*, or the "role and place of a poetic dimension as the church contributes to social transformation."²² This is "the poetry-the song that

¹⁹ Morgan, Kathy Pauly, "Describing the Emperor's New Clothes: Three Myths of Educational (In)Equality" *The Gender Question in Education: Theory, Pedagogy & Politics*. Ann Diller et al. Boulder CO. Westview. 1996.

²⁰ Coleman. 7.

²¹ Legge, Marilyn J. In the Company of God and One Another: Feminist theo-ethics, heterogeneous publics and intercultural churches. in Monro, Anita and Stephen Burns (eds). *Public Theology and the Challenge of Feminism*. 2015, Routledge.

²² Fensham, Charles J. "The transformative vision: Public witness and the poiesis of Christian social transformation." *Missiology: An International Review*. Vol. 44(2) 155 –166..

is contained in the biblical text and that breaks from our lips or flows from our paint brushes into community”²³. There is not a set formula or solitary theology across contexts but rather the need for creative energy in each community to discern intercultural ministry. The DUIM program invites participants into “the art of intercultural ministry”²⁴ as a process of discovering the tools for ministry in the emerging ecumenical paradigm in their contexts. Important to this study will be an exploration of the role of *poiesis*. While theology and praxis are important for Intercultural ministry the transformative moments of the program are produced through creative processes of the community and activities that engage participants holistically.

Theological reflections in the DUIM program draw on the Road to Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-36) where God is revealed through a stranger, a companion on the journey who at first is not recognized. Just intercultural community requires being able to be open to God being revealed through the stranger. An important moment in the Road to Emmaus narrative, and a vision of just intercultural ministry, are the words of Jesus that follow; “Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’” The word Jesus uses is Shalom, or right relationship with each other, with all of creation, and with God. This is the biblical notion of peace Martin Luther King Jr. described as *Beloved Community*²⁵. It is a global vision in which all

²³ Fensham, Charles J. *Emerging from the Dark Age Ahead: The Future of the North American Church*. Ottawa: Novavlis. 2008.

²⁴ “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program brochure. <http://www.ccforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/DUIM-Brochure.pdf> Accessed July 30, 2018.

²⁵ King, Martin Luther Jr. “Facing the Challenge of a New Age” (1957) *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (edited by James M Washington). Harper Collins. New York. 1986.

people share in the wealth of the earth. Theologically, *Beloved Community* is community where each member is able to be fully themselves as created as a Child of God. Likewise each culture is able to fully express itself as a creation of God.

Letty M. Russell describes a vision of “Just Hospitality”²⁶ that resonates with the emerging Canadian notions of intercultural ministry. In her vision Russell insists on “giving priority to the perspective of the outsider”²⁷ and the church is “a community of Christ where everyone is welcome and Christ’s presence among us calls us to be open to each other.”²⁸

While Russell’s work offer theoretical and theological understanding, Stephanie Spellers²⁹ also offers a praxis of just intercultural community. Drawing on her own experience as someone outside the dominant culture, she uses the term *radical welcome*; “the spiritual practice of embracing and being changed by the gifts, presence, voices, and power of The Other: the people we systemically cast out of and are or marginalized within a church, a denomination, and or society.”³⁰ Spellers draws on Miroslav Volf’s images of opening arms to telegraph the desire to reach beyond yourself in order to connect with the other.³¹

²⁶ Russell, Letty M. *Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

²⁷ Ibid. 45.

²⁸ Ibid. 69.

²⁹ Spellers, Stephanie. *Radical Welcoming: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation*. New York: Church Publishing. 2006.

³⁰ Ibid.6.

³¹ Miroslav Volf. *Exclusion and Embrace: A theological exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon. 1996 (p140-45) as described by Spellers,.12 ff

While David Augsburger argues that it requires coming to know other cultures to know one's own culture³² I argue that there are barriers to the Canadian dominant culture knowing other cultures. Kurt Ver Beek³³ and Karla Ann Koll³⁴ in researching global short term cross-cultural encounters give evidence of barriers for dominant cultures to know other cultures.

For the dominant Canadian culture to be in a just relationship with those who are different requires a process of becoming aware or conscious of one's own culture and how it shapes relationship across cultures. In this study, and in the DUIM program, this includes the barriers to knowing other cultures such as the myths the Canadian culture holds of itself. This process is what Freire would describe as a process of *conscientization*.³⁵ Ivan Illich described "educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his [or her] living into one of learning, sharing, and caring."³⁶ These pedagogies recognize learning is transformative when all voices are heard, each person is recognized as a child of God and that each community is seen as created by God and given the ability to know God.

³² Augsburger, David W. *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*. Westminster Press. Philadelphia. 1986. 18.

³³ Ver Beek, Kurt. "Lessons from the sapling: Review of quantitative research on short-term missions." In *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing it Right!* (edited by Robert Priest). William Carey Library. 2008. pp. 469-496.

³⁴ Koll, Karla Ann. "Taking Wolves Among Lambs: Some Thoughts on Training for Short Term Mission Facilitation." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Vol. 34. No. 2. April 2010.

³⁵ Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic. 1968.

³⁶ Illich, Ivan. *Deschooling Society*. Harper Row. New York. 1971. 2.

The DUIM program draws on anthropology, ritual studies, and theories of change such as the work of anthropologist Victor Turner naming stages of transition as helpful in understanding the process of *conscientization* required to overcome the barriers to just intercultural community.

The DUIM program draws on pedagogies outside traditional Western models such as those described by Fyre Jean Graveline in order to “understand and bring to consciousness, a mind-set, a worldview that is a product of the development of European culture.”³⁷ Graveline argues that the hegemony of the White worldview, and the pedagogies that support it, are barriers to relationship. Singleton and Linton³⁸ describe intentional process and pedagogy that is required to engage these kinds of difficult transformative conversations.

Assumptions Operative in the Study

A process of *concientization* is required to counter the myths about itself held by the Canadian dominant culture that are barriers to just intercultural community. The emerging era requires Canadian Christianity to be open to other theologies and learning from other cultures in order to respond to Canadian contexts. In order to respond creatively to the emerging ecumenical paradigm the Canadian church needs new tools to enable local contexts to envision, discover, and construct intercultural ministry and theologies that respond to their local contexts. The DUIM program was designed to help participants understand their own culture, to recognize and

³⁷ Graveline, Fyre Jean. *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness*. Halifax: Fernwood. 1998. 23.

³⁸ Singleton, Glenn & Curtis Linton. *Courageous Conversation About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools California*. Corwin Press. 2006.

name theologies that emerge out of their contexts and to provide tools to engage similar processes with their communities.

Action-in-Ministry Component

*Appreciative Inquiry*³⁹ will be used as a methodology. Appreciative Inquiry is rooted in social constructionism, a theory of the process by which humans generate meaning⁴⁰. Social constructionism resonates with the understandings of culture used in the DUIM program. This methodology was chosen as this study has at its core the understanding of culture and the process of discerning and constructing new ways of relationship. Appreciative Inquiry is described as a collaborative system wide approach to enhancing the “life giving forces” in a system.⁴¹ This resonates with the objectives of the DUIM program to help the Church discern God’s vision for ways of being in relationship that allow all to be fully as God created them..

Other methodologies based on modernist ways of understanding break down, or deconstruct, organizations into pieces of interaction to find a problem that can be solved. In contrast, Appreciative Inquiry see organizations as greater than the sum of the parts and already being “a solution to be embraced.” As a post-modern approach to organizations Appreciative Inquiry resonates with the DUIM program as helping the church discern ways of being in a post-modern context. Appreciative Inquiry also emphasises collaborative ownership in which the

³⁹ As described by Cooperrider, Whitney, Reed, Stavros, Watkins, Mohr, Kelly and others.

⁴⁰ Watkins, Jane Magruder, Bernard Mohr. Ralph Kelly. *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* (2nd Edition). San Francisco, CA. Pfeiffer. 2011. 38.

⁴¹ Ibid. 22.

participants are experts in the reality of an organization.⁴² This resonates with the DUIM assumptions that program participants are the experts on their contexts and that ways of being church and community in the context will be generated collectively and not imposed from experts outside the community.

The application of Appreciative Inquiry will not be limited to a strategy for conducting interviews but will be applied to the full project. According to Tim Sensing, “Since Appreciative Inquiry is fundamentally not a problem solving form of inquiry, it requires re-conceptualizing the purpose of the DMin project thesis.”⁴³

The project will be the application of Appreciative Inquiry to the existing DUIM program. This will be a way to test the assumptions behind the design of the program, shape future program offerings, and give wider ownership of the program within the Canadian context. This study comes at a transitional time in the life of the agency and will allow new partners to understand the existing theology and pedagogy and feel ownership in shaping the agency and program moving forward.

DUIM is a 5 day residential program that draws on the experience of the participants and is shaped by the context through a host committee that helps design the offering of the program and through the knowledge of the context of the participants. The program draws heavily on the

⁴² Cooperrider, David, Diana Whitney, Jacqueline Stavros. *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: For Leaders of Change* (second edition). Brunswick OH. Crown Publishing. 2008. 4.

⁴³ Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, Oregon. Wipf & Stock. 2011. 175

stories, experiences, and wisdom of the participants. Content of the program includes building a learning community, understanding how culture works, and exploring God’s vision for relationship across difference. Issues of power and privilege are explored. The program explores how culture shapes theology. Models and learnings are applied to local contexts and participants design and practice practical applications to their contexts. Conversation includes identifying ways to make the work sustainable and the creation of a supportive network of program alumni.

Research design.

The Appreciate Inquiry will engage three groups; past participants of the DUIM program, facilitators and resource people of the programs, and staff of denominations and other stakeholders. Engaging all three groups will be important for a broad ownership of the visions that emerge and will provide triangulation of the results as each of the groups brings a different perspectives from their location to the inquiry. The biases of the primary researcher is mitigated and triangulation is also built into Appreciative Inquiry in that participants, and not the researcher, discern themes in the data.

Appreciative Inquiry provides a four step, or “4-D” cycle labelled *Discovery*, *Dream*, *Design*, and *Destiny*.⁴⁴ Core to Appreciative Inquiry are the first two stages. The *Discovery* stage asks when, in the particular context, is a system or organization most “alive, healthy, and symbiotically related” to its context. The task of participants is naming what they appreciate of the organization. ‘What gives life?’ is a key question. The *Dream* or envisioning stage asks about

⁴⁴ Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros. 5.

possibilities. A key question is ‘What might be?’ In Appreciative Inquiry in for-profit organizations participants are asked what the world is calling for. In faith settings a better question would be ‘what is God calling for?’ In the *Design* stage participants construct a future based on the discoveries of the first two stages. In this stage concrete proposals are developed. The *Destiny* stage is the ongoing enactment, shaped by the first stages, of proposals.

The faith setting of this study means motives need to be consciously different than the motives for this methodology in a for-profit organization. Liberation theology’s hermeneutic circle, which shapes the pedagogy of the DUIM program, will be important in shaping the methodology. The *Discovery* stage has parallels to the *ver* of the hermeneutic circle. The main task of *ver* (to see) is to describe the context, including, as in *Discovery*, what is life giving. The question ‘what is God calling for’ is an important question of *juzgar* (to discern) and makes the questions of the *Dream* phase theological. *Actuar* (to act) is a reminder that this study’s purpose is not simply a more effective program (as shaped by the *Design* phase), but action as a community of faith. *Celebrar* (to Celebrate) is a reminder that *Destiny* is more than implementation and profitability of a program but rather transformed communities that are able to become more sustainable just intercultural communities and better able to live into an ongoing process that again leads into *ver* and *Discovery*.

Each of the three groups will be invited into the *Discovery* (“what gives life?” or appreciating) and the *Dream* (“what might be?” or envisioning) stages. The collective of those groups represented by the FILL reference group will engage the *Design* (“How can it be?” or constructing) and the *Destiny* (“What will be?” or sustaining) stages.

Program alumni will be invited to participate in the research and small groups will be formed that will meet in person or virtually. They will be asked to tell stories of life-giving personal experiences during the program and of relationship across cultures from after their participation in the program (the *Discovery* stage of Appreciative Inquiry). Questions will focus on how God's vision of Shalom or Beloved Community has been revealed. Each group will then be tasked with identifying common themes they heard in the stories. Finally the group will be asked to vision, to name what they would hope for in future program (the *Dream* stage). Each group will be tasked with distilling these hopes to a set of 5 statements to be shared.

Staff of denominations and other stakeholder organizations will also form a group. They and will be asked to tell stories of live giving impacts and visions of shalom of the program they have observed in their denomination (*Discovery*). They then will be tasked with discerning themes from the stories, sharing visions for the program (*Dream*), and distilling those hopes into a set of 5 statements to be shared.

Program facilitators and resource people will form a third set of groups who will be asked to share stories of what they observed during the program that was life giving and revealed Shalom. They will also be asked to tell stories of intercultural relationship in their home contexts that were shaped by their roles in the program (*Discovery*). They will discern themes from these stories. They will then be asked to share their visions for the program (*Dream*) and distill those hopes into a set of 5 statements.

Data from these interviews: stories that were told, themes identified by the groups, and hopes statements will be shared with the FILL reference group. The reference group (which includes some of the members of the above groups and others) will be presented with the themes

and hopes statements and will be given an opportunity to read a cross section of the stories from which these themes emerged. The researcher will select stories based on their illustrating these themes.

The reference group will go through a process of identifying key themes from this data. Unlike traditional research methodologies it is not necessarily the statistically significant (most often spoken) themes that will be identified, but those that most resonate, are life giving, or articulate a vision of the future for the program.⁴⁵ The reference group will write a description of themes and visions for the program toward designing (*Design* phase) and evaluating and sustaining future program offerings and other activities of FILL (the *Destiny* phase). While this study will focus on the *Discovery* and *Dream* stages of Appreciative Inquiry it will be part of a longer ongoing process of the reference group engaging the *Design* and *Destiny* stages of Appreciative Inquiry.

Qualitative Research Methodology Operative in the Action-in-Ministry

Appreciative Inquiry was chosen as a research methodology as helpful in amplifying the transformative and life-giving experiences of the DUIM program. The program, through its emphasis on *conscientization*, is well rooted in deconstructing of culture. However that is not an end in itself. The program exists out of a perceived need for the Canadian Church to discover new theologies and ways of being. Appreciative Inquiry, as rooted in social constructionism, offers a way to name the new ways of being that are being discerned.

⁴⁵ Watkins, Magruder, Mohr and Kelly. 201.

Appreciative Inquiry is a research methodology that resonates with the theology and pedagogy of the DUIM program. Appreciative Inquiry is “based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well. And those strengths can be a starting point for creating positive change.”⁴⁶ As with the DUIM program and its learner centred and popular education approach, it assumes that participants are the experts in their experience and contexts. The DUIM program is not solution based or prescriptive but rather assumes that the emerging ecumenical paradigm requires Canadian Christians to discover and name theologies and praxis of just intercultural ministry shaped by their contexts. The DUIM program encourages participants to engage in a process of creative imagination similar to what Appreciative Inquiry describes as “the art of the possible.”⁴⁷ The “4-D Cycle” of Appreciative Inquiry⁴⁸ parallels Liberation Theology’s hermeneutic circle.

Appreciative Inquiry is a response to what in this study is described as the emerging ecumenical paradigm. The designers of Appreciative Inquiry describe this shift as moving “from Newtonian linearity to quantum relational theories [or] the ‘modernist’ era to the “post-modern era.”⁴⁹ Appreciative Inquiry offers ways to engage “changing mindsets and consciousness, addressing diversity and multicultural realities, and advancing new and different models of change”⁵⁰ Instead of the modernist approach of a Newtonian image of the universe that separates

⁴⁶ Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros. 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 5.

⁴⁹ Watkins, Magruder, Mohr and Kelly. 40.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 4.

things into parts, a postmodern approach recognizes a greater complexity in systems where the whole is more than the sum of the parts.⁵¹ The authors of Appreciative Inquiry critique a “deficit-based paradigm” for change as the default setting of Euro-Centric western culture⁵². They argue that the approach of finding problems and fixing them does not generate systemic and sustainable change. As the church moves into the emerging ecumenical paradigm, or into the era of the world church, Appreciative Inquiry offers a model of change alternative to the modernist and Euro-centric models.

Instead of a focus on evaluation, Appreciative Inquiry emphasises valuation.⁵³ The DUIM program focuses not on evaluating relationships, but rather on already known glimpses of right relationship. Just Intercultural community, right relationship, Shalom, or Beloved Community is aspirational. So also Appreciative Inquiry “[takes] the best of what has happened and [uses] it to create a collective image of a desired future.”⁵⁴

Appreciative Inquiry and the DUIM program both recognize the power of story and its centrality to culture. Story is universal and used by all cultures to share knowledge, custom and learning. Story creates relationship. Story is memorable and transmits images and affect. Story is changeable and can be interpreted in multiple ways. Story counters the modernist tendency to sort into categories. Story is alive and moves us to new possibilities.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Watkins, Magruder, Mohr and Kelly. 11-15.

⁵² Ibid. 17.

⁵³ Ibid. 275.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 279.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 148.

Using Appreciative Inquiry reinforces the current approach of program as it emphasizes the experience and wisdom of the participants. The increased familiarity with Appreciative Inquiry will add a specific tool to the resources of the agency and will reinforce the agency's culture of appreciation of participants' experience and wisdom.

The program pedagogy and activities focus on deconstructing understandings of culture (including privilege, power, the relationship between culture and theology, multiculturalism, and more) as a step toward allowing something different to emerge. The Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism network used the image of "cracking open White identity"⁵⁶, or deconstructing White identity, in its racial justice work as an action toward "transformation." The deconstruction of the dominant Canadian culture, to use an image from popular culture, points to a crack that allows the light to come in.⁵⁷ Appreciative Inquiry, as a constructionist approach, will provide ways to name the glimpses of possible alternatives if the dominant culture is deconstructed. It allows the light that is glimpsed to be discerned and named. Appreciative Inquiry offers a way to balance the deconstructive pedagogy and activities of the program with a constructionist dreaming of what could be. It allows for the community to engage in "creative imagination" or "poiesis."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Canadian Ecumenical Anti Racism Network. *Cracking open White identity toward transformation*. Toronto: Canadian Council of Churches. 2012.

⁵⁷ "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in": a line from Leonard Cohen's *Anthem* (on the Album "The Future" 1992. Sony/ATV Music Publishing Canada Company.

⁵⁸ *The title for Cracking open White identity came about when a racialized member of the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network" said, "I wish I could crack open the head of a white person and look inside to see what is going on." White identity and White privilege are commonly used terms in anti-racism work to describe the not always transparent systems that give and protect power and privilege based on skin colour. Instead of a*

Theologically the program, in its deconstructionist approach, provides a crucifixion or death narrative for the dominant culture. The use of Appreciative Inquiry will allow naming of glimpses of the resurrection, of God's vision of what is life giving.

Ethics, Risks, and Liabilities

There is a theological risk in using Appreciative Inquiry as a research methodology. Appreciative Inquiry is in part rooted in power of positive thought and movements which have also produced a theology contrary to a *theology of the cross*⁵⁹ and relies on an assumption that what we imagine is what becomes truth.⁶⁰ At its extreme this leads to a theology that doesn't require God in that we are able to bring about our salvation by our own human abilities to imagine it and think positively. This is countered by the DUIM programs' vision of just intercultural community as God's vision of Shalom or Beloved community. It is not something we create, but rather a vision we get glimpses of and participate in. Questions in the study will be framed using this kind of theological language intentionally asking participants not what they created through the program, but what glimpses of God's vision they discerned through participating in the program.

violent act, the cracking open referred to here is similar to Cohen's poetic image of the revealing crack. Racial justice work and theory often provides a process of deconstruction but fails to provide what might emerge. This study is an attempt to point to imaginative alternatives once the "light comes in."

⁵⁹ As described in: Bowler, Kate. *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel*. USA: Oxford University Press. 2013.

⁶⁰ Watkins, Magruder, Mohr and Kelly. 43.

A second risk is sociological. The Appreciative Inquiry emphasis on identifying the positive has the potential of reinforcing the myths the dominant Canadian culture holds of itself. This will be countered by program participants having, through the program, been immersed in identifying the unconscious of culture, including concepts such as perception and unconscious bias, and the harm of Canadian myths. Participants will be reminded of the myths that were deconstructed through the program and questions framed in terms of the life giving alternatives to these myths. Appreciative Inquiry doesn't ask "what is best" of an organization, but "what gives life."⁶¹ Through the program, participants recognize myths Canada holds of itself as not being life giving.

A third risk is anthropological. Appreciative Inquiry might tend to an enlightenment notion of progress. In only naming and enhancing what works well members of the dominant culture might not do the difficult work of naming issues such as racism and dynamics of power and privilege. This will be countered by the diversity of the program participants, many of whom are from racialized or other marginalized communities that know well, as it is part of their lived lives, the negative impacts of racism and other abuses of power and privilege. It is anticipated that the naming of these dynamics will in fact be one of the strengths of the program. Appreciative Inquiry is a process where "marginalized voices are more likely to be heard and received"⁶² than through other research methodologies. As noted above it is not the statistically

⁶¹ Bushe, GR. Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique. In Boje, D. Burnes, B. and Hasard, J. (eds) The Routledge Companion to Organizational Change (pp. 87-103). Oxford, UK. Routledge. 13.

⁶² Ibid. 9.

significant findings, or most often stated themes, that Appreciative Inquiry finds significant but rather the most life giving themes.

A fourth risk is that Appreciative Inquiry is shaped by the dominant culture the DUIM program critiques. Appreciative Inquiry has been developed for and most often used by for-profit organizations to increase profits and functioning of capitalist organizations. This will be countered by recognizing that at its root Appreciative Inquiry is not about corporate profit, but rather is an attempt to provide a method for organizational change rooted in social constructionist theory.⁶³ Canadian culture's myths about itself are socially constructed. The DUIM program is about the construction of new ways of knowing needed to respond to the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

The corporate for-profit culture of Appreciative Inquiry will be countered with an emphasis on the spiritual aspect of Appreciative Inquiry, an aspect that is downplayed in academic and business writing and uses of the method.⁶⁴ The focus will be on transformative change that is life giving. Questions will ask for glimpses of Shalom, Beloved Community, Just Intercultural Community, or a world the way God would want it. The study is not about a more profitable DUIM program, but about a program that helps reveal glimpses of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1)

Appreciative Inquiry requires the participation of the researcher. This carries the risk that the researcher will influence the outcomes. However AI assumes that the research will in part

⁶³ Ibid. 1.

⁶⁴ Bushe, GR. 14.

shape the outcomes as one of the participants in the institution being studied and therefore also a carrier of knowledge of the organization, in this case of the DUIM program. The AI process mitigates undue influence in that the researcher trains the participants in the AI process, but then takes a less directive role as they work together through the process. In the three groups participants will work together to distill their conversations into sets of 5 statements which will then be used by the FILL reference group for the final stages of the AI process. The risk of the researcher's influence and interpretation of conversations will further be reduced by not being a note-taker. Instead the conversations will be recorded and transcribed.

Finally there are risks to participants. The study needs to be designed taking into account potential vulnerability of or harm to participants and their communities. Many of the participants in the DUIM program self-describe themselves as coming from marginalized communities or as being marginalized within communities. This marginalization is through a variety of ways in which participants are unable to participate fully in the dominant culture because of identities such as race, sexual identity, ethnicity, class, gender, skin colour, and more. This vulnerability is addressed in the design and pedagogy of the DUIM program that intentionally creates a safe learning community that allows full participation and through which participants are able to empower themselves to name and confront marginalization. Originally it was thought the DUIM program would draw participants from the dominant culture however in its current form marginalized participants have chosen to participate as the program provides safety and gives them voice in the process of discerning a culture and church that addresses marginalization.

Most of the participants, lay and clergy, are in pastoral relationships or are in communities that will be at the core of the stories they tell in the study. Making these stories and

insights public might be damaging to relationships and to the communities. To mitigate these risks none of the study participants will be coerced and participation will be voluntary. In the publishing of stories identifying names and descriptions will be changed or made anonymous. Participants will be given opportunity to review the recording of stories and asked permission for them to be published.

Limitations

The success of this research will depend on the commitment and availability of past program participants, denominational staff and other stake holders, and members of the FILL reference group. Funding for this program and ecumenical work is tenuous so changes to finances, staffing, and other resources may require adaptation over the course of the research. The study provides only a snapshot of the experiences of the research participants and won't allow for a fuller description of the impact of the program within various contexts and over time. The recruitment of participants will tend to report the experiences of "the converted"; those who resonate with the program objectives and design and won't report from communities which are not interested in the approach or for whom the approach may not have been successful.

Contributions of the Study

The work of FILL is at the margins of the Canadian churches. A relatively small number of people know about or have been engaged in this work. Many of the learnings of and impact of this work to date have been anecdotal or are carried in the memory of program designers, facilitators, and participants. This project will document the design, content, theology, pedagogy, and learnings of the DUIM program in a way that will allow awareness to a wider audience and for the program to be replicated or for its learnings to shape other program and ministry.

One of the struggles of the DUIM program has been difficulty encouraging participation. The program requires participants to commit resources, a time commitment, and the risk of difficult conversation. Through this study the benefits to the wider church and to the dominant culture will be named. Some participants have struggled with implementing the program in their home contexts. From this study will emerge stories of successful implementation that will be helpful to other participants.

As the study is happening as the FILL reference group forms it will allow new partners to understand the existing theology and pedagogy and feel ownership in shaping the agency and program moving forward.

It is anticipated that the study will find that program has enabled participants and their communities to better engage the diversity of their contexts and discover tools for intercultural ministry. This research will be helpful to the wider Canadian church as it continues the journey of living into the emerging ecumenical paradigm in Canadian contexts.

Typically the church has sought to address racism, sexism, genderism, and other issues of power and privilege through documents and short workshops that name the issues and harm, or name the sin. The DUIM program is an attempt to combine this approach with a deeper contextual experience and providing participants with ways to discern alternatives to harmful ways of being community and church. The program and this study will give resources to the Canadian church and invite it into creative imagination, *poiesis*, or the art of intercultural ministry as it discerns God's vision of Shalom.

**Appendix 2:
University of Toronto Research Ethics Board Human Participant Ethics Protocol Submission**



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT,
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Human Participant Ethics Protocol Submission
CONFIDENTIAL

0 - Identification

RIS Human Protocol Number
37141

Protocol Title
Living into the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: A Process of Conscientization and discernment toward Just Intercultural Community for Christianity in the Canadian Context

Protocol Type
Investigator Submission

Applicant Information

Applicant Name
Jonathan Schmidt

Rank / Position
External

Department / Faculty
N/A

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26

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Collaborators/Co-Investigators

Name	Department	Email	Phone	Designation	Alt Contact
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Projected Project Dates

Estimated Start Date
7-Jan-19

Estimated End Date
31-Aug-19

1 - History of the Protocol

A Protocol has been recently closed which is similar to this application or this application will replace

2 - Location

Location of the Research: University of Toronto Other Locations

Administrative Approval/Consent

Administrative Approval/Consent Needed: Yes No

Community Based Participatory Research Project? Yes No

Protocol #: 12754

Status: Delegated Review App Version: 0002 Sub Version: 0000 Approved On: 22-Feb-19 Expires On: 21-Feb-20 Page of 8

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS
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Other Ethic Boards Approval(s)

Another Institution or Site involved? Yes No

3 - Agreements and Reviews

Funding

Project Funded? Yes No

Explain why no funding is required

Research is a Doctor of Ministry degree requirement and has no costs.

Agreements

Funding/non-funding Agreement in Place? Yes No

Any Team Member Declared Conflict of Interest? Yes No

Reviews

This research has gone under scholarly review by thesis committee, departmental review committee, peer review committee, or some other equivalent

Type of Review - e.g.: departmental research committee, supervisor, CIHR, SSHRC, OHTN, etc.

Doctor of Ministry Thesis proposal Committee

This review was specific to this protocol

The review was part of a larger grant

This research will go under scholarly review prior to funding

This review will not go under a scholarly review

4 - Potential Conflicts

Conflict of Interest

Will researchers, research team members, or immediate family members receive any personal benefit? Yes No

Restrictions on information

Are there any restrictions regarding access to, or disclosure of information (during or after closure)? Yes No

Researcher Relationships

Are there any pre-existing relationships between the researchers and the researched? Yes No

Relationship Description

Researcher was a facilitator/instructor of 5 day professional development course in which some of the researched participated. There is little power differential as these are voluntary courses for which there was no academic credit or grading. Some of the researched participants represent funding agencies of the researcher's employer. There is little power differential as funding is not contingent on this research.

Collaborative Decision Making

Is this a community based project - i.e.: a collaboration between the university and a community group? Yes No

5 - Project Details

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

McMurch Building, 12 Queen's Park Crescent West, 2nd Floor, Toronto, ON M5S 1B8 Canada
Tel: +1 416 946-3273 Fax: +1 416 946-5763 ethics.review@utoronto.ca http://www.research.utoronto.ca/for-researchers-administrators/ethics

Summary

Rationale

Describe the purpose and scholarly rationale for the project

This project is a partial requirement for the Doctor of Ministry (D Min) degree at the Toronto School of Theology. A process of conscientization, as described by Paulo Freire, of Canada's dominant culture and that culture's impact on relationship is necessary for Canadian Christian communities to discern God's vision of just intercultural community. The study draws on the work of Letty M. Russell and Stephanie Spellers to describe just intercultural community which has resonance with Martin Luther King Jr's notion of Beloved Community. Theologically the notion of just intercultural ministry is rooted in the notion of Shalom, or right relationship with God, self, others, and the earth. Just intercultural community is necessary for the Canadian Church to live into the emerging ecumenical paradigm within its contexts. This emerging ecumenical paradigm was described by David J. Bosch. Bernard Lonergan described this shift as a movement from a "classical notion of culture" to an empirical notion of culture. Karl Rahner described it as the movement into the third great epoch of Christian history in which Christianity see the possibility of being shaped by the contexts and cultures it encounters. Barriers to just intercultural community in Canada are the myths or shared beliefs or stories around which the culture understands itself. This includes the myth of White civility and Canada as the ideal British colony as described by Daniel Coleman, the myth of Canada as peacemaker described by Paulette Regan, and myths Canadians hold of their relationship to the land as described by Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi. The process of conscientization to overcome these barriers, become aware of its own cultures impact on relationship with other cultures, and become just intercultural community requires pedagogies from outside traditional western models. These pedagogies outside traditional models include those described by Frye Jean Graveline, Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton, and Paulo Freire. The study will look at the impact of this process of conscientization as experienced through the "Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding of Intercultural Ministry" 5 day intensive program previously offered by the Canadian Council of Churches in locations across Canada. This study will record the development and learnings of the program, tell the story of its impact, evaluate the program, and envision next steps for the future of the program.

Methods

Describe formal/informal procedures to be used

The Methodology to be used is Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as describe by Cooperrider, Whitney, Watkins, et al. and the AI "4-D" cycle (Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny). This methodology will be adapted to theological language and purpose using the Liberation Theology Hermeneutic circle (see, discern, act, celebrate) as described by Leonardo and Claudios Boff. Appreciative Inquiry is a qualitative research methodology. Small groups of alumni of a previously offered 5 day program in intercultural training will be engaged either in person or via videoconference. They will be asked to describe life-giving and just intercultural community experiences during and after the program. The group will identify common themes in each other's stories. They will be asked to name hopes for the program in the future and distill these hopes into 5 statements to be shared. A small group of staff of stakeholder organizations (church denominations) will meet in person or via teleconference. They will be asked to tell stories of the life giving and just intercultural community impact of the program they have observed in their denomination and discern common themes from their stories. They will share hopes for the program and distill the hopes of the group into 5 statements. Program facilitators and resource people will form small groups in which they will share stories of what they observed as life giving and just intercultural community building in the programs. They will discern common themes in their group's stories. They will name hopes for the program and distill those hopes into 5 statements for the group. These conversations will be recorded and transcribed. Data identifying individuals or their communities will be omitted from the transcriptions. The research will generate a research report that includes some of the stories told, themes identified, and hopes statements. At the conclusion of the research this report will be included in the researcher's Doctor of Ministry thesis. It will also be shared with the program oversight group of the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of the Canadian Council of Churches who may use it to evaluate program and design future program.

Copies of questionnaires, interview guided and/or other instruments used

Document Title	Document Date
Interview Script 1: Program participants, and Program facilitators and resource people	2019-02-15
Interview script 2: staff of program stakeholder organizations	2019-02-15

Clinical Trials

Is this a clinical trial? Yes No

6 - Participants and Data

Participants and/or Data

What is the anticipated sample size of number of participants in the study? 30

Describe the participants to be recruited, or the individuals about whom personally identifiable information will be collected. List the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where the research involves extraction or collection personally identifiable information, please describe where the information will be obtained, what it will include, and how permission to access said information is being sought.

A qualitative research methodology will be used.
 There will be three groups of participants:
 - Alumni of past program offerings of the Canadian Council of Churches Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning
 - Program facilitators and resource people of past programs

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Staff of Stakeholder organizations
 Recruitment will be through an invitation sent by email to all program alumni, facilitators and resource people, and staff of stakeholder organizations (sent only to staff with direct responsibility for liaison to the program being researched). The research process will be communicated as part of the research conversations and participation will be voluntary. The previous participation in the program was voluntary. There will be no compensation.
 Contact information for recruitment are already part of the database of the Canadian Council of Churches. During the study contact information of participants will be kept on a secure server for the purpose of scheduling small group conversations. After the conclusion of the study this information identifying individuals or their communities will not be identified in the transcriptions and recordings will be deleted upon completion of transcriptions. In reporting participants will not be identified other than which group of participants they are drawn from.
 Participants will learn the findings of the study through communications sent to the full pools of alumni, facilitators, and stakeholder staff.

Is there any group or individual-level vulnerability related to the research that needs to be mitigated (for example, difficulty understanding consent, history of exploitation by researchers, or power differential between the researcher and the potential participant)? Yes No

Recruitment

Any participant(s) recruited? Yes No

Recruitment details including how, from where, and by whom

Recruitment will be through an invitation sent by email to all program alumni, facilitators and resource people, and select staff of stakeholder organizations. The research process will be communicated as part of the recruitment letter and research process and participation will be voluntary. The previous participation in the program was voluntary. There will be no compensation.

Is participant observation used? Yes No

Will translation materials be used/required? Yes No

Attach copies of all recruitment posters, flyers, letters, email text, or telephone scripts

Document Title	Document Date
Recruitment letter (revised)	2019-02-15

Compensation

Will the participants receive compensation? Yes No

Non Compensation Description

Participation is voluntary. There is no funding. There are no out of pocket expenses for the participants. The research will be seen as part of a collaborative activity.

Is there a withdrawal clause in the research procedure? Yes No

Is compensation affected when a participant withdraws?

There is no compensation. Research results will be shared with all participants including any who withdraw.

7 - Investigator Experience

Investigator Experience with this type of research

Please provide a brief description of the previous experience for this type of research by the applicant, the research team, and any persons who will have direct contact with the applicants. If there is no previous experience, how will the applicant and research team be prepared?

As part of the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology participants are given training in the philosophy and methods of AI. All program alumni and program facilitators and most of the program oversight committee have participated in the program being investigated.
 The researcher engaged in research ethics and methods courses and practice in an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Sociology. Training in ethical behavior and dynamics of power relationships were part of the researcher's professional training, including a Master of Divinity degree and continuing education in the workplace. The institution within which the researcher is employed (The Canadian Council of Churches) has written and enforced Sexual Conduct and Responsibility of Care for Vulnerable Persons policies. In the context of the institution under which this research will be done the researcher facilitates conversation, designs and facilitates program, and guides development of policy and practice in relation to power dynamics in relations to culture, gender, sexuality, race, class etc. The researcher's Doctoral studies include coursework in research methodology and design.

Are community members collecting and/or analyzing data? Yes No

Please describe the community members research team status (eg. employees, volunteers, or participants). What training will they received?

The focus group participants will be research participants and will not be collecting data on other participants. I have indicated that they will be collecting and/or

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analyzing data as analysis of data by participants within focus group conversations is part of the research methodology. Appreciative Inquiry. During the focus group conversation participants will help sort (analyze) the data shared by fellow focus group participants. Each focus group will identify common themes heard.

8 - Possible Risks and Benefits

Possible Risks

Potential Risk Details:

Physical Risks Yes No

Psychological/emotional Risks Yes No

Social Risk Yes No

Legal Risk Yes No

Risk Description

There is a low level of social risk. The stories told by the participants in interviews might include details that would identify individuals or communities in their workplace (ministry settings). As persons with pastoral (clergy) or leadership responsibilities for these communities there is a small risk that these relationships might be harmed. These risks will be mitigated by removing from transcripts any details that might identify individuals (including the participants) or communities.

Potential Benefits

Benefit Description

The thesis project will document the design, content, theology, pedagogy, and impact of the Canadian Council of Churches 5 day "Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry" program to allow awareness to a wider audience and for the program to be replicated or for its learnings to

9 - Consent

Consent Process Details

Recruitment will be through an email invitation to persons who previously voluntarily participated in a program of the Canadian Council of Churches. The research process will be communicated in written form as part of the recruitment. The study methodology (Appreciative Inquiry) includes as part of the methodology describing (as a mini-lecture) the steps of the study. There will be an explicit statement that participation is voluntary, and that the participants may withdraw at any time, and may decline to answer any question or participate in any parts of the procedures without negative consequences. Participants will be told that conversations will be recorded for the purpose of transcribing and that the recordings will be deleted after transcribing and that digital documents will be deleted and paper records will be shredded at the completion of the study. Participants will be told that their names and information that identifies their particular community will not be included in the published findings. Participants will be told that they may be quoted or the stories they tell summarized in the published findings without identifying them or their communities by name. Participants will provide written consent which will be signed and emailed when responding to the invitation to participate.

Uploaded letter/consent form(s)

Document Title	Document Date
Not Applicable	

Is there additional documentation regarding consent such as screening materials, introductory letters etc.: Yes No

Uploaded letter/consent form(s)

Will any information collected in the screening process - prior to full informed consent to participate in the study - be retained for those who are later excluded or refuse to participate in the study? Yes No

Is the research taking place within a community or organization which requires formal consent be sought prior to the involvement of the individual participants Yes No

Are any participants not capable (e.g.: children) of giving competent consent? Yes No

10 - Debriefing and Dissemination

DeBrief

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Will deception or intentional non disclosure be used? Yes No

Will a written debrief be used? Yes No

Do participants/communities have the right to withdraw their data following the debrief? Yes No

Information Feed Back Details following completion of a participants participation in the project

Appreciative Inquiry is a process through which the participants inform each other of the qualitative data they bring to the study. Participants are involved in discerning the findings of the study and identifying themes.
Participants will be emailed a summary of the full study findings.
Participants will be invited (by email) to read the completed DMin thesis of this study.

Procedural details which allow participants to withdraw from the project

Participants will be able to withdraw at any time during the project without consequence. This may take the form of ceasing to participate in conversation or leaving the room/video-webinar. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw in the recruitment email and at the beginning of the group conversations.

Not Applicable

What happens to a participants data and any known consequences related to the removal of said participant

As Appreciative Inquiry is qualitative research and requires group conversations it is not possible to remove all of the participants contributions to conversation.

Not Applicable

List reasons why a participant can not withdraw from the project (either at all or after a certain period of time)

Not Applicable

11 - Confidentiality and Privacy

Confidentiality

Is the data confidential? Yes No

Will the confidentiality of the participants and/or informants be protected? Yes No

List confidentiality protection procedures

Risks will be mitigated by removing from transcripts any details that might identify individuals (including the participants) or communities.

Are there any limitations on the protection of participant confidentiality? Yes No

List Confidentiality Limitations

As Appreciative Inquiry is qualitative research and requires group conversations it is not possible to remove all of the participants contributions to conversation.

Is participant anonymity/confidentiality not applicable to this research project? Yes No

Data Protection

Describe how the data (including written records, video/audio recordings, artifacts and questionnaires) will be protected during the conduct of the research and subsequent dissemination of results

All electronic files will be stored on a secure server owned by and located at the Canadian Council of Churches.
At no time will identifiable electronic information be outside the secure-server virtual private network environment of the Canadian Council of Churches server. Only the researcher will have access to individual-level raw data and electronic files related to the research. The denominations of the Canadian Council of Churches do not have access to the organization's server. The committees (include the program oversight group) of the Canadian Council of Churches do not have access to the organizations server.
Consent forms will identify the individuals participating in the research. These will be stored on the secure server. When transcripts are generated any information identifying individuals or their communities will not be included. These will also be stored on the secure server.
A research report will be generated which may be used by the program oversight group of the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of the Canadian Council of Churches for program evaluation. This report will not include individual-level raw data or information that identifies participants or their communities. The benefit to the denominations of the Canadian Council of Churches will be from the Doctor of Ministry Thesis' contributions to theology when it is published.
Paper data (e.g. fieldnotes, interview notes) will be stored in a locked cabinet located in a locked office of the Canadian Council of Churches

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Explain for how long, where and what format (identifiable, de-identified) data will be retained. Provide details of their destruction and/or continued storage. Provide a justification if you intend to store identifiable data for an indefinite length of time. If regulatory requirements for data retention exists, please explain.

Data will not be retained. Electronic files will be securely erased and paper data shredded.

Will the data be shared with other researchers or users? Yes No

12 - Level of Risk and Research Ethics Board

Level of Risk for the Project

Group Vulnerability
 Research Risk
 Risk Level

Explanation/Justification

Explanation/Justification detail for the group vulnerability and research risk listed above

The low social risk is necessary as the purpose of the program being studied is to bring about changes in the individuals' ministries and ministry context. This requires participants to self-report their experiences of the program and its impact.

Research Ethics Board

REB Associated with this project

13 - Application Documents Summary

Uploaded Documents

Document Title	Document Date
Cover letter with responses to REB comments	2019-02-15
TST Approvals	2018-12-18
Interview Script 1: Program participants, and Program facilitators and resource people	2019-02-15
Interview script 2: staff of program stakeholder organizations	2019-02-15
Recruitment letter (revised)	2019-02-15

14 - Applicant Undertaking

I confirm that I am aware of, understand, and will comply with all relevant laws governing the collection and use of personal identifiable information in research. I understand that for research involving extraction or collection of personally identifiable information, provincial, federal, and/or international laws may apply and that any apparent mishandling of said personally identifiable information, must be reported to the office of research ethics.

As the Principal Investigator of the project, I confirm that I will ensure that all procedures performed in accordance with all relevant university, provincial, national, and/or international policies and regulations that govern research with human participants. I understand that if there is any significant deviation in the project as originally approved, I must submit an amendment to the Research Ethics Board for approval prior to implementing any change.

I have read and agree to the above conditions

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RIS Protocol
Number: 37141

Approval Date: 22-Feb-19

PI Name: Jonathan Schmidt

Division Name:

Dear Jonathan Schmidt:

Re: Your research protocol application entitled, "Living into the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: A Process of
Conscientization and discernment toward Just Intercultural Community for Christianity in the Canadian Context"

The Social Sciences, Humanities & Education REB has conducted a Delegated review of your application and has granted approval to the attached protocol for the period 2019-02-22 to 2020-02-21.

Please be reminded of the following points:

- An **Amendment** must be submitted to the REB for any proposed changes to the approved protocol. The amended protocol must be reviewed and approved by the REB prior to implementation of the changes.
- An annual **Renewal** must be submitted for ongoing research. You may submit up to 6 renewals for a maximum total span of 7 years. Renewals should be submitted between 15 and 30 days prior to the current expiry date.
- A **Protocol Deviation Report (PDR)** should be submitted when there is any departure from the REB-approved ethics review application form that has occurred without prior approval from the REB (e.g., changes to the study procedures, consent process, data protection measures). The submission of this form does not necessarily indicate wrong-doing; however follow-up procedures may be required.
- An **Adverse Events Report (AER)** must be submitted when adverse or unanticipated events occur to participants in the course of the research process.
- A **Protocol Completion Report (PCR)** is required when research using the protocol has been completed. For ongoing research, a PCR on the protocol will be required after 7 years, (Original and 6 Renewals). A continuation of work beyond 7 years will require the creation of a new protocol.
- If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Appendix 3: Research Invitation Letters



Toronto School of Theology

GRADUATE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF MINISTRY

Affiliated with the University of Toronto

47 Queen's Park Crescent East
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2C3 Canada

416-978-4039

www.tst.edu • inquiries@tst.edu

Dear past participant in the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” (DUIM) program,

I am inviting you to participate in a study to tell the story of the program’s impact, evaluate the program, and envision next steps for the future of the program.

Participants will gather in small groups once for no more than an hour and a half through an online videoconference.

If you consent to participate, please indicate your availability at the doodle poll at: <http://bit.ly/DUIMparticipants> and sign and return the form at the bottom of this letter.

Purpose of the Research

This study will serve several purposes. It is part of the Doctor of Ministry studies of Jonathan Schmidt whose doctoral thesis will help record and enhance this ecumenical resourcing of Canadian intercultural ministry. The research will help raise awareness of this work and will be a contribution to Canadian theologies and practices of intercultural ministry. The research will also contribute to shaping future program of the Canadian Council of Churches Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning. Finally, the research is designed so that participation might be a resource to your ministry.

Description of the Research

The research will use “*Appreciate Inquiry*” (AI), a method that is designed to help communities and organizations name what is life giving and envision future possibilities. As part of the 1 ½ hour conversation you will receive a brief training in AI so that the group can lead itself through a conversation.

There will be three categories of groups that will meet for this research: DUIM program alumni, DUIM program facilitators and resource people, and staff of stakeholder organizations (such as church denominations).

The groups will be asked to describe life-giving and just intercultural community experiences experienced during and after the program. Each focus group will identify common themes in each other’s stories. Finally you will be asked to name hopes for the program in the future and distill these hopes into 5 statements to be shared.

These conversations will be recorded and transcribed.

There will be a research report that includes some of the stories told, themes identified, and all of the sets of 5 hopes statements. This report will be included in the researcher's Doctor of Ministry thesis. It will also be shared with the program oversight group of the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of the Canadian Council of Churches who may use it to evaluate program and design future program.

All who are invited to participate will be emailed a summary of the study findings and an invitation to read the final Doctor of Ministry thesis of this research.

Research Ethics and Privacy

The research, methods, and use of data will be approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Toronto. Participants in this research can contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if you have questions about your rights as a participant. Participants may also contact the researcher's University of Toronto faculty supervisor, The Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham at c.fensham@utoronto.ca or 416-978-4509.

The research study you are participating in may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and/or consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by the HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that has been stated by the research team.

You will not receive monetary compensation for participating.

As many of the participants are in pastoral relationships that may have a very low risk of being harmed by their participation in this study, any details that might identify individuals or communities will be removed from conversation transcripts.

Conversations will be recorded and stored on a secure server for the purpose of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted after transcribing. Transcriptions will be deleted and paper records will be shredded at the completion of the study. Names and information that identifies particular communities or individuals will not be included in the published findings. Participants may be quoted or the stories they tell summarized in the published findings without identifying individuals or communities by name.

Consent and ability to withdraw

A written record of your consent to participate is required. Please sign the form below and return by mail or email as instructed on the form.

At any point during the research you are able to withdraw. You will be reminded of this at the beginning of the group conversation. As the research will require group conversations it is not possible to remove all of your contributions to conversation should you withdraw from the research.

Questions

Thank you for considering being part of this research which we hope will be a resource to your ministry in your context and to the wider community of Canadian Church denominations.

Questions can be directed to the researcher:

Jonathan Schmidt

jonathan.schmidt@mail.utoronto.ca / schmidt@councilofchurches.ca

416-972-9494 x26



CONSENT

____ I have read and understood the above invitation to participate in a study of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” (DUIM) program. I give my consent for participation in this research.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please sign and email this form to: jonathan.schmidt@mail.utoronto.ca or schmidt@councilofchurches.ca

or hardcopy can be mailed to:

Jonathan Schmidt
c/o Canadian Council of Churches,
47 Queens Park Crescent East,
Toronto, ON. M5S 2C3

Print and retain a copy for your records.

Please indicate your availability for a focus group at the doodle poll at: <http://bit.ly/DUIMparticipants>



Dear Program Facilitators and Resource people in past “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” (DUIM) programs,

I am inviting you to participate in a study to tell the story of the program’s impact, evaluate the program, and envision next steps for the future of the program.

Participants will gather in small groups once for no more than an hour and a half through an online videoconference.

If you consent to participate, please indicate your availability at the doodle poll at: <http://bit.ly/DUIMfacilitators> and sign and return the form at the bottom of this letter.

Purpose of the Research

This study will serve several purposes. It is part of the Doctor of Ministry studies of Jonathan Schmidt whose doctoral thesis will help record and enhance this ecumenical resourcing of Canadian intercultural ministry. The research will help raise awareness of this work and will be a contribution to Canadian theologies and practices of intercultural ministry. The research will also contribute to shaping future program of the Canadian Council of Churches Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning. Finally, the research is designed so that participation might be a resource to your ministry.

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These conversations will be recorded and transcribed.

There will be a research report that includes some of the stories told, themes identified, and all the sets of 5 hopes statements. This report will be included in the researcher’s Doctor of Ministry thesis. It will also be shared with the program oversight group of the

Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of the Canadian Council of Churches who may use it to evaluate program and design future program.

All who are invited to participate will be emailed a summary of the study findings and an invitation to read the final Doctor of Ministry thesis of this research.

Research Ethics and Privacy

The research, methods, and use of data will be approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Toronto. Participants in this research can contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if you have questions about your rights as a participant. Participants may also contact the researcher's University of Toronto faculty supervisor, The Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham at c.fensham@utoronto.ca or 416-978-4509.

The research study you are participating in may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and/or consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by the HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that has been stated by the research team.

You will not receive monetary compensation for participating.

As many of the participants are in pastoral relationships that may have a very low risk of being harmed by their participation in this study, any details that might identify individuals or communities will be removed from conversation transcripts.

Conversations will be recorded and stored on a secure server for the purpose of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted after transcribing. Transcriptions will be deleted, and paper records will be shredded at the completion of the study. Names and information that identifies particular communities or individuals will not be included in the published findings. Participants may be quoted or the stories they tell summarized in the published findings without identifying individuals or communities by name.

Consent and ability to withdraw

A written record of your consent to participate is required. Please sign the form below and return by mail or email as instructed on the form.

At any point during the research you are able to withdraw. You will be reminded of this at the beginning of the group conversation. As the research will require group conversations it is not possible to remove all your contributions to conversation should you withdraw from the research.

Questions

Thank you for considering being part of this research which we hope will be a resource to your ministry in your context and to the wider community of Canadian Church denominations.

Questions can be directed to the researcher:

Jonathan Schmidt

jonathan.schmidt@mail.utoronto.ca / schmidt@councilofchurches.ca

416-972-9494 x26



CONSENT

____ I have read and understood the above invitation to participate in a study of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” (DUIM) program. I give my consent for participation in this research.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please sign and email this form to: jonathan.schmidt@mail.utoronto.ca or schmidt@councilofchurches.ca

or hardcopy can be mailed to:

Jonathan Schmidt
c/o Canadian Council of Churches,
47 Queens Park Crescent East,
Toronto, ON. M5S 2C3

Print and retain a copy for your records.

Please indicate your availability for a focus group at the doodle poll at: <http://bit.ly/DUIMfacilitators>



Dear Staff and representatives of the “**Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry**” (DUIM) program stakeholder organizations,

I am inviting you to participate in a study to tell the story of the program’s impact, evaluate the program, and envision next steps for the future of the program.

Participants will gather in small groups once for no more than an hour and a half through an online videoconference.

If you consent to participate, please indicate your availability at the doodle poll at: <http://bit.ly/DUIMstakeholders> and sign and return the form at the bottom of this letter.

Purpose of the Research

This study will serve several purposes. It is part of the Doctor of Ministry studies of Jonathan Schmidt whose doctoral thesis will help record and enhance this ecumenical resourcing of Canadian intercultural ministry. The research will help raise awareness of this work and will be a contribution to Canadian theologies and practices of intercultural ministry. The research will also contribute to shaping future program of the Canadian Council of Churches Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning. Finally, the research is designed so that participation might be a resource to your ministry.

Description of the Research

The research will use “*Appreciate Inquiry*” (AI), a method that is designed to help communities and organizations name what is life giving and envision future possibilities. As part of the 1 ½ hour conversation you will receive a brief training in AI so that the group can lead itself through a conversation.

There will be three categories of groups that will meet for this research: DUIM program alumni, DUIM program facilitators and resource people, and staff of stakeholder organizations (such as church denominations).

The groups will be asked to describe life-giving and just intercultural community experiences experienced during and after the program. Each focus group will identify common themes in each other’s stories. Finally you will be asked to name hopes for the program in the future and distill these hopes into 5 statements to be shared.

These conversations will be recorded and transcribed.

There will be a research report that includes some of the stories told, themes identified, and all of the sets of 5 hopes statements. This report will be included in the researcher’s Doctor of Ministry thesis. It will also be shared with the program oversight group of the

Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of the Canadian Council of Churches who may use it to evaluate program and design future program.

All who are invited to participate will be emailed a summary of the study findings and an invitation to read the final Doctor of Ministry thesis of this research.

Research Ethics and Privacy

The research, methods, and use of data will be approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Toronto. Participants in this research can contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if you have questions about your rights as a participant. Participants may also contact the researcher's University of Toronto faculty supervisor, The Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham at c.fensham@utoronto.ca or 416-978-4509.

The research study you are participating in may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and/or consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by the HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that has been stated by the research team.

You will not receive monetary compensation for participating.

As many of the participants are in pastoral relationships that may have a very low risk of being harmed by their participation in this study, any details that might identify individuals or communities will be removed from conversation transcripts.

Conversations will be recorded and stored on a secure server for the purpose of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted after transcribing. Transcriptions will be deleted and paper records will be shredded at the completion of the study. Names and information that identifies particular communities or individuals will not be included in the published findings. Participants may be quoted or the stories they tell summarized in the published findings without identifying individuals or communities by name.

Consent and ability to withdraw

A written record of your consent to participate is required. Please sign the form below and return by mail or email as instructed on the form.

At any point during the research you are able to withdraw. You will be reminded of this at the beginning of the group conversation. As the research will require group conversations it is not possible to remove all of your contributions to conversation should you withdraw from the research.

Questions

Thank you for considering being part of this research which we hope will be a resource to your ministry in your context and to the wider community of Canadian Church denominations.

Questions can be directed to the researcher:

Jonathan Schmidt

jonathan.schmidt@mail.utoronto.ca / schmidt@councilofchurches.ca

416-972-9494 x26



CONSENT

____ I have read and understood the above invitation to participate in a study of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” (DUIM) program. I give my consent for participation in this research.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please sign and email this form to: jonathan.schmidt@mail.utoronto.ca or schmidt@councilofchurches.ca

or hardcopy can be mailed to:

Jonathan Schmidt
c/o Canadian Council of Churches,
47 Queens Park Crescent East,
Toronto, ON. M5S 2C3

Print and retain a copy for your records.

Please indicate your availability for a focus group at the doodle poll at: <http://bit.ly/DUIMstakeholders>

[Email to program alumni]

Dear past participants in the “**Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry**” (DUIM) program,

Please find attached a letter of invitation to participate in a research study that will help us document and evaluate past programs and envision next steps for the future of the program.

I am inviting you to a 1 ½ hour videoconference conversation in January. Please fill out the doodle poll at <http://bit.ly/DUIMparticipants>. As people indicate their availability, they will be put into small focus groups. I will send the time of your focus group and instructions for connecting.

This is also an opportunity for learning that will be useful in your ministry. The research method we will use for the conversation will be “Appreciative Inquiry.” Our conversation will include a brief training in and opportunity to experience this method that you might find useful in your work and ministry. Instead of looking for problems or what is wrong, Appreciative Inquiry looks at the whole and what might be. The core question of Appreciative Inquiry, “What is life giving?” is deeply theological.

Please also read the attached letter, sign and date the consent form at the bottom of the letter, and return to me by email (jonathan.schmidt@mail.utoronto.ca or schmidt@councilofchurches.ca) or by regular mail to

Jonathan Schmidt
c/o Canadian Council of Churches,
47 Queens Park Crescent East,
Toronto, ON. M5S 2C3

The Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program has been offered multiple times every year since 2013 and each program, while having the same core structure and activities, has been differently shaped by the context and participants. I look forward to your conversations, and the unique experiences of the program, and implementing your learnings in your context, that each of you will bring.

[Email to program facilitators, resource people, and intercultural mentors]

Dear Program Facilitators, Resource people, and Intercultural Mentors in a past **“Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry”** (DUIM) program,

Please find attached a letter of invitation to participate in a research study that will help us document and evaluate past programs and envision next steps for the future of the program.

I am inviting you to a 1 ½ hour videoconference conversation in January. Please fill out the doodle poll at <http://bit.ly/DUIMfacilitators>. As people indicate their availability, they will be put into small focus groups. I will send the time of your focus group and instructions for connecting.

This is also an opportunity for learning that will be useful in your ministry. The research method we will use for the conversation will be “Appreciative Inquiry.” Our conversation will include a brief training in and opportunity to experience this method that you might find useful in your work and ministry. Instead of looking for problems or what is wrong, Appreciative Inquiry looks at the whole and what might be. The core question of Appreciative Inquiry, “What is life giving?” is deeply theological.

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[Email to stakeholder representatives]

Dear Staff and representatives of the “**Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry**” (DUIM) program stakeholder organizations,

Please find attached a letter of invitation to participate in a research study that will help us document and evaluate past programs and envision next steps for the future of the program.

I am inviting you to a 1 ½ hour videoconference conversation in January. Please fill out the doodle poll at <http://bit.ly/DUIMstakeholders> so we might find a common time.

There will also be focus groups of program participants and program facilitators.

This is also an opportunity for learning that will be useful in your ministry. The research method we will use for the conversation will be “Appreciative Inquiry.” Our conversation will include a brief training in and opportunity to experience this method that you might use in your work and ministry. Instead of looking for problems or what is wrong, Appreciative Inquiry looks at the whole and what might be. The core question of Appreciative Inquiry, “What is life giving?” is deeply theological.

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Toronto, ON. M5S 2C3

In your focus group we will draw on the stories or reflections you have heard from participants, the impact you have seen as a result of their participation, and your visions for future programming.

I look forward to your conversation as well as, after the research is completed, reporting the findings and recommendations that emerge.

Appendix 4: Interview Scripts

Introduction: All groups

Thank you for your sharing your time and wisdom.

Today's conversation is part of a wider research project that will help us learn about the impact of the Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry" program and will help shape future programs. It also will be part of my Doctor of Ministry thesis as I look at some of the cultural, theological, and sociological thinking behind Canadian Just Intercultural Ministry, and specifically describe this program as a resource the church.

The research method we are using is "Appreciative Inquiry."

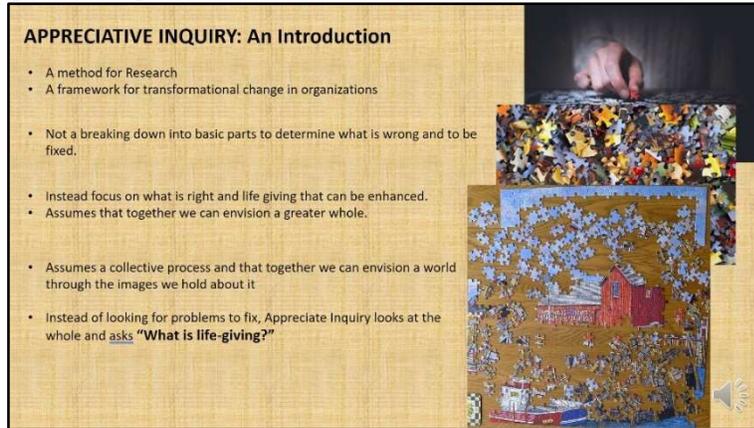
In addition to using this method for the research, this will be an opportunity for you to learn about and experience this method that can be a resource in your ministry context.

As part of experiencing Appreciative Inquiry you will be leading each other through this research method. In a moment you will receive some teaching about the method. In a few minutes we will also be asking for two of you to volunteer to help facilitate the conversation. One person will be the "timekeeper" to make sure you are able to move through the process. A second person will be a "conversation facilitator" who will make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak.

Before we begin our conversation, I invite you to watch this 5-minute introduction to the Appreciate Inquiry research method.

Appreciative Inquiry an Introduction (mini lecture: PowerPoint with voice)

[SLIDE 1]



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: An Introduction

- A method for Research
- A framework for transformational change in organizations
- Not a breaking down into basic parts to determine what is wrong and to be fixed.
- Instead focus on what is right and life giving that can be enhanced.
- Assumes that together we can envision a greater whole.
- Assumes a collective process and that together we can envision a world through the images we hold about it
- Instead of looking for problems to fix, Appreciate Inquiry looks at the whole and asks **"What is life-giving?"**

[TAB 1] Appreciative Inquiry is both a method for research and a framework for transformational change in organizations.

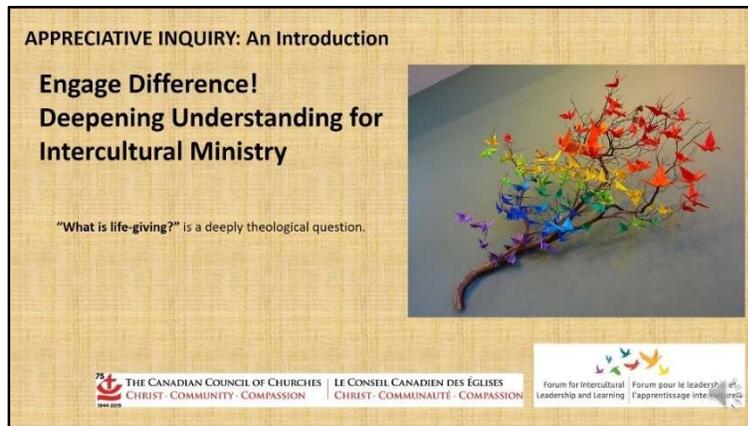
[TAB 2] Other research methods break down an organization or process into its basic parts to determine what might be wrong and can be fixed

[TAB 3] Appreciative Inquiry focuses instead on what is right and is life giving that can be enhanced.

[TAB 4] It assumes a collective process in groups, organizations and communities and that together we envision a world through the images we hold about it.

Instead of looking for problems or what is wrong, Appreciative Inquiry looks at the whole and asks, "what is life giving?"

[SLIDE 2]



We are using this approach to document the impact of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program and to envision the future of the program.

As people of faith in community we experience God and collectively discern God’s vision for community and the world. We are using Appreciative Inquiry as a method to together discern God’s vision for the Engage Difference! program and how to resource intercultural ministry in Canada.

Appreciative Inquiry is most often used outside the church. However, we recognize that asking “What is life giving?”, the core question of Appreciative Inquiry, is deeply theological.

[SLIDE 3]

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: An Introduction

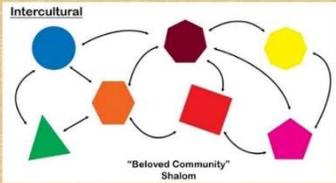
Just Intercultural Community

- All can be fully themselves as created by God
- All voices are heard
- All are able to shape the community

Beloved Community

Shalom – Peace

Right relationship with God
Right relationship with each other
Right Relationship with all of creation



75 THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
CHRIST - COMMUNITY - COMPASSION

LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ÉGLISES
CHRIST - COMMUNAUTÉ - COMPASSION

Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning
Forum pour le leadership et l'apprentissage interculturels

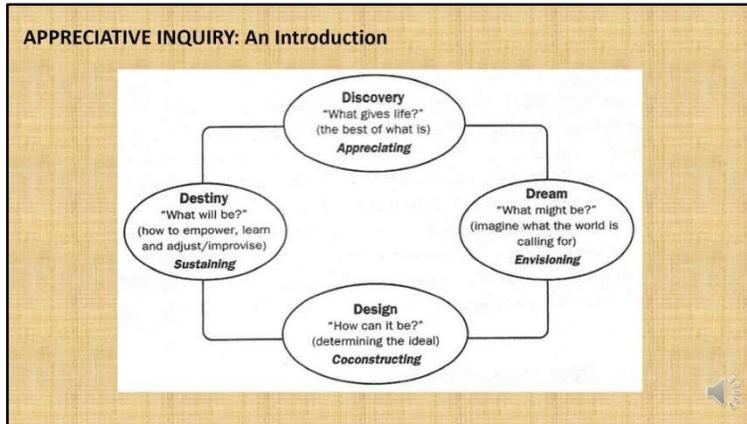
“Just Intercultural Community”

The “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program was designed to help the Canadian church journey toward “Just Intercultural Community.” We define “Just Intercultural Community” as a place where people can be more fully themselves as created by God, where all voices are heard, and all are able to shape the community.

[TAB 1] Another term that has been used for this is “Beloved Community” or the way in which God would want us to be in community.

[TAB 2] You might also think of this as God’s vision of peace or “shalom”; right relationship with God, with each other, and with all of creation.

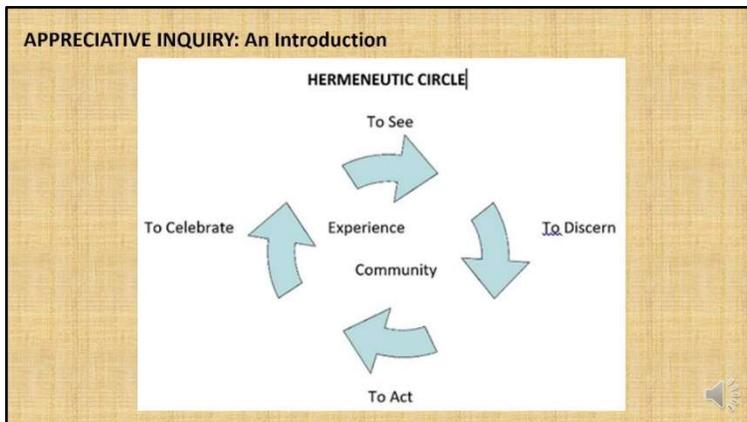
[SLIDE 4]



The 4-D stages of Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

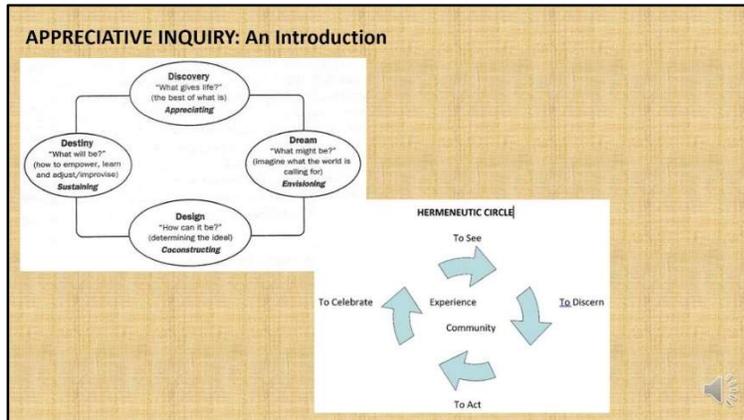
Appreciate Inquiry uses a cycle of four stages: **Discovery – Dream – Design - Destiny**

[SLIDE 5]



A similar faith-based approach to learning is used in the “Engage Difference!” program, the hermeneutic circle of **See – Discern – Act – Celebrate**.

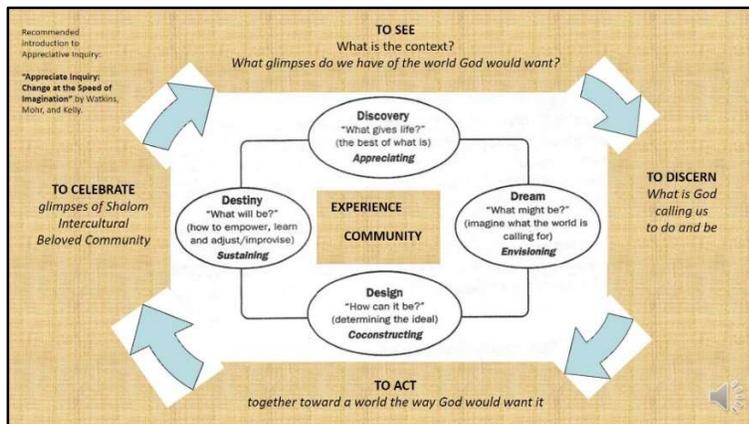
[SLIDE 6]



In a moment we will go over the Hermeneutic Circle and the four stages of Appreciative Inquiry

We invite you to see the 4 stages of the AI process through the hermeneutic circle's faith-based approach to learning. Both are rooted in experience and community. Both assume the participants know the organization or community through their participation and are active agents in shaping the community. Both are processes toward transformation and a different world.

[SLIDE 7]



[TAB 1] **Discovery** "What Gives Life?"

This first step of Appreciative Inquiry is to describe what is.

Participants in an organization or community are asked when a system or organization in which they participate is most alive, healthy and responsive to its context. They are asked questions like, “What gives life in this organization?” They are encouraged to use story to describe what is positive and life giving.

In this study today you will be asked to reflect on the experiences of the Engage Difference! program and the impact of taking learnings back to communities. You will be asked, “What has been life giving?” and “When did you see glimpses of God’s vision of how we might be as community?” in experiences of the program, in home communities, and the wider church.

[TAB 2] Similarly, the first stage of the hermeneutic circle is “**to see.**” This is the describing of the context. “What is life-giving?” is a profoundly theological question and as we use the Appreciative Inquiry process in a faith context, we might also ask questions such “What glimpses do we have of the world God would want?”

It is important to note that this first stage of Appreciative Inquiry does not ask what is wrong or what are the problems to fix but focuses on the positive; what is right and life giving. Today you won’t be asked to “fix” the program or identify what is wrong with it. Instead you will be asked how you experienced the program as life giving.

[TAB 3] **Dream** *What might be?*

A key question in this stage is “what might be?” Participants are asked to envision possibilities or a preferred future for the organization. They are asked to build on the positive of the organization’s past to imagine how it might expand its potential.

In this study you will be asked about what you see as possibilities for the future of the Engage Difference! Program. You will be asked, “What might be?” or “What is God calling for”? And “What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Program?”

[TAB 4] The second stage of the hermeneutic circle is “**to discern**” or to ask what God is calling for. The community asks, “What is God calling us to do and be.” This is discerning as a community Gods vision of what might be.

[TAB 5] **Design** *How can it be?*

In this stage participants construct a future based on the first two stages and concrete proposals are developed to further enhance the positive and life giving. A compelling image is created of how the organization will be when the positive core identified in the first two stages is fully present.

We won't ask that question yet today. A smaller group will look at the visions that come out of this and several other group conversations. From that they will propose an image of next steps for supporting intercultural ministry.

[Tab 6] In the hermeneutic circle the third stage is "**to act.**" Having discerned God's will we act together toward a world the way God would want it.

[Tab 7] **Destiny** *What will be? :*

This is the ongoing work of enacting what emerged out of the design phase. The organization identifies how to empower its members and continue to learn, improvise, and sustain the change that gives life in the organization.

The common vision that emerges from these conversations will help us support the Canadian Church to live into Just Intercultural Community, Beloved Community, Shalom, or Right relationship.

[Tab 8] In the hermeneutic circle the fourth stage is "**to celebrate.**" In this stage it is named how the process has changed and transformed the community. The community celebrates how its members have engaged as active agents in the long term project toward a world the way God would want it.

[Tab 9] An experience of Appreciative Inquiry

In the study in which you are participating you will have an opportunity to experience the first two stages of this process (discover and dream). Later the report that is generated by this research will be a resource to the program oversight group of the Forum for Intercultural

Leadership and Learning as it uses the following stages of Appreciative Inquiry (design and destiny) to design and support future program.

In addition to shaping our overall work and the program we hope this introduction to Appreciative Inquiry might offer you another tool with your community as it continues its journey toward intercultural community. If you would like to learn more there are many texts we can recommend but commend as an introduction, “Appreciate Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination” by Watkins, Mohr, and Kelly.

Interview Script 1:

- **Past participants in the Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program**
- **Program facilitators and resource people**

You have heard a brief lecture on a research methodology called Appreciative Inquiry. At its core, Appreciative Inquiry is designed to enhance what is life-giving. In theological terms we can say that it can help us discern the world the way God would want it.

In this interview we will apply Appreciative Inquiry to the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program.

In the program we talk about “Just Intercultural Community”, “Beloved Community”, or “Shalom” in which all persons can be fully themselves. We will ask you to tell stories of how you experienced glimpses of “Beloved Community” during the program itself and in your home community as you applied the learnings of the program.

The program is designed to help resource the church to move toward becoming Beloved Community, for it to be a place where people can be more fully themselves as children of God. We are looking to hear stories of how we were able to do this.

Listen carefully to each other’s stories. We are going to ask you as a group to identify themes you hear in the stories.

These two first steps, telling stories and identifying themes. are the Discovery Stage. Using faith language, it is the stage of describing what was life giving or glimpses of “Beloved Community.”

We will then have you engage in the “Dream” stage of Appreciative inquiry. This stage asks, “what might be?” Theologically this is asking, “What is God calling for?” We will be asking you to have a conversation around what you would hope for the future of the program. Listen carefully to each other as we will be asking you as a group to name 5 hopes that stand out.

We will be recording this conversation. When conversations are transcribed, we will remove names and other information that would identify you or your ministry community.

Before I begin, I want to remind you, as was stated in the consent form for this research, you may withdraw from the conversation at any time.

You will be having the conversation with each other. To help with this we need two volunteers. One person who makes sure everyone has opportunity to speak, and a second person who can act as a timekeeper. Any of the questions we ask today could be given a great more time, but we want to honour the amount of time you committed to this conversation. As all of you will have opportunity to speak, and there will be several other groups meeting, we trust the wisdom of the community and the voice of God will emerge even if not all is spoken today.

- **The group is asked to name one person as a conversation facilitator.** It will be this person's role to make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak if they wish in the time given for each question.
- **The group is asked to name one person to be a timekeeper.** It will be this person's role to make sure we move through each stage of the conversation. Warn the group when there is about 5 minutes left to answer a question and then let the group know when it is time to move to the next step.

[Power Point 2: Question Slides] (*Show each as the question is asked*)

[SLIDE 1]

Question #1

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community.

You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Discovery
“What goes on?”
Appreciating

- **Question 1 for conversation.**
Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

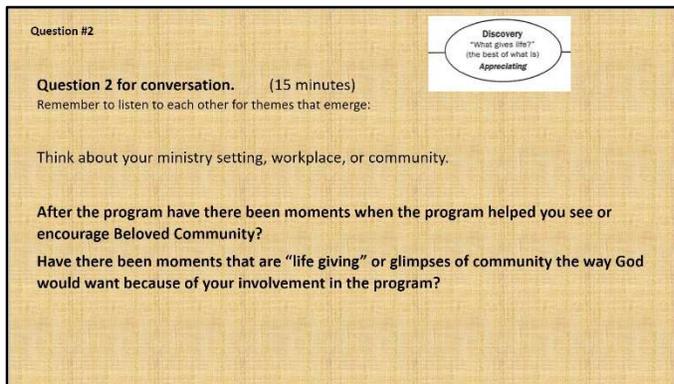
“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community. You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

You have 15 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 2]

A slide with a light brown textured background. In the top left corner, it says "Question #2". In the top right corner, there is a white oval containing the text: "Discovery", "What gives life?", "(the best of what is)", and "Appreciating". The main text on the slide reads: "Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)", "Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge.", "Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.", "After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?", and "Have there been moments that are 'life giving' or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?"

Question #2

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)
Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge.

Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are "life giving" or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

- **Question 2 for conversation.**

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

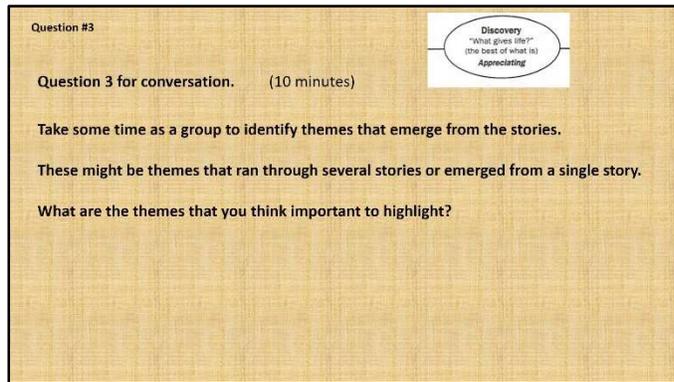
Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are "life giving" or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

You have 15 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 3]



Question #3

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

- **Question 3**

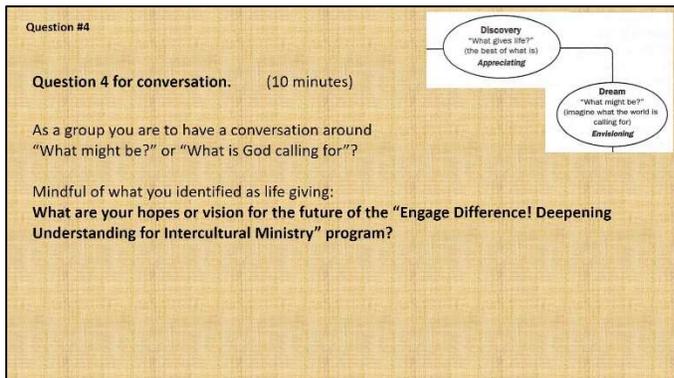
Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

You have 10 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 4]



Question #4

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around
"What might be?" or "What is God calling for?"

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:
What are your hopes or vision for the future of the "Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry" program?

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

Dream
"What might be?"
(imagine what the world is calling for)
Envisioning

- **Question 4**

As a group you are to have a conversation around "What might be?" or "What is God calling for"?

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

You have 10 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 5]

Question #5

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Discovery
“What gives life?”
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

Dream
“What might be?”
(imagine what the world is calling for)
Envisioning

- **Question 5**

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

You have 10 minutes for this conversation.

Closing Statement

Thank you for your time, stories, hopes, and vision! There are a number of different groups meeting. The stories and hopes you share will help me document some of the impact of the “Engage Difference!” program as part of my doctoral studies. In the future we will share with you a report of this research and you will be invited to read my doctoral thesis.

Interview script 2:

- Staff and representatives of program stakeholder organizations

You have heard a brief lecture on a research methodology called Appreciative Inquiry. At its core, Appreciative Inquiry is designed to enhance what is life-giving. In theological terms we can say that it can help us discern the world the way God would want it.

In this interview we will apply Appreciative Inquiry to the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program.

In the program we talk about “Just Intercultural Community”, “Beloved Community”, or “Shalom” in which all persons can be fully themselves. We will ask you to tell stories of how you experienced glimpses of “Beloved Community” during the program itself and in your home community as you applied the learnings of the program.

The program is designed to help resource the church to move toward becoming Beloved Community, for it to be a place where people can be more fully themselves as children of God. We are looking to hear stories of how we were able to do this.

Listen carefully to each other’s stories. We are going to ask you as a group to identify themes you hear in the stories.

These two first steps, telling stories and identifying themes are the Discovery Stage. Using faith language, it is the stage of describing what was life giving or glimpses of “Beloved Community.”

We will then have you engage in the “Dream” stage of Appreciative inquiry. This stage asks, “what might be?” Theologically this is asking, “What is God calling for?” We will be asking you to have a conversation around what you would hope for the future of the program. Listen carefully to each other as we will be asking you as a group to name 5 hopes that stand out.

We will be recording this conversation. When conversations are transcribed, we will remove names and other information that would identify you or your ministry community.

Before I begin, I want to remind you, as was stated in the consent form for this research, you may withdraw from the conversation at any time.

You will be having the conversation with each other. To help with this we need two volunteers. One person who makes sure everyone has opportunity to speak, and a second person who can act as a timekeeper. Any of the questions we ask today could be given a great more time, but we want to honour the amount of time you committed to this conversation. As all of you will have opportunity to speak, and there will be several other groups meeting, we trust the wisdom of the community and the voice of God will emerge even if not all is spoken today.

- **The group is asked to name one person as a conversation facilitator.** It will be this person's role to make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak if they wish in the time given for each question.
- **The group is asked to name one person to be a timekeeper.** It will be this person's role to make sure we move through each stage of the conversation. Warn the group when there is about 5 minutes left to answer a question and then let the group know when it is time to move to the next step.

[SLIDE 1]

Question #2

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)
Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:
The second question is about the impact of the program on your organization.

Think about your organization or denomination as a whole.
After the program have there been moments when involvement in the program encouraged Beloved Community in your wider organization?
Have there been moments that are "life giving" or glimpses of community the way God would want because members of your organization or denomination participated in the program?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

- **Question 1 for conversation.**
Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community. You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

The first question is about the impact of the program on individuals from your organization who have participated.

Think about participants from your denomination, institution, or organization and their experience of the program.

After the program have there been moments when involvement in the program encouraged Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of their involvement in the program?

You are encouraged to use stories to share. You have 15 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 2]

Question #1

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

The first question is about the impact of the program on individuals from your organization who have participated.

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community. You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Think about participants from your denomination, institution, or organization and their experience of the program.

After the program have there been moments when involvement in the program encouraged Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of their involvement in the program?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Discovery
“What gives life?”
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

- **Question 2 for conversation.**

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

The second question is about the impact of the program on your organization.

Think about your organization or denomination as a whole.

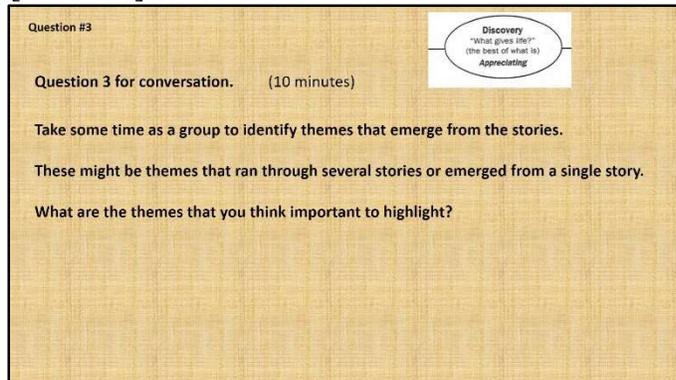
After the program have there been moments when involvement in the program encouraged Beloved Community in your wider organization?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because members of your organization or denomination participated in the program?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

You have 15 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 3]



Question #3

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

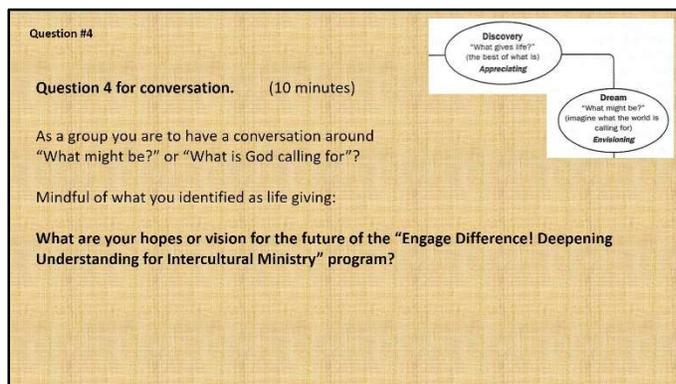
- **Question 3**

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight? You have 10 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 4]



Question #4

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(the best of what is)
Appreciating

Dream
"What might be?"
(imagine what the world is
calling for)
Envisioning

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around
"What might be?" or "What is God calling for?"

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the "Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry" program?

- **Question 4**

As a group you are to have a conversation around “What might be?” or “What is God calling for?”?

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

You have 10 minutes for this conversation.

[SLIDE 5]

Question #5

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

The diagram consists of two ovals connected by a line. The top oval is labeled 'Discovery' and contains the text: "What gives life?" (the best of what is) Appreciating. The bottom oval is labeled 'Dream' and contains the text: "What might be?" (imagine what the world is calling for) Envisioning.

- **Question 5**

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

You have 10 minutes for this conversation.

Closing Statement

Thank you for your time, stories, hopes, and vision! There are a number of different groups meeting. The stories and hopes you share will help me document some of the impact of the “Engage Difference!” program as part of my doctoral studies. In the future we will share with you a report of this research and you will be invited to read my doctoral thesis.

Appendix 5: Interview Transcriptions

(edited to remove identification of individuals or communities)

Focus Group 1: Participants. January 13, 2020.

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community.

You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this? You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Unknown Speaker 4:15

I was going to, I was going to say I have a recollection of the care that was taken at the very beginning of our gathering to emphasize that we were in a safe, safe place and encouraging us to care for each other, that was a great start. I appreciate it that. And we built on that as the as we went through the time we had together.

Unknown Speaker 4:56

Um, I didn't hear all of that, but you're talking at the beginning of the about sort of the space safe space at the beginning, I think I really appreciated we had a mentor in our group or I can't remember what we called him but somebody who was there as a kind of a chaplain almost to the group, whose role was to sort of intercede and make sure that it was a safe space and that people were being heard or to kind of call us out on if there were problems that we were smoothing over. And I found that to be a very, very helpful role to have in the group and it it moved us through some challenging places.

Unknown Speaker 6:06

And one part that I really valued was how the workshop was set up with the fact that it was done in a modeling a circle process, to the fact that the space is set up to intentionally either hear everyone's voice or at least give everyone the chance to have their voice shared or their silence in those questions be known as well. Especially as we were discussing issues that folks that would have different experience with different vulnerabilities towards. I felt like how and when everyone spoke was handled with care, and that's something I really appreciate it. And I also found the experiential learning that we did to be very life giving. So I did my program in Winnipeg and I, I don't know if this would be similar to your context. So we that also had a think that title was intercultural mentor or something to that effect. And then other folks in the community who came and shared a bit about their experience and traditions. And so we had a focus on Indigenous communities in the area, and participated in a sweat lodge started every

morning with a smudge, finished the program with a pipe ceremony. And so I found the active being in ceremony with each other to be really sacred, especially ceremony that at least folks coming from my context aren't used to as every day, parts of our life. So yeah, I don't have the exact words to put around this but being in in those ceremony together, felt like a life-giving Beloved Community that I really valued.

Unknown Speaker 8:06

I too did it just outside of Winnipeg in Beausejour at the Sandy-Saulteaux centre and so therefore had the same experience that you spoke of and that allowed us to when there were bumps in the road that community allowed us to not ignore them or nobody walked away, we're able to move our way through them and that was good and life giving.

Unknown Speaker 8:44

What I appreciated was the way in which the so, I was part of a quite large group, there were 35 of us maybe. Um and yet over the course of the five days together the trust that developed was phenomenal. Everybody kind of without really be instructed to do so had the sense to change tables every day. And so by the end of the week, everybody had sat with almost everybody else. And the, the level of vulnerability that quite a number of people offered as they struggled with working in intercultural contexts. And not just not simply like a lot of the work I've done in in areas of racism has been you know, white black or white red or but it was a whole multiplicity of different intercultural work and people struggling with their, their or being vulnerable about their struggles to make that work was just profound

Unknown Speaker 10:06

Just to go off of that, X, I completely, completely agree. And it reminded me how much I appreciated the valuing of lived experience of everyone within that space. So sometimes I feel like in different trainings, we often it's kind of that facilitator group one way, passing of knowledge. But having the chance to use our own kind of social identity and social location and dig into some of those lived experiences, learn from our cultural mentors, and other guests in the room. I really valued that and not having to kind of sanitize down lived experience into things that fit into acceptable boxes and being able to bring all of who everyone was. Like it has mentioned to, to a space that really had that foundation of trust and the welcoming of the vulnerability.

Unknown Speaker 11:26

As we all went through, was there anything that someone else said that really stuck out to you as Yes, I totally felt that to my time with the program to or no, I actually didn't feel that way in my experience.

Unknown Speaker 11:47

X, what you were saying about the sort of the being in ceremony with others. We had a very in Montreal, I want to say we have a lot of different sort of axes of experience that were there. It was a group that was intended to be I think it may have been the first the first group that was bilingual in French and English. And so it was intended to focus on cultural issues specific to Quebec and French Canadian experience that but there was also Indigenous experience and experience around race and around sexuality and other things going on all in this all in this

group. So there were a lot of sort of different axes that we're trying to navigate. And when we certainly had our mentor that we had was an Indigenous person, but it was not specifically, I don't think he was chosen as an Indigenous person, I think he was chosen as a as a as a mentor to facilitate sort of everything that was going on. And we did have invite Indigenous members of the local of the Mohawk tribe or near us in Montreal to come in and share with us some smudging ceremony. And also to lead the blanket exercise which I imaged people are familiar with. And it was that was the first time that I had experienced that and it was a very moving thing for me. And I don't know and so we had another axis of experience that opened itself up then was the experience of homelessness. So I think that while it was really kind of challenging to, to navigate all these different things going on and the way that they intersect that, that, that there was, in fact, a real life-giving aspect of that because it felt like reality, it felt like the challenges are the things that were that were, you know, it's dealing with things in real life do not fit into neat boxes and do not fit into we're going to, you know, focus on one thing at a time or, you know, you're dealing with all of these things all at once. And so it was a like, I think it was it was a little bit experimental with the language as well, you know, but, and it felt a little bit experimental, but I think that it also felt really good than that, it was it was grappling with reality.

Unknown Speaker 14:58

a real experience of intersectionality. And that's I mean, if we're, if we're committed to doing intercultural work, having that kind of experience with, you know, the language dimension you mentioned as well as. Yeah, yeah.

Unknown Speaker 15:29

I think just one thing that I found that like giving was the pace of the, the time that we had together, we never felt rushed and there was space and time to, to really listen to what other people were saying and to think and so I found that very, very helpful.

Unknown Speaker 16:03

Nodding

Unknown Speaker 16:09

I still have my painting that I did when I was there. It's in my office and it's not prominently displayed because I'm not a painter but I peek at it all the time. So that to me is life giving and yeah. Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 16:47

So I just said earlier that I was nodding in agreement with X. I really appreciated the pace. Some of the coursework I've done in this is like trying to cram way too much into to short a time. So just having time to actually absorb what we were thinking about and, and make the kind of internal, do the internal work and make the internal shifts.

Unknown Speaker 17:11

Yes.

Unknown Speaker 17:14

And I think off that I, I really valued that it was five days. And I know that that can be a barrier for a lot of people. And we're definitely moving towards a space in society where resources are short, staff time is short, and so our trainings get shorter and shorter. But the value of five days, one for the amount of content we could cover but two it gave, I felt time to really grapple with some of these big kind of complex things that we were trying to address and in the, the workshops where you're kind of in and out and you're getting it as quick as you can. And like you said, X there really isn't that time to do that internal work as you're processing what's going on. So that's something I appreciated too.

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

Unknown Speaker 21:20

I think, you know, I'm going to go back to that idea that I spoke up taking time to, to listen and as X was saying, so often in our culture, we want to move quickly and get into some sort of action as quickly as possible. And so having that preparation to go into a, another setting as we did with the ecumenical accompaniment, different culture, and the complexity of the problems meant that there wasn't going to be a quick solution. And so just being conscious of the need to, to be present to, to hear what other people were saying to let them tell their story, whatever the situation might have been, and to really carefully listen without interjecting or without trying to, to, you know, get.. pick up the pace kind of thing. I'm not articulating it very well, but it was a was a profound difference from our culture here where we sort of are problem oriented or whatever, you know, we have a problem we need to try to fix it, whereas people were trying to tell us about the, the reality of their situation and learning how to, to honor people by really listening and giving them the time they need to say what they want to just say. So being able to bring that back into church settings here or whatever it has been, it's just something I tried to be aware of consciously. And that came out of that experience of being in our group together here and then trying to apply it in the in the placement situation.

Unknown Speaker 23:57

And so I also participated in the program as a preparation for international experience. So I did this a couple months before I was preparing to move to Malawi for nine months with the Presbyterian Church. And I remember hearing other kind of young adult internships and they had very kind of tailored preparations. Here's what you're going to learn about the culture, you're moving to the country you're moving to and just based on the size and resource of our church, we didn't have those very specific things. Then after I did the program and when I arrived in

Malawi, I remember just feeling so grateful because those five days helped guide me through a journey of understanding my position into where I'm going. So you know, what, do I need to know about myself in this kind of context? What assumptions or expectations were they bringing? really understanding power dynamics in many different ways. So, being a young white woman of economic privilege in a country like Malawi, what is coming from that? And all questions that I was able to start working through in those five days that learning, you know, about Malawi, as a country wouldn't have brought me through understanding the colonial legacy and where I find myself in that. And so like, like X was mentioning it, gave me the tools or started me in a process and journey to, you know, sit down and listen and not insert myself the way that our culture often values and is, is telling us it's helpful to do and, and then I worked in other international context after that and just kept building and learning on or building and learning around that idea of Yeah, like, like X mentioned how to deeply listen and deeply listen well. I guess understanding these complexities around that kind of previously, my life, I think I took this when I was 21 or 22. Still early on, I wasn't necessarily thinking about the background and complexities and that might be fueling or leading to some of these conversations. I don't know if that's clear, but I'll be faster.

Unknown Speaker 26:41

I think being part of the program allowed me to come back to the congregation that I serve that is quite multicultural and is becoming increasingly over the years and just to be aware of many things, so I didn't even think about before and I think that's helped our ministry. So, you know, who is setting up in worship, who is doing leadership on committees, and who is what does it look like as well as what does it feel like and what do people want to do and I just kind of went, "Oh, wow, we're one big happy family" before and now I was being a bit more intentional about it. So that was a really good learning, I think, and a really good realization that came from the group to my ministry.

Unknown Speaker 27:36

I think for me, and I have found that I recognize some of the principles and I recognize that beloved community, sometimes more outside of the church then inside, in that like I have found. I live in Montreal, which is an enormously diversity I you know, and work in, I don't know, I mean, I live in I live in a coop and working in in a sort of activist circles outside of the church where there's a great deal of diversity to sort of negotiate, I guess, among people who have common goals or common, you know, common living arrangements, common whatever it is, but it's like there's, there's a great deal of cultural diversity to negotiate. And I have found that the, the course has been, was very helpful for me to sort of recognize some of the dynamics that might be going on in those situations. People who didn't necessarily have the common language of the church that we had in the group. And so that was an interesting thing to find. And that's also helped me to sort of recognize umm, how I put this, that to recognize the ways in which the ways in which the church has.. it can be sort of stuck in its dynamic. And in comparing contrasting with these groups outside of the church and how they relate to these ideas that would covered in the course. I don't know it's brought up, it's made. It's made some of the some of the challenges in the church a little bit more legible, I guess. I don't know exactly if that makes sense. But it feels it feels like it's made the challenges more visible. I don't know how well it helps me to encourage to fix them, but it at least made them more visible. And I do think,

though, that it has, for me has definitely had an impact beyond the walls of the church and beyond sort of a parish context or a church community context.

Unknown Speaker 30:27

Um, I think the thing that I've been working on, I think the thing I've been working on since the course is trying to figure out how to show up differently. So I'm really increasingly aware of, and I'm not sure I can't remember who said this already, but I alluded to it. I'm talking about connecting things, but um, is that You know, being a white person of privilege, I have a particular expectation about how you engage in conversation for instance, right? So, it's okay to interrupt and it's okay to, you know, be in certain ways and you have an agenda and the point is to get through the business and some of those kinds of things so, to be trying to learn to pay more attention and give the other person who is speaking more space and not always be doing the back and forth dynamic. That's been that's been important for me. There's an Indigenous group at a six nations does a meeting called grandmother's tea and all they do is once a month, you have a potluck lunch and eat together. Then at the end of the lunch, you spend maybe half an hour and you go around the room and everybody says two sentences about something like, what was your favorite vacation? Or what are you looking forward to about Christmas? Or just a really simple thing like that? And then we're done. And in the past, I kind of felt like, well, what's the purpose of this? Right? There's that kind of get it done mentality. And now I'm going and I'm just wanting to be there and listen, and figure out what does it mean just to be present with one another? That kind of

Unknown Speaker 32:44

That had me thinking a lot about, the theme of representation really came up for me and during the program and since then, and I still remember we were working through some kind of, you know, worksheet with different questions and one question was, can you buy band aids that reflect your skin color? And do you have textbooks where people who look like you are in the textbook, which has really led to a snowballing of thinking about representation. And who is in what spaces? What voices are valued? Who's deciding who is at the table? What are those power dynamics? And X, I think you mentioned, you know, who's standing up in church who's taking roles of leadership? And what structures and policies do we have that encourages that, prevents that who's making those policies, who's implementing those structures, and the snowball just keeps going and going and going. And but both in the church and outside of the church representation has been a big takeaway for me. And so I guess the question of what are glimpses of these moments is when there is this authentic, diverse representation that isn't tokenistic that isn't created that isn't done to take a box or meet a requirement. But and yeah, and it's done through the work of that body.

Unknown Speaker 34:14

Oh, yeah, I was. I was at a gathering. Did I interrupt? Were you done? I was at a gathering in November and it was it was like you're talking about like, we had people of all colours, all ages. And some people who, who had grown up in Canada and some people who had not, and from a whole, a whole different and it was just like that glimpse of this is what this is what the kingdom would be like. This is. Yeah, it was. It was amazing. It was a church gathering. And it was just so phenomenal.

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

Unknown Speaker 36:54

I think one for me was intersectionality like the importance of really bringing together, and I mean, we reach hit it, came at it in different ways, but the importance of bringing together a variety of different kinds of intercultural experiences and backgrounds and like I've done work in the United States in racism, it's kind of just black and white, literally. And and so to have that, that diversity is just really significant. I think that's one theme I heard.

Unknown Speaker 37:42

One theme that really stuck out for me was the idea of addressing these complex problems or challenges and not just avoiding them. I think even when the in one of the first days the program I think we were talking through like the doctrine discovery in some, and maybe not, maybe I'm just thinking we did, but some of those big kind of institutional historical moments and policies and practices that we're part of that have led us here. And not just, you know, how do we get along with each other, but how do we take stock of the history and take responsibility for those things and, and lean into the discomfort but lean into it with intention, and with tools and resources and understanding to move forward and do something about it. So that that came up for me in our conversation.

Unknown Speaker 38:44

Um, I was hearing a lot from all of you about, about listening, you know, just learning how to listen and I and I don't think the word was ever mentioned, but I was hearing a lot of humility, I think in a very positive in the most positive sense of that word right like that, that there's just a sense of learning how to center other people in relationship so you know, in in your relationship with them and that was a that struck me with all of all of what you all had to say. So that was one.

Unknown Speaker 39:33

I was hearing that we were learning a new way and not and realizing that our way was not necessarily the best or only way of doing things, and how there was value in learning a new way and continues to be value in learning a new way. I think I heard that too from others as well as myself.

Unknown Speaker 40:01

also heard a lot about, I think, in two big ways the value of time. And of taking time, because that was both like that both happened in, in talking about sort of how the structure of the course itself and allowing how it, there was space to allow the participants, ourselves, to sort of take the time we needed to get through the sort of just the material but also just the challenges and to absorb and to really reflect constructively during the thing but also the value of time and the

sense of the taking the time to listen to really listen to others and to allow people the space and the time that they need. That those things were related like me the benefit of having the of having the experience of being allowed to take the time is a way of sort of internalizing the value of allowing, of making sure other people have that.

Unknown Speaker 41:17

Another thing I heard was a honoring of experience. So just, you know, the, the whole invite, I mean, even this process is, is continuing that, you know, telling stories and offering experiential learning as well as theory and some of that.

Unknown Speaker 41:48

X, I was struck by the comment about intersectionality and it made me think about opportunities these kinds of gatherings together of people to move beyond clichés. Like, the more people we meet, there's such a wide spectrum of it in any group or culture, whatever and to be willing to see that spread of diversity, like you can't lump this group of people all in together that group of people or whatever and fast tracking is to go with a cliché and to you know, but, but it takes more effort, It takes more listening, it takes more time, as we were saying, to, to hear individuals stories and get them the attention they deserve.

Unknown Speaker 43:08

Another theme that I heard a lot was trust and vulnerability and the intentionality of creating a space that the participants felt like they could trust and they could be vulnerable in which I think is important in this kind of work because we are understanding our role individually and our role as part of institutions where we're connected with I can bring up feelings of shame or guilt, as we see ways that we've been part of oppressive systems. And so if, it has been oppressive, maybe in some of the ways that we would been in the world that were part of the culture we were, we were raised in or has been part of, and so to take I think a lot to unlearn these things before we can relearn how to be in in just community and so without that solid foundation then nothing really can build from there

Unknown Speaker 44:41

you know that that the thing that you were just saying X about trust how important that was in our gathering together because it you know if you've come from a position of leadership and you know, meeting other people's expectations, it really is quite something to be able to admit vulnerability in front of others and that sort of thing. So to, to have that kind of trust was quite, quite amazing.

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around

“What might be?” or “What is God calling for”?

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

Unknown Speaker 46:31

I think I have hope of who the participants are. I remember in my cohort, I think it was very minister heavy and compared to those of us who were in lay role and I would love to see more lay leadership. You know, persons in the church participate in programs like this because it's great when our when our leadership is going through these workshops and can think critically on some of these issues. That's certainly important. But to really have this kind of way of thinking and being and valuing disseminate out into the communities that we are in, I think would be really important. And kind of highlight who are we valuing and how, and where and.. um.. yeah, I would just love and, again, I did this quite a while ago, but this would really be interested to see a diversity in the participation and the support to help them participate, and realizing that there's quite a cost and the time and, and other resources that might be hard to prepare.

Unknown Speaker 48:02

I would just second that as another lay person who participated and was one of only a few. I don't remember the exact makeup, but it was very much very much leaning towards ordained ministers in the in the group. And so I think more lay leadership or more general participation would be great. I wonder... I felt like that there were a lot of relationships kind of started and I might have a hope of a way of continuing with the same cohort to kind of deepen, deepen over time of because I, You know, I feel like that those, the relationships and the challenges and we had an exercise I don't know if that works the same way in every group but when we had an exercise where people were really invited to bring in specific sort of either projects or issues that they were working on in their community to bring those to the group and kind of design a response or, based on what they had learned over the over that time and I felt like it would be really great if we could follow up and see what happened with that and help each other continue to go through some of those issues.

Unknown Speaker 49:52

I participated with a bunch of leadership from my denomination and some of us have continued to meet and that's been a really, even just to kind of like recalibrate, right, to get back to like, Oh yeah, I committed to doing this work, I committed it just, it just an end to say, Okay, I feel like there's some accountability to say, Okay, this is what I've been working on. And, you know, this is what's next and these are the questions I'm it's, yeah, I would echo that it because I had that experience. It's been really valuable. Um, the other thing and I, I had this some this was this came for me while I was still doing the program, but I work with the education retreat center that's moving from being a, well United Church of Canada, It's broadened to be to connect with other Christian denominations, but also now is really quite intentionally becoming an interfaith center. So we have a large Muslim, and also are building the relationship that was already there with the Six Nations. And so one of my visions would be for this training program to bring people, not just Christians together, but people from other faiths. Who would say, longing and agenda for ending the language would be different, but the vision of a world where people aren't divided by culture, race, creed.

Unknown Speaker 51:41

I would definitely second that move towards an interfaith model or even engaging with a more secular world because I guess that was I guess that It'd be one thing it's like that most of the people who were in the group shared definitely church language. And so it's, I think, would be really great to be able to talk about, I don't know to, I don't know, how do I say this practice? Talking about these things in a way that's not necessarily specific to a Christian context.

Unknown Speaker 52:40

Yeah. Yeah, I would agree to.

Unknown Speaker 52:51

That's interesting. I appreciate what what's being said about the interfaith and connecting with the secular. I think there's much to be gained from that and hope that that kind of thing could happen without losing our, our Christian distinctiveness or whatever. So I would hope that we would be able to have that kind of balance in whatever broader configuration we might come to. I did want to just say about that idea of checking in after people have done the course and then have perhaps gone on to have some sort of actual experience, the value of reconnecting, X, you and I weren't in the same cohort, but we've had opportunities to talk together based on the kinds of things that we learned, and that's been really, really valuable, so I appreciate it very much, but that that's sort of happened, informally. I mean, we've been lucky that we've been able to do that. But if there was some mechanism that could help that happen more broadly.

Unknown Speaker 54:26

I sure wish it wasn't as costly because as soon as I mentioned it to anyone about the event on how great it was costly in terms of time, and in terms and even more importantly, in terms of money that just for the average person, that it's just beyond reach. So I know that there's some grants available and things but it's still a lot of money and, yeah, it's for those for Yeah, sometimes it's like, you know, a week rent or something and so it really feels a lot. So, you know, I wish I say that in a negative way. So in this appreciative inquiry I wish it was more accessible for more people and in of all economic and social economic backgrounds and cultures and all of that. Yep. And a wide variety of experiences because that would broaden the experience of everything that we did and experienced there.

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Unknown Speaker 57:22

I'd like to pick up on what X said about the importance of the this program and these kinds of opportunities and sustainability would be, I guess, where I'm going with this, that that this kind of program will continue to be supported and therefore available to people. So that would be one, my basic hope. And, and that has practical implications about funding and that kind of thing. And I was thinking about it. When we come back, after having had the benefit of the, the, you

know, the preparation by taking the course and then the benefit of a, an intercultural experience coming back and speaking about it to remember to speak about this, the interaction we had before we left, it was within an important component of all of this. So, I'm being out of our conversation today I'm being more mindful of that myself to talk about that.

Unknown Speaker 58:36

Thank you. Yeah, I definitely want to say that I think these are related that accessibility in terms of time and money as it relates to the sort of the diversity of representation in the program.

Unknown Speaker 58:58

Going off of that, as the word that really stuck out for me as you're going was invitational, being economically invitational, invitational from like an interfaith perspective and intercultural perspective. Yeah, and being intentional about those invitations in participation and in, development of what the program looks like, to again, representation not just in participation, but in the entire life of this program.

Unknown Speaker 59:58

I guess kind of related to that, and I don't know if it's the same or if it's different or building from that, but, um, to continue to widen the circle of, of, of participation and always have a dream for the church as being able to give leadership not just for the church, but to make things happening a wider circle. So picking up on what you were saying that about, you know, bringing in people from not church experience and widening the circle for that conversation. Because I think, I mean, this is the stuff we need to be doing and talking about, and it's just getting more and more urgent.

Unknown Speaker 1:00:42

And I also value in talking about depth of participation within communities. When you go, when you have one or two people in the community who go and come back with a vocabulary and come back with tools. You know, the more people within any given community who have that, who share that vocabulary and those tools, I think the more effective it can be. So to be able to, yeah, it's both wider but also deeper within the communities that are already representing.

Unknown Speaker 1:01:31

And I would add depth in.. um.. so like, who's the mentor and who does worship and who does the opening and what kind of, so the depth of and breadth of our experience of intercultural world as reflected in the workshop as well. So if it is an Indigenous opening one day, perhaps it could be you know, a Christian one the next day or a Muslim one the next day or whatever it is that that the group entails or that the group might learn from. So not just in participants but in like the overall part of the program. Yeah. Yeah, I would be. I would love that I would, you know, just feel like Yeah, that would be a great hope for me.

Focus Group 2: Facilitators. January 15, 2020

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community.

You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

(Note: this section not directly transcribed from a recording. video recording failed. Reconstructed from researcher’s notes during the conversation)

There were participants who did not understand French and there were participants who did not understand English. However, when the language they did not speak was being used, they were still listening. They were doing so intentionally as they felt the importance of the person being able to express themselves. There was a recognition that it is important to listen when we can’t understand the other language.

There was a building of trust. There was an openness to listening and trying to understand.

There was a deep sadness at the epiphany of recognizing marginalization of people in the group—most often of people of colour. Out of that came something good. People who feel othered or marginalized, felt heard.

There was a participant who was offended by something a racialized person had said that day. Found her in the bathroom crying. She felt she couldn’t stay for the rest of the program. She didn’t end up leaving. It was a moment of being able to see how people can grow and work together in community.

The retreat format was important. It gave the program a spiritual undertone.

The majority of the participants were not white Anglo-Saxon. They came with their own great experiences of intercultural community and could have been the teachers of the course. We were able to give words and images so that they could speak about their own experience, rather than teaching them. We were receivers of learning as much as teachers.

The facilitation team. We let go of control. We trusted each other and trusted the process.

When I did an exercise with flour and asked people to hug each other. they enthusiastically sprung up to hug and participate. This in the midst of a context that has all kinds of rules and concerns about hugging and connecting in this way—people were willing to break the rules.

On the last day everybody found a place and voice to say something.

In the program I was part of there was a gentleman from India, a sister from Myanmar, and myself from the Philippines. We were all able to learn something about Indigenous communities. There was great potential for possibilities.

There were moments of conflict and discomfort. Within those people were able to speak their experience and speak their truth. And within that context could resolve problems.

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

Gave me a fuller understanding of history and how we relate. The program helped me to induce relationship in my congregation context. The Majority are Filipino and there have been a small number of Indigenous. The Filipino community tends to be closed. I have been able to induce conversations differently. There are now 5 Indigenous persons part of the church.

As a racialized person I am always experiencing moments when I feel I don't belong. At my work with students I work to build spaces where everyone belongs. It often feels I am alone in this. The programs are a place where I encounter others who are committed to this work. I am reminded that I am not alone.

A lot of the participants are from the dominant group yet are there committed to learn.

The relationship building that happened. People found other people and continue to work together. People who had not personally known each other realized that they have the same desires. The same happened with the group of program designers and facilitators.

The program has emboldened me to use my voice in situations where previously I would have, consciously or unconsciously, been unable to speak. It gave me permission to speak up.

Seeing that people are in different places in their journey has helped me when I encounter the same in my context.

Raised awareness with facilitators about ourselves. We have had our own intercultural experiences that the program helped us understand. Facilitators can't detach themselves from the process of the program.

I have gained understanding of my own spiritual journey through the lenses of intercultural ministry. I have been noticing different ways of expressing intercultural ministry as I am in faith and secular settings. I have learned theologies and language discourse through participating with other people.

There are power struggles in my own community. I am trying to figure out whose moments of where Beloved Community are. Have found them with individuals who are trying to build relationship across various diversities. One example is with people who are intellectually challenged.

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

(Note: transcribed from video recording)

Unknown Speaker 2:24

I heard a few times sitting with the discomfort and staying with it. Through that to come to understanding of resolving conflict...um..

Unknown Speaker 3:04

And X, I really, really connected with what you said about being with others who are really committed to creating spaces where all belong. I guess because I am in a community setting where I feel very much in the minority. So it's good to be able to know that there are others who are committed to this work and who are doing this work and I find it very, very encouraging and very uplifting. So so that particular theme for me, really resonated.

Unknown Speaker 3:55

I feel like someone might be trying to speak or.. Okay, I'm going to go ahead then. I don't know...I heard the theme come up about being seen and heard. And also, I guess, kind of in the same vein as having a safe space and feeling safe to be to be seen and heard and to speak your truth or to push back.

Unknown Speaker 4:26

Yeah, I see the theme of the word possibility it is, always keeps coming back and back to me possibility because there are some things that we never thought possible, like, you know, us talking to another person, having migrants here. And that's the theme of possibility. We have a

word for that "puede." It's possible, and so it opens to a lot of things for me. So the word is possibility, the possibility, even how remote it is our possibility that might be but that ran very, very close to me. Reverberated so much possibilities, possibility.

Unknown Speaker 5:20

Well, um, I guess, trying to think about X's question about pushbacks. Um, I think one or two things that, for me emerged and as a theme is, is one, there are always disagreements and tensions and I think that for a community to build itself as a beloved community, there will be a disagreement and I think that should be taken positively. But with it also comes the whole idea that X emphasized and that is the willingness to listen. And sometimes willingness to listen requires us to in the process make or ask for clarifications as for, Can you express it in a different way? So the developing the sensibilities to listen to the story of another is not an easy thing to do. That is, I heard it quite loudly. So that's what I wanted to highlight.

Unknown Speaker 6:35

So I would say, simply to build relationship between people of different backgrounds is so important to experience that that is possible that we build trust in relationship. And I heard X saying and I also heard the X saying in their stories that also goes with giving a voice to this place to speak for people who feel marginalized.

Unknown Speaker 7:14

And to add to that I heard like from X and X, that kind of a sense of belonging and kindredness, like you know, that sense of beloved community and feeling welcome and being able to embrace that and to connect to go along with that as well.

Unknown Speaker 8:07

I tend to agree with what's been said so far. So I don't think there's anything really peculiar that pops out for me at this moment.

Unknown Speaker 8:19

Maybe I add something. What also was important is that this experience that we live in the group in the program gave enough enthusiasm for people to spill out into their contexts and into the world they live in, right. So this experience is important.

Unknown Speaker 8:47

I heard to like an openness to change and that perceptions changed and realizations came up from a few stories.. yeah, but there's that possibility of discovering something or seeing something in a new way. We're seeing someone in a new way as well.

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around

“What might be?” or “What is God calling for”?

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

Unknown Speaker 10:40

Yes. I just wanted to put this out there. And I don't know if I said it so everybody knows I'm with the United Church. And they also said that I in a community where I am in a minority, so the dominant white persons who make up the congregation, and I, and the and the ministry leadership. And I know that the clergy, United Church are required to take racial justice training. And so it may be a little bit without having myself gone through that training, I don't know what it is. But I just have heard for some people, it's something I have to do and you know, so I, my hope for this program would be that more of the ministry leaders, the clergy leaders within the United Church, were able to take advantage of the five day DUIM program because I think maybe it would open people's minds to new ideas. I have people to understand more about how the privilege and power works within their community. And so a person's may be who, like myself within those communities might be able to, to work more closely with the clergy to move our communities along, in in the Beloved Community journey.

Unknown Speaker 12:40

I have a very, very deep deep hope that what's two parts, that we can figure out a way to put this work towards social justice. Inequities that are that, that these differences of power that X was just talking about are at the root of our big part of the problem. And in such a way that we can see like, measurable changes and improvements in marginalized people's lives. And I guess my like, you know, I guess the part that's life giving to me more obviously, just the change of life giving, but to me is to see like these networks that are being created, and these connections between other people who already understand why this work is integral, and who are longing for beloved community into moving in that way, can be connecting on a regular basis, and particularly, and bringing into the fold more of those folks who are getting burnt out in the social justice circles or who are feeling kind of isolated, not alone and that they're hitting, they had up against all these walls that we could start to have in our various geographic communities like gatherings on a regular basis that just keep people empowered, and give people a safe space to talk about it to get new ideas and to celebrate. And just to kind of keep the work moving forward, keep it energized, because I'm finding that a lot of folks are burning out and just feeling I guess, dejected isn't quite the word I want to use, but demoralized. And so and then we just need it on so many fronts. Like there's just so many crises that our culture and our society is feels like we're losing the battle on and I know that the people are there to do work and the desires are there and so I, I feel that we're just kind of scattered and disjointed. And so I would hope that we would in some way be able to like, energize and connect and support that works in ways that we can see change. And see, I guess, measurable steps that we're getting closer to, you know, that Martin Luther King vision that shalom vision, the kind of yeah, like being in right relationship with each other and with God and with creation, that we can help empower people who are already working towards that. To see more results.

Unknown Speaker 15:40

One aspect we haven't talked about yet is the ecumenical dimension of the program and I don't want to lose that because relations between our different denominations are kind of stuck and not

very dynamic. And I think this program also offers the opportunity to see denominational identity as culture and to bridge that and to open that dialogue again. So I hope that.

Unknown Speaker 16:16

Yeah, yeah X, you beat me to the draw for the knowledge of everybody, both X and I are came from the same university, the same institute, we were together, we were once part of Bosse. So it's nice to see you again. I was about to say that but, you know, tapping into that dovetailing into that would be something like, but also these things would be seeping into our churches structures. So that some of the structures that has long been there be be reimagined or well, for lack of a better word dismantled and replaced with another one that really fits the context because there's a prediction in the news that in 20 years now some of the major denominations in Canada would fail to sustain its life. And so what does it presents us so it for me that's a possibility again, and opportunity for that, how do we look at it in an ecumenical fashion and at the same time, mindful of our own of denominations, so and the structures that is, so yeah, I think I look at it in more practical terms, but also I dream and we imagine things because the face of Christianity in Canada is already here. It's changing. It's already happening. And I see, period, Manitoba alone. I see a lot of other people folks coming in and migrating and the world is changing. Thank you X. Thank you for that.

Unknown Speaker 18:18

The two things that I have, I guess is, I think one of them goes along with the whole question of ecumenical, and that is the, on one hand we've been working about, you know, identifying white privilege as part of the structural questions and difficulties that minoritize communities are confront. And one of the things that I will hope I can get address at some point as the is how minoritize community sometimes reproduce some of those structures of power and how there needs to be learning within individual minoritized communities about how they themselves can begin to think about building a different world where people belong. But together with that also goes a deeper a deepening of our theological understanding. I think as a theologian and an ethicist, I'm always looking for the need of the theological aspect. And that is one thing that I've always been searching for. And this this kinds of activities in organizations and, and that is something that I continue to look and hope for.

Unknown Speaker 20:00

So I don't want to repeat what everyone else has said but definitely I agree. And I would also add then that I'm just expanding the audience to even include secular, you know, people who are not Christians. And also different languages like I know there's French already but there's different cultures that could be included who have a different language.

Unknown Speaker 20:34

X, I would agree with X what she just said, I I also think there's a need and thirst for this kind of workshop. No matter the format it can take for for faith communities for small groups. So there can definitely be development there. I I also think just from a facilitation point of view, especially if the goal is to be able to have, have the materials be easily used and implemented without having to train facilitators on, you know, with a lot of take a lot of time to do that. I think the materials should be a little more streamlined and clear. The experiment, I only have this one weekend experience in Montreal, but I think it was a challenge. No matter how much the spirit

work through it, it was sort of anxiety in these things to have so many facilitators on one team for an equal number of participants with different facilitators, each bringing their own piece and then putting together the materials sort of at the last moment. It was hard to have like a cohesive view in advance about what would be going on. And so I think that made for a couple of moments throughout that weekend where we were just kind of surfing on things and trying to almost improvise. And I think the, the, the workshop merits strong documentation that is, you know, at least has some kind of a strong basis that that doesn't move too much and doesn't change too much to which other people based on their own experiences and the context where the workshop is being given. There can be add ons and adaptations, but I would hope that going forward, some kind of a general documentation can be established. That's, that's clear for everyone so that there's a everyone's kind of on the same page to start with.

Unknown Speaker 22:54

I have a small point, that's been buzzing around in my brain for some time. And it's just a step back from, from all of the comments which I agree very much so about the program and the potential. And what X was saying about the need and the thirst for this kind of experience that people are recognizing that they have a sort of a spiritual and theological movement towards beloved community. But one of the things on the opposite of that which I find very, almost how to put it, it's, the first step is in, in promoting the program I found often quite a resistance to the idea that even though there is this thirst for, for beloved community, and I'm thinking that we also need some small way of engaging conversation about people who, who resist even though their own ministry is involved in intercultural relationships and ministry, how the presented in a way that starts the conversation before they even come to the program. So that it's really understood as something very important in our, in our communities. And that, you know, into schools, church and non church I think, is common sense.

Unknown Speaker 24:40

I agree.

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Unknown Speaker 25:22

Well, for me, I'm gonna be pretty selfish here. So for me, I think, a solid theological understanding would help a great deal take us in so many different directions, both in understanding ourselves as a community, beloved community but also what that means with that. What does shalom mean? What does Beloved Community mean, all those understandings I think, would help us a great deal because they would also help us in understanding our questions about the divine and are also about what it means to be church.

Unknown Speaker 26:14

The ones that are resonating and with me. Hello? Okay, I thought someone else was going to

speak... As I think it was X that spoke about addressing how we recreate, I guess the status quo of the dominant culture in minority, minoritized communities as well as I think it was X that was saying, how do we better express the need for this work for those people that like that needs that are as she said, like are in intercultural ministry and yet are resistant to the work, I also resonated with what X said about extending this other languages and also the secular circles. And of course, as I said, like I'm, I would really like to see like, I think that we need to, in that same vein, like in full social justice work because it's like a beloved community and Shalom. That's what it is right? And so to start to do this in a way where we're seeing results as far as being in my relationship with God and each other and the environment.

Unknown Speaker 27:36

I would add here just endorse point that X brought up about how do we break down the resistance to engage maybe with some of the ideas around power and privilege within our communities.

Focus Group 3: Participants. January 16, 2020.

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community.

You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Unknown Speaker 0:38

Maybe before I start monitoring or inviting people, I can share my story so I could, you know, also focus on inviting other people to share their stories. So very quickly, I think, in one of the intercultural workshop that I host, I hosted, you know, at the church, it was the time when I try to minimize using English using language as the, as the communication kind of medium, I encouraged I created some exercise for people to use just the body language and, or gestures for a language that they don't, you know, they at the other person wouldn't understand so they could be making up sounds. So to just go blah, blah blah you know, so that you know, everyone is equal, you know, in that conversation. And, and it was actually to me it was very emotional time when we get back together and talk about the experience because some some of the non English speaking or you know, some of the people that who are learning English kind of share that it was the first time they felt very equal in Canada or you know, in [location]. So some people share their story and to me it was it was very emotional for a lot of newcomers to to share their stories and felt equal at that moment. So that's a story that I, I share so I invite others to share yours.

Unknown Speaker 2:21

I remember in my DUIM experience, our group was some of our, our group was preparing worship, we're planning worship. And there were some differences of opinion and didn't seem to be. We couldn't get past some of these differences of opinion, but until after, after our session where we're sitting during coffee break some of us on a step outside. And, and somebody pointed out that you know what any changes that are made in something like worship, take a long time. And, and it's and the insight is that, you can't make changes like this and expect them to happen quickly. You have to be patient. Patience is the key. So that was a good insight. And it helped us to get past our differences. That's my contribution.

Unknown Speaker 3:38

I know, for me when I took part in actually both of the programs that I took part in it was the possibility of change. So there was it was the first time in a long time that I sort of had seen hope in the idea that there could be a diverse church that there could be many voices that there could

be opportunity for sharing stories. And, and I really think that came about for me, especially when I did the DUIM program in Toronto because I think it was actually on the first day when we were going through the exercise that Jonathan put us through about sort of placing us on the map of sort of where we'd all come from, and, you know, and so on, and just seeing that change and seeing the willingness of people to actually listen to one another and to actually see each other. And it was the sort of being seen part that made me and it just fills me with hope like that there was hope in the, in the possibility of, you know, sort of diverse, you know, engaged church that actually, you know, shared stories shared the possibility of, you know, movement towards a beloved community.

Unknown Speaker 5:00

I, like I say, I did this course in the 2018 in November. Yeah, moving toward a beloved community. I like the last statement, my fellow have said, we are, it's very difficult to create a beloved community is according to the Bible or according to the eyes of God. Because for me, it's not about you being on the table of people of different races. I mean, it's one of the things which I was expecting it a good beginning for us to share who are we in terms of this intercultural thing? Who are we where are we from originally? Of course, you can tell X is an African and somebody is from is from that about corner of the world. But that is not enough for me. Because when we were having that workshop, DUIM workshop, we were people from different races. But still we were using English, the language of the dominant people. There were people who were struggling to speak English, me included as well as you can hear my accent. And there are other people who couldn't express themselves in English. But we were left without option except trying to express ourselves in English. So for me, the program is really good and important, because it is trying to tell us our wishes. We will never be there because colonialism left big prints in our lives on day to day living, the white supremacy is still leading the world. So I'm saying we need to do a lot than what we might think, for us to come up with the beloved community. But over and above all I'm saying the program is so beautiful. It's an eye opener. It gives us time to talk about it. It's just a beginning. So let's go. Thank you so much.

Unknown Speaker 7:51

Follow up to what X just said as a member of the privileged white community one of the parts of the workshop that I found very helpful was just recognizing where others were in the I forget how to explain it, it was the we stood in different spots depending on where we were in in terms of privilege and access to what this is what our society has to offer. And of course, some people were very far from privilege and others like myself were very high up on the privilege and that was one very helpful piece to look at for me. And then another part that was also very encouraging was to understand that different religions, different faith expressions on part of our language as well as my faith language, I guess is the way I would put it.

Unknown Speaker 9:39

I think I, the moment I felt almost close to the Beloved Community during the DUIM, I mean, during were the small groups moments. When we were in small groups. I think I felt in those groups more accommodated, more listened to and I felt like I get space to, to be able to express myself. I think maybe on this same note that was raised by X, some of us like somewhat like myself, I still think in [mother language], you know, to translate everything from my mind before it gets to my, to my mouth, I have to play a translation processes. And in a larger group, usually

for those who English is their native language, they just you speak as they think. I mean, they thought they they thought it from their lips, and I have some thoughts and processing them. And I'm not sure if I'm using the right word if I'm you. I mean I struggle with this way, the way I'm translating it is it going not to offend anyone? Is it a good word? Is it not a bad word? Is it going to express exactly what I'm supposed to be saying? Am I saying the right thing? So I'll be struggling through that. Everyone else is speaking and the conversation is going. For myself, I usually find myself very quiet and then try to simply listen and learn and not contribute. Two things happened. That was it, that I lose the opportunity to learn, because I have not expressed what I'm thinking so as to get feedback. And also I deprived that group, the opportunity to hear what I'm thinking and fit into the discussion. And maybe all that have been visited but because I'm still struggling with the language and things like that. So the small groups are I mean, really helpful to me because I think everyone was going to have to make sure that everyone is contributed. Like if we are doing a project, you know, the small projects that we do in groups during DUIM training. The project is great, everybody's thinking, what do you think about this Tumblr? Where should we place it? Do you think if we do this it balances? So I'm in a small group, everyone gets that opportunity and I feel that creates more of the Beloved Community, because it's everyone's contributing. Everyone is an opportunity to contribute, and the contribution is, is valued. So I feel those models are important. And I think that's what intercultural should be. I think they need to be conscious in intercultural that we learn through listening to others, who may take a longer time to processes because they are struggling with the language. English is my kind of my third language. You know.

Unknown Speaker 13:06
I agree with you,X.

Unknown Speaker 14:13

I'm reminded by the conversation, thank you X. It was, for me a four or five day residential program that mattered. Because I learned more from having lunch or spending an evening on the road with X, than in some of the curricular time. Also, the idea that, as I am reminded of it, it was a Guild of prophets that got together. It was a particular it was all church workers like clergy. It was not my usual community of people. And it was a particularly good subset, our which was helpful. Cuz X and I go back to the you know, we're all white guys. So generationally, and in the broad stroke of like Alberta conferences, like X mentions, we get one sense of who we are collectively, it's good to gather in subsets and experience that it's more than the verbal behavior that happens within the curricular moment in in the DUIM session. It's a gathering of people for five days. That was very valuable. I'll stop that was just a couple of headlines.

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

Unknown Speaker 17:43

Okay, so, to catch the time, maybe I'll share mine too. After joining DUIM, I actually went back to [location]. Well, you know, came back to [location] to my church and organized a regular intercultural workshops that you know, that got extracted information from DUIM and, and create mini workshops. So we instead of the five full days I break it down into one and half hours. And then we now also have English conversations and encourage you know people from different countries and cultures to join us. So I do actually see you know, after two, two years, you know, three years of operation, we do have a regular group of diverse, you know, a group of people with diverse culture or background. Right now, regularly we have one person, one person from Japan, Thailand, Korea, China, and South America, India, you know, so we have one of each, almost, maybe, you know, there are a few Chinese people but they come and go. So, we do have a very diverse group of people going you know, they are creating kind of activities together. So they will go out to eat they might go out to watch any movies or play badminton whatever so they are now you know taking off and enjoying life together. So this is something that I feel very very touched and it's a big motivation for me to continue organizing this program. So that's my part so to you

Unknown Speaker 19:30

Okay. When we were at the meeting I asked X, what's the purpose of this workshop? Because I was expecting a kind of sessions, team up and fighting things like racism in Canada also things discriminate other and me. And X said to me, X that is a good idea, but the main focus for is for we are around 15 people. [sound break up...The 15 peopleplaces... teaching this will make it and then when I come here.]

Unknown Speaker 20:16

X, something's happening with your maybe if what I'm going to do is stop your video and that might help where you're breaking up your voice a little bit. So just for a minute while you answer that question, just continue on.

Unknown Speaker 20:39

Okay, so when I came here, I started to talk about it, about the program from the pulpit. And as of now, I'm carrying out a project as well with it....I teach..... [sound breaking up]

Unknown Speaker 21:40

No, I I have already said everything I wanted to say. From the time I had the workshop. I started preaching about it and I'm teaching my congregation about the goodness of intercultural ministries. Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 22:07

I think so that what DUIM course has made the difference in some people's lives and also my ministry or how I engage with others in the region or in the presbytery or in other ways is that I think those who took the DUIM course has different attitudes have the different attitudes developed that means they know what it why it's important to get together and move on with

their own voices crafted and created from these interactions, relationships and community building amongst themselves. And so, I think that different I really appreciate from the DUIM is that I am motivated and those DUIM alumni are motivated and understand that getting together and creating a different kind of community model and influencing the leadership in the church. I think that's really wonderful asset to any place, presbytery or region or any level. So I think that that's really a wonderful thing that can happen. But yeah, so I think that's the power of this program.

Unknown Speaker 23:41

Is ah... we had the opportunity not long after I my DUIM session to have a vacation Bible school at [location] and there's a First Nations community quite close to us. So we were able to implement a cross cultural elements in our, in our vacation Bible school, including some First Nations spiritual practices. We had an elder who did a talking circle and who's munch before our sessions. And so that really lent a different kind of a different kind of a, an atmosphere to it, and subsequently, as part of the increased participation by First Nations youth in leadership processes, has involved them in ongoing ministry in that congregation, even though we're not there anymore. X was was in charge of that Vacation Bible School and it really, it really kind of helped the First Nations youth to get involved in a way in which hadn't happened before. That was great.

Unknown Speaker 24:59

And it wasn't as so we were trying to proselytize either. That wasn't our intention. It was basically just to involve them in God's love. Whatever way they understood that. But anyway, it resulted in their leadership in aspects of the congregation's life. But we, in addition to all of that we were preaching cross cultural relationships, not being afraid of the stranger. And we ended up being part of a refugee sponsorship group. What amazed me was that our congregation, although they were not directly involved in the sponsorship at all because we did it together with another community, and with about four different four different churches plus members who were not churched at all. So what amazed me was how much our congregation participated in that sponsorship how much they supported it and really got involved. And I think Yeah, I do credit our experience in the DUIM program as being very much helpful in our thinking and are speaking about welcoming strangers.

Unknown Speaker 26:45

My context is a little bit different because it was intercultural was my experience every day. What happened in the program though, and what I'm hearing now build on that discord and other people have underscored it. Is that really what matters so much and what's what's lovely, it's really about relationships. It's about that thing that happens inside us. Rather than knowledge that comes into our heads, the knowledge is helpful, but it's really about that. You know, one of my favorite phrases from the Bible is the inclination of your heart, which way is your heart inclining? And which way is the heart leaning? And so much of this stuff? It really is about heart communication. And the moments that really work are when because of attitudinal change because of knowledge because of those things. Somehow, as I think it was not sure I think it was X talked about where you create space, that expression, and communication can really happen. And whenever that happens, that's I mean, that's community that's the beautiful thing and so, so for me, my experience, both in the program and the following it was always about in those

moments when just when the privilege thing can disappear, at least for the moment, and there's enough space in that thing to hear each other. That's a marvelous thing. So

Unknown Speaker 28:35

Okay. Thank you. So my I, I love what everybody is saying and my experience of where I serve is in is a wonderful community but that also has a history of some difficulty and so on and relationships were not good with six nations which is the reserve that's right on the edge of our town. The DUIM the program gave me so many tools to use and having a conversation that went towards not a healing because nothing is is perfect. But in the congregation where I served, there was a lot of anger, there was a lot of hurt. There was no willingness for welcoming the stranger. There was no willingness for welcoming anybody really. There was little understanding. And I've used a lot of the tools and we've come alongside and as I say, nothing's perfect. But there's been a huge opening up of, you know, of the congregation of the community itself, because then we started running programs within the church, for other people to you know, to attend so that there was you know, some conversations could happen. And then we've also had so we've got kind of lived with the, you know, sort of the stranger among us always being here in this community, right. So there was always a very great divide between First Nations people, and the predominantly white [location]. And so we were working on some, you know, some relationship building that way. But then now, so there was a stop to all buildings. So no, there was no progress in the community. And then only recently in the past year, year and a half, there's been, they've allowed building again. So there's a new subdivisions, new homes, new, you know, stores opening up and so on. And the community itself is becoming more diverse, even then, you know, just sort of having two groups. And it's been interesting to watch how the program and the tools that I received from that and then in the groups and then now the people have taken that out and it's really changed. How the community works. And it would be my and I'm not sure whether or not this is the next question or not, but it it just seems like they're just tools to allow us to learn how to listen to one another and not fear as much and that was, that's what I found was, you know, sort of the way we use the program.

Unknown Speaker 31:32

I think my experiences I think the DUIM built in me confidence in doing things and trying new things. I mean, as someone who, who I'm serving in a rural community, both parishes I've served in Canada so far, our rural communities and there are communities, we are every day discover who is related to who and I mean, in indoor community. So it gives me some confidence to try new things. And from there we started Bible study that is growing and there were a group of people that is kind of become a permanent future in that Bible study, and we started the mission and outreach team to reach out to our communities, and to just try to begin doing things in communities. So I think the problem kind of equipped to feel confident and to do ministry. I mean, like, the way I'm not sure at that place I could claim, I'm doing my ministry in a way I will be doing it in my in my setting. Okay.

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

Unknown Speaker 34:16

I think language, you know and being able to not to speak in, you know, in your own language and being able to tell your story and the language that you know, as your first language or the language you feel most comfortable with.

Unknown Speaker 34:37

I want to second that, that that really stood out for me the whole question of language. In spending time with our refugee family, it's still difficult for them to clearly express themselves although they have English as a second language. And a difficult for me to understand all the time. And I'm not sure that I'm getting it all the time either I might, I might be missing things

Unknown Speaker 35:17

Actually very quickly to share with you what we have done at [congregation]. Language is a big issue but you know, I think it's also important you know, I think we tried in programs, but one of the things that draw you know, quite a lot of attention at our church is that we started doing welcoming in in the morning, you know, for Sunday service and then at the end, I will speak different languages of welcomes so and then after about two months, people start to come you know, doesn't matter where they're from, or you know, what's their first language they start to come to me and and feel very welcomed for the newcomers. And then for the local residents they also start to tell me that you know what language they speak and their ancestors and all that. So is suddenly, you know, just by saying a simple welcome of different languages is, you know, it's drawing people together so something that's quite interesting. Okay, someone else.

Unknown Speaker 36:36

I've been working in smaller and wider and older crowds, three in a row since I started this program. So I'm in a very different context, I think. But I live in urban environments. So beyond my work, place flock. I live in a world that's far more diverse than this screen. So there's a sense of despair and futility and grief for me and amongst us and this programs a helpful counter you know, Peter Birger, like like-minded deviants huddling together against the sense of despair. So that's, I think related to the conversation I've been listening to. But my contribution is from a different corner.

Unknown Speaker 37:53

I think I really like what, X just said. I could relate to it a lot, because I haven't working in mostly dominantly White congregations even though I present condition is person just white congregation, because we have a number of Indigenous members and leaders who actively participating worship and leadership in the congregation. But even still, it's definition, mostly white congregation. So what I observed from my own ministry in the White congregation, and I am not part of the white community, so, and I affirm that there is a diversity in a White congregation as well. But what I want why I relate to what X just said is, there's the culture of the this kind of United Church. I'm not assuming that this is the culture in general, in, outside the church or outside the United Church, but the there's the particular kind of sentiment or culture that the White congregations of the United Church might have, might share. As I observe and experience them, that's the people are vulnerable and they are keen to experience or they are

vulnerable to experience, grief and despair. So many times, people need the people find the need to talk about despair, or sorrow or grief, that kind of thing. So their lens to see the world is through the despair and grief and sadness or grief. There's so many bad news in the world today they might say. Or ee because when whenever they turn on the TV, they would hear lots of bad things, terrible things that's been happening in the world. So when they talk these things to me or shared them with the others, their their despair, despair, lens or narrative are pretty is very dominant. And but I don't come from that kind of sensitivity. I come from more kind of the context where I see people's aspirations and people's real need to find, you know, the work for the hope so the energy level is different from the the congregations and the United church. So what I'm saying is, what I hear from the conversation is we are more oriented, we hope to be more, we hope to orient ourselves to more the desire to see hope and create hope among ourselves than just to seeing the world from the lens or narrative of despair, sadness and grief because we have more, we shared this energy and hope to be different starting from ourselves to create more intercultural and more just and more beloved community, which we just have to make. So, I don't know whether this makes any sense to you, but to you, everyone, but I think the difference that I hope that DUIM makes is we come from the we come from the we come from the energy that people already have that that are not overcome by the sense of despair and the lack of hope that's the average United Church people and congregation might say that they are at this point. More hopeful narrative.

Unknown Speaker 42:15

I think I hear more on team building and kind of breaking barriers that she, I think that that was kind of something that I hear as a theme that came out from this like from after the training going working with refugees and communities and initiating new things and things like that. So I think that's kind of a theme I take out, that kind of come out there in this conversation.

Unknown Speaker 42:59

I hear the same as well, that you after the DUIM we will well equipped for the working in our communities.

Unknown Speaker 43:10

One thing I want to add just that, you know, because in my experience in [location], it's interesting that you know, we just the last two, three years, we have just started having people from different cultures coming to the island. However, I find it that it's more difficult to bring the local residents into the picture. So, so far I have more newcomers joining my program, than local people from congregation so that's, that's a big challenge I'm facing right now. So something you know, for you to share with me. It's like, you know, I talked to some local residents and from the congregants, they, you know, they feel like they don't need to enlarge their social circle. And many of them are older so that they feel like you know, they don't need new friends. So and then actually a few that younger, while kind of middle age would tell me that because they have never experienced any newcomers in their life so that they are actually not comfortable. So I think that different dynamics that we have to look into when we talk about a truly intercultural community.

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around

“What might be?” or “What is God calling for?”

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

Unknown Speaker 45:57

I know I know for me I would love to see the program offered is something and maybe you're already working on this. I know that it's offered for credit now from some of the seminaries and so on, but I would actually like to see it as part of almost a mandatory part of, you know, theological learning and so on in the seminaries across Canada, because it just, it just seems to me the way that, you know, our communities are as much as you know, some of us may serve, you know, myself included a predominantly white congregation is we're not able to, with church changing so drastically if we're not able to be able to be in the world and meet people and listen to people and engage with people of all different cultures, then, you know, we're kind of missing how we're supposed to be serving God's message.

Unknown Speaker 47:10

Yeah, one of the things in [location] it's different from [location]. It's a different situation. And we're in the middle of a sea of whiteness here. But one of the major communities is a First Nations community, which is one of the largest communities in our area. And they are kind of an island unto themselves. Yet in the last federal election, we had some participation, of course, from the First Nations people in the election and because I was involved in the political process, I had some connection with that first nations. So that's an opportunity for us, it's an opportunity to, to break down the walls, even though and because the political organization I'm a part of has meetings. I'm hoping to involve people from that first nation in the political process and it doesn't really matter which political party it is. The important thing is that they are can find involvement and communication with the wider community through that political process. I think that's, that's one of the few opportunities I see in this community. But it is one it's the hope and a dream. It's a hope and a dream. Right.

Unknown Speaker 48:54

One of the things in this got highlighted.. And that has to do a lot with the experience of folk who are coming from away. And the experience of people who are coming from different context. I worked very closely with a person named X who is a pastor from [overseas location], and the whole accreditation. I think that at this point in our history, we so desperately need, at least in the United Church, we so desperately need to hear an understanding and wisdom from folk who have come from context in which the church is not well off, can't afford a minister in each context, each church and so folk who have the strength and wisdom to be able to do that. And in order for that to happen, we really need to have an opportunity for engagement at a more significant level in which, you know, people talked about You know, Adrian Rich has that quote, which is this is the oppressors language but I needed to talk to you to be able to, to actually deeply communicate our urgent I think need for folk who are coming from away for them to be able to help us be the church that we want to be. And so to make sure that all of the directions and in our training and in our engagement, it's bi-directional that put so somebody who's coming

from away learning about dominant culture here, as people from here learn about a broader cultural context from that surrounds us. So is about holding those two realities together and making sure that the program isn't tailored to white population, but to really be able to facilitate that urgent, I think conversation so that would be my hope. Thank you.

Unknown Speaker 51:08

Yeah, I I wanted to repeat my question or my statement. I talked to X when we were at the workshop. I think they can...[following difficult to transcribe because of poor quality audio: what they are doing, because this intercultural thing is not only in Canada but Canada is now a multicultural society... we are all talking about things in churches. Churches which are.... but if people ... in society do not go to church, there's no way to share information about how to live intercultural... again problem but.... because I believe... wherever they ...real... so I'm saying...is our willing which can... to help them how to live, how we can build beloved community, because there are very few people who are going to church.....So it is my hope and my dream that through our.... do more than what we are doing.]

Unknown Speaker 54:28

When I look at the future of the DUIM program and the Canadian society I think this, this program can be a very good instrument for the reconciliation process in this nation. Who.. everyone in the gathering that is what I heard in gathering that I attended. There is the usually different accusation, they usually shaming and demeaning, they usually disappointment and I annoyance and being annoyed. I mean, so people have not really found what they really want to do when they talk about reconciliation in this country. And I think the DUIM program can be an instrument that can help to drive the community, that dimension, to find each other. And then talk respectfully, discuss truth, process, forgiveness, talk about justice, talk about the healing, and then leading to reconciliation. I think the DUIM program, is an instrument that can help the nation to do that from the churches, spreading it into the communities. Church is no longer the big gathering point in this nation. Now, as far as I object, other places. Okay.

Unknown Speaker 56:17

Yeah, I think X said exactly what I was saying. So there is no need for me to type again.

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Unknown Speaker 57:01

I think I didn't say about this before. And I think it's not very related to the more stronger themes through our conversation this afternoon. But I think that when I took the DUIM course and even after, it took time for me to realize that we mostly talk about White privilege, especially when I took the DUIM course, White privilege was the central theme that everyone could in different ways engage and realize and reflect and make their voice heard and, you know, listen and that kind of thing. And then, later I learned that I have not fully reflected on settler privilege, as even

as a newcomer or even as an immigrant. I have not had a chance to fully reflect on settler privilege. And then the immigrant folks or newcomer folks, and you know, white folks, regardless of who they are, if they are not the Indigenous community members, we all share and we all benefit, we all live what the what, what just what just makes us privileged from the settler privileges. And then newcomers themselves will learn will have to learn what privilege itself is like for everyone. You know, there's the patriarchy thing. And there's the hetero-normative thing. There are so many different kinds of privileges, and even newcomers themselves should learn what privileges they have. If they are a male member, they certainly have the male privilege, something benefit from the patriarchy, that kind of thing. So we can see ourselves from many different lens and we can be humbled. We can we can develop humility, regardless of whether you're a white member or non white member, we have this responsibility to learn about ourselves. And we learn humility, and what I can, what I would like to conclude my sharing out with is what I learned from an elder, the wisdom of the teaching of wolf and I love the teaching of wolf. And that is, that is summed up as I know, I know nothing and understand even less, that kind of that kind of humility is all are required to learn and embody through this DUIM course, especially when the opportunities are given for everyone to not only critically examine ourselves from the lens of white privilege and other privileges, but also from the settler privileges, then we are all on the same boat.

Unknown Speaker 1:00:16

Well, I like to reinforce what was just said definitely. But and also a previous comment about the necessity for having a DUIM component of all seminary education, and possibly also for clergy retreat type situations, I think to make this a bigger component of clergy training, at least as well or all leadership within the church. I know some, some seminaries do have a cultural component, but I'm not sure about the rest.

Unknown Speaker 1:01:00

Thank you. Maybe I quickly will say something, you know, I think unfortunately, you know, when X tried to come to [location] that, you know, it didn't happen. And as I said, you know, it seems like it's a bigger challenge to get the local community to participate in into the any intercultural kind of activities. However, while many actually you know, raised that it was a price concern, but you know, I have a question mark on that, but anyway, one thing I want to, you know, say is a big thank you to Jonathan and the DUIM program because I think I got very, very motivated after joining the five days, and then and I actually got very emotional learning so many new things from the DUIM program. And it was the first time I kind of realized, you know, when we went through it was some, on the third day, when we went through the Indigenous, you know, reconciliation. I never really knew so much about, you know, the history of the crudeness of Canadians. So I, I actually got very emotional, you know, learning all the, all the negative things you know about Canadians, even though I got my greatest, you know, I got my citizenships in the 90s. But I've never really liked history, so I never pay attention. But I think I got very motivated so that when I went back to [location], I started, became, I became very active in organizing, trying to get the communities to be together. I feel like you know, I'm the intercultural ambassador, but I feel like I'm the person that benefiting everything, because now I'm able to talk to people of different cultures. And people of different cultures will come to me when they have problems issues locally, or you know, with people from different countries.

Doesn't matter if they know that I speak the language or not, they still come to me because they feel like I would know something. Even though you know, the librarian, if they see a name that they cannot, you know, they know that is not English, they will come to me and say, Do you know this person? You know? So I actually feel that, you know, I'm learning so much, because I'm getting so much stories from each of the people joining the program. So to me, I think something that I learned from the DUIM is that culture is not just about geographically from different locations is about their own personal habits, lifestyle, everything so that, you know, I think for me, I'm helping my group of people, you know, at the church, to to have respect to each other doesn't matter where they're from, because everyone has their own culture in, you know, by themselves or with their family. So that's something that, you know, I want to thank Jonathan for, for getting me you know, kind of, I feel so, so blessed, you know, to be in the program, and always, you know, getting me involved. Thank you very much.

Focus Group 4: Participants. January 17, 2020

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community.

You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Unknown Speaker 0:21

I guess one of the things for myself is that compared to the circles in which I move on a day to day basis, the group that was assembled when I was in the program was very diverse. And when I sit when I sit here today and we have people here today that are from various, various backgrounds, I go hey Right. Yay, good. So we had we had people who were born in Canada, those who weren't born in Canada we had different racial, linguistic, English, French, other languages all together and within that community of the program, and it did become community just the people had the space to talk and people were listened to. And in our case, people were listened to twice because they would speak still English or French as per their choice. And saying, one of us would be doing translation usually were a couple of name translators or myself would translate. And so people were listened to they were and I really think that they were heard in the community as a program.

Unknown Speaker 2:18

X here, it's a my beloved community I created, as I mentioned, intercultural working group within church. This is a third year. As an activity I've been trying to do food makes people talk and the friendly right away and decided that I gathered all kinds of resources for let's say last year, we did resources. Which Canadian missionaries went to Asia, Canada in Asian Heritage Month, and then lot of congregation members did not know many Canadian missionaries went to Korea to spend a lot for their work. Also, I've been working for a communicator kind of neighborhood. I doing it the kind of classroom is a multicultural background of first generation over immigrants here to share stories and through the kind of class a mindfulness class and of the food and cooking in a class. And that there are also educational components over how we can interact, such as our community has a Jamaican, Jewish, Filipino Korean and Russian Jewish is a lot of things in [location] and I've been involved with a creating two groups. It's become a quite a interesting intercultural sharing story beside the food over the food, the people excited about the share story, their ancestors how to create this kind of recipe. So slowly in becoming more intercultural interact each other. And also [congregation], I'm creating storytelling circle. I did it two years a multicultural potluck through the around 150 congregation members joined the

second year, this year and the last year and the year before, through the that later wider church members, they appreciate it. That kind of event, but just on the event. So now I'm forming storytelling circle with over the tea. Tea means a Japanese or Chinese or Western or a kind of common element. Over the tea time, we can share story. So I'm very excited about using to grow one in the neighborhood, the community center one into my church. So I think that these are mine beloved community, which I will like to continue become intercultural interact. Thank you

Unknown Speaker 5:15

I have two memories because it's been a little while since we've done it done the course so but I have two very vivid memories, beloved community. When I participated in the program, the one was worship. I remember that worship was very participatory, all of us were taking part. And that for me, you know, I even though I'm in the Toronto area, I work in a in an area that culturally is diverse but not as far as skin color or other parts of the world so for me, it was a real wonderful opportunity to sit with Pentecostal, South Americans originally to, to sit with people with brown skin and white skin like all kinds of people from all from different parts of the world, as X said, but also in the worship to begin to see people's essence or soul as they worshipped and as they expressed in worship, individually, and I thought that was a really moving part. And...yeah, I think I'll leave it there.

Unknown Speaker 6:53

For me, there are a lot of great memories to begin with. To be honest, but the first thing that I want to point out is from educational perspective as a seminary student, the concept of multicultural and intercultural, the differences between that wasn't clear enough for me, even to this point. But this course made it very clear from the get go. And that concept just hit everyone to be honest. And the diagram that they provided was great for everyone to understand that they're all part of this beloved community, even though they really don't recognize that they're part of it. They want to be but at the same time by looking at that diagram that Jonathan provided it. It made it easy for everyone to understand what this could look like. And the way they designed the whole program was to recognize who we are from our origin, our ethnic background, our language, the things the languages that we use. So finding out who we are first and then go beyond from ourself to another person and see who they are. And it's okay to be different. That message was really helpful to a lot of people. And at the end of each day, what they did was this activity called the yarn activity. So they were asked to each person was asked to share their short reflection of the course. And as they share, they, they were asked to hold one, one side of the yarn and as everyone shares that yarn created huge spider web, and at the end, Jonathan concluded and saying this is our beloved community. And we are all part of this and a lot of visual aids that they used help people to understand what this could really look like in the real world. So that helped a lot. And another thing that I really appreciated it was the readings that were provided from the course that has to do with Latino perspective, Indigenous perspective, South African perspective, Asian perspective. He, I don't think he missed any of racial, various racial context. So he covered most of it. And that appreciate that made participants to appreciate even more about discourse. I feel like. That's about it.

Unknown Speaker 10:00

If I could make a quick comment, two things, one, somebody mentioned it already about music

or worship, I should say. One of the groups I was a part of we, over the course of a week, wrote a hymn to do with peace and I still have that him and have occasionally used it in church, we gave each other permission to do that. So that was a real community building moment. Another and I've shared about it often it was groups or in sermons even at the Toronto School of Theology. There we had a Spanish priest from Toronto whose name I unfortunately don't, didn't retain, but he was more or less, laying on the stairs of the place playing guitar, and perhaps purposely looked a little rough around the edges and we all had to walk by him to get in. And then of course, the evening began with him. walking in and saying, welcome, I'm your I'm your speaker for tonight and leading worship and it was such a good experience in terms of, you know, seeing Jesus in the face of the other and examining our assumptions around appearance and around context of where we see and meet different people. Anyway, I'll end it there but there's two minutes left if somebody else wants to jump in. Thank you.

Unknown Speaker 11:56

I think one of the areas that are really impressed me with was the moment during the program, I shared an experience. There was a point they wanted someone to share an experience of what he lives in his community. It was just a very brief moment. We were just to listen and not to say anything. And I felt connected was like, understood me. It was like, they were having some experience with me. So feeling like I was understood that I'm not alone in the situation, that the reality I'm living is something universal, really reassured me. It was other moments to where I could read from other people's experience my own context or hear from their own cry, my own difficulties. So, those moments of interconnectivity, those were the moments that really impressed me and really touched me so much. Thank you very much.

Unknown Speaker 13:25

Yeah okay when I discovered through this program is the difference between what really is interculturality and multiculturalism. So, and I experienced that okay within the DUM helped me to understand that before I did the workshop when I was newly arrived in Canada, and I have prepared me to fit the situation because anywhere about multiculturalism, it means people are there, if no interconnection with them, but after the event by spreading the word, I understand that I'm not is not only to be there, but is to be there knowing who are already there. And what you can do together. And then you are not there to live a simply person where you are there to share what you have and to share what other peoples have. So it is this kind of Christian life, as you say, share what you okay. Yeah, we, the member of the same you had a member of the same body and everyone is active, everyone need others to live , nobody can live alone and isolated to that it was very helpful for me to introduce to okay to do to do my way here in the in Canada and in the United Church and specifically in Toronto, where I am where interacting with groups, not English speaking as a first language, but coming aboard through we need to share it with each other and know that we belong to have a sense of belonging and not only is isolated as a island, but you a part of, and it is very, very helpful. Okay, what I can share.

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

Unknown Speaker 17:39

This is this is a really good question, and I think the thing that comes to mind and it follows on some of X's, comments about visuals is the whole iceberg process that was used in the in the actual training here. I've used that a lot since and would love to eventually talk to others about how to keep applying that because it's not a concept people grasp very quickly. But on the other hand, it has power because of that. And I used it at an LGBT a global LGBTQ consultation, that people from around the world at an ecumenical on top of that, and introduced the idea and people were really taken with it, because it's about the way I would see it anyway, about surfacing a lot of the unnamed stuff that's beyond us as individuals, and I, for my white community in particular, that's a big jump right to to get out of the mindset that we're all individuals. And that's all we are. And so that whole process and me using it in different contexts and using it for myself, like even in personal conversations with people has been really helpful to ask what is really going on under the surface here. That is actually something that is a I don't want to call it a script, although I think it is that sometimes. But that's about all the stuff we're taught that is invisible. And that is collective. And I've just find it applies in many, many different situations including church conflict situations, right? Both, our community culture, but I use it mostly for intercultural work and white privilege. So that that's the thing that comes to mind for me, thanks.

Unknown Speaker 19:45

My personal experience is I came back from the program, it was challenging. At the beginning when I when I was listening to the program I was like, I've got what I need to go back and then change things and just let things move. But then at the end of the program or coming back I discovered maybe I've not I've not really understood the real problem at the beginning. On the basis of what do people want and I'm sometimes I have an idea, I put them down, I write it I develop, it's really well organized. And then when you come in contact with people, then you discover are really the somewhere else. They're not here to where I am. So it's helped me to try to understand first What do people want to live, where they want to go. The idea is it's really accepted by everyone? Is this team mine? So what I've done so far is trying to sell out the idea. Trying to bring people together reason with them and see if we can come up with a at least come to a stage where we can move ahead. Because what I've discovered after the program is that sometimes we might be in the same church, we might be in the same of the same society, or even the same race, but we don't have the same vision of the world. So the problem being that sometimes we have privileges that others don't have, because of our formation because of our position. And we now think that everybody should know what we know. But it doesn't work out that way. So this program made me to listen to them. Ask them if they really want to go ahead with me. Then which for the right time because the right time is not always the one the moment we think of it. So that's perspective. Thank you.

Unknown Speaker 22:32

I'm thinking for myself that there's a couple of things that have happened since the program

within the past recharge. And but to say, well, they happen because of the program I it's hard for me to to put a link from the program to the event necessarily. We've had blanket exercise, which we open to the community. Very, very good response. I, did I invest myself more in that because of the program? Perhaps so did a couple of other other things. I'm thinking it in a way. I'm trying to think of a metaphor, that that's in a positive sense. But, you know, if, if you're, if you're in a noisy room, you have to speak louder. Well, suddenly, I have there's this underlying theme of the intercultural ministries that's just sitting there. And and so I'll I think it just impaction in while hasn't had a specific nameable impacts. Like I say, Oh, it's because of the program that we did such and such, we advanced in this way, especially right now we're in the midst of a major transformation otherwise as a pastoral charge, but I think it's just as ambient influence that makes little changes here and there, in in my approach to, to to somethings, investment of energy, how I respond to certain elements and so on.

Unknown Speaker 24:39

For me, I can think of three things. First one, I'm actually preparing to write my thesis for next year. Actually, relating to this, after the course was done. What caught my attention was how this intercultural work can apply to children and youth. We are adults in this class learning about this concept and trying to understand how we can apply in our lives. But, can this be possible to children to youth? And it's something that I've been always interested in. My husband is a youth pastor, and he's been doing youth ministry for last 13 years in mono-ethnic church. And that's another thing too, how can this be applied to mono ethnic church and move towards intercultural church space? Well, the context where I'm in his Korean immigrant churches in Toronto, and they are preferring to keep themselves as Korean immigrant churches so that the congregation members can feel the comfort to be part of Korean community instead of going towards to intercultural even though they're living in their pluralistic society in Toronto. So that's something that I've been wanting to do. And part of my thesis will be geared towards doing research for children and youth. And yeah, I mean, this course, brought me to think of a my thesis topic, which is, which I'm really thankful for. And what else? Oh, and another thing that I can think of is, as Julie mentioned, some of the visual aids that I learned through this course I'm actually using it for teaching lessons that I'm coming up with when it comes to Native youth. So we can talk about how we are part of God's creation. And the theme of God's creation can apply to anybody as long as you believe that God is there and you're you are created by God and the yarn activity spin very helpful for youth to engage and understand the concept. So I've been I've been using that a lot, which I'm really thankful for.

Unknown Speaker 27:30

Okay. As I mentioned, I was at the beginning of my ministry in the United Church and that have me after that, to know that where you have someone in front of you. What is he is he is shaped by his background is shaped by his culture. And you say, when, you know, that is very helpful to dialogue or to be helpful for people and I used to work in, minister in inside community, okay, Canadian English speaking in French speaking area in Quebec and if you have not done the workshop down, it would have very difficult for me, but it was also very helpful for me to think about what, how to be more useful and right now I went to I was transferred in Toronto where we started at least in French, because people here at some Francophone in, in Toronto, were not able to start to to organize the life in the way that will be possible for them, others and how to

get together, and French also speaking is not it is a kind of interculturality because we have intimate friends we have also friends from Quebec, friends from Ontario from Africa, friends from Europe and so on them being those people together we thought we people with different backgrounds, I was prepared to face them and to bring them together. So that was really helpful to for me after to continue and to exercise my ministry.

Unknown Speaker 29:36

After the program I've done it, I implemented in our church. Is there any some event or activity in a poster designed multilingual based on the our area for five different languages of a theme of different languages and posters. Also community center same way, I do design multilingual posters in a that is a really responded well by community and the church members. Also language, I suppose the theory, since I learned that we have very surface I'm in facing and the language is a very surface of initial challenges. So that's why I become a multilingual poster design or also our Sunday worship beginning multilanguage greeting, you know, from the congregation each Sunday morning. At the [location] is a project we show are the language and the one person from different area. They own tongue over languages to greeting and transcript to the English so people really like that. Also, we do get the welcome committee desk and the Sunday morning and the right people sanctuary entrance. So we have a welcome host to welcoming so that welcoming committee has a few different diversity members so they people really felt or are welcome in a Sunday morning who walk in so that those are very minimum also Sunday school I'm a as a teacher as a background, Sunday school even started with an even smaller coloring and the storytelling among us so we so do you know what is this about Black History Month so but do you know ten dollar bill showing who is a showing this a new \$10 bill. So those are kind of approach we are doing it. So I really appreciate that I will. I like to do more from this program to implement this Sunday school and the congregation. Thank you.

Unknown Speaker 32:13

Sorry. Hi, are we're just standing I guess, but I'll quickly say that. One of the things she mentioned greetings, X did and X and I have found too that even in, even in large groups, I've moved to a very common peaceful way of gathering we used to my complaint is we're sorry, we're not supposed to break things down. But often in groups I've heard where people yell something like you know, The Lord be with you to gather people together. And I've just moved to a much gentler way of doing that and trying to be considerate of community and, you know, raise hands or do something to get us gathered. So that's just a small thing. But we're time's up, but it would be good to hear from the other colleagues thank you X.

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

Unknown Speaker 34:09

I'll just, I'll just name a couple that I saw. The first theme I saw was the program really helped to,

X and X, and to opening them where they can expend energy in supporting or, or actually leading programs like the blanket exercise or the research. So it inspired, I think, or opened participants in the program, or the effect of the program was to open people to where they want to expend energy to bring some goodness to the world. That's one and the other one is a leadership theme where and I heard this from X is leadership helping others notice. Helping others be aware of the diversity that's all around them. The \$10 bill story was really helpful for me to hear that. So there's a couple themes

Unknown Speaker 35:37

I guess part of my reaction is that that some of the impacts are little impacts, you know, little changes, and some of the impacts like X's is quite a significant one, with it having an impact on a thesis but small and large impacts... They all they all add up.

Unknown Speaker 36:12

Hi. Yeah, seems like I know on my D.Min. course as well I have a cohort of very ethnically diverse and denominationally diverse people and even Canada wide geographically. And just as this group is it's encouraging to be able to speak well and listen well in such a group and I think that's something I've personally carried forward and try to in other gatherings a we do locally with particularly with First Nations and but other people as well. But really, because of part of my focus, that's a big part of what I do. So just trying to really listening attentively and create safe space that that's the theme that I've heard from various people. I think creating safe space is vital in all the work that we do. Thanks.

Unknown Speaker 37:15

Yeah... there were some themes that came up for certain points that came up regularly. The creation of the working of creativity. From all indication, I had someone talking about how to transfer from not just only are in area of multicultural group but also in Mono cultural group. You cause for creativity because he's not, he's not given you don't see how to do it, you need to create it yourself. There were also the idea of how I considered others how I take into consideration the situation cause for creativity and there wasn't... Many other, we all individuals need to talk to others to let them know. Yeah, we might have differences, but we all individually, these are calling for creativity. So, for me, there's a working of creativity that could be a term that could be exploited. I don't know how it could be phrased, but something I'm sure there's that area that has to be considered for this or this idea of diversity and differences as limits and forces, diversities as our differences as limits and forces in intercultural relationship, I will explain myself. The fact that we have two important group actually, in this discussion, there's someone talking about Miriam is talking about a mono cultural community that need to apply certain interculturality is where authentic. So, and we also in different cultures, people are talking about the idea of difference in gender in sexual orientation, or even ethnicity and stuff like that. These are all differences and these are different diversities. If we see it as a difference, then is a problem where we see it as a diversity, then it could also give us opportunity to bring something new, it becomes multicolour. And so, but we can also wave a way the differences, so the differences who create limits, and then we have to transform every difference to diversity. So it becomes a force. So, I see it in that way diversity and differences as limits and forces depending on how it's established. Thank you.

Unknown Speaker 40:27

okay, what I already mentioned but I would just like to add integration because when this idea that what we what arise for many of us that you bring, people together and make a kind of integration and not be strange not be new in a station. Yes, I would like just to mention that in addition of what already have been said.

Unknown Speaker 41:04

I'm hearing the power of storytelling, but it needs to happen in a safer space. And I, I would have started this conversation saying, but for it to be very good storytelling, you need to have diversity. And a lot of our communities don't have but what a number of you have said is reminded me that there is diversity in every person in every community. And it's often invisible-ized So, I'm sitting with that theme right now. Thanks.

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around

“What might be?” or “What is God calling for?”

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

Unknown Speaker 43:19

I hope this DUIM program as soon to be adapted as I mentioned X has also said too some miniature of a program to we can use a Sunday school or young adults also different of totally adults who group in a congregation. So sometimes one for Sunday school up to 13 or young adults is 13 to up and the adults. So I hope when you can create that kind of way then it's a story in in it a context of gonna be might different expression for kids to young adults and adults. And also later I heard from my [congregation], 216 years old membership is up to 65 years to 45 years of membership. They said this is quite concerned about the seniors a program so senior might need this kind of some program, if they've been living so nice and safety cozy their own cultural base, but we might educate them new way of to see newcomers or whatever. So I say around the four different categories over this kind of context of the DUIM develop, then it's easy to each congregation, each community circle we can use, we can promote more easier to educate others rather than me as a not ordained minister I'm not really attended a theological academical background on theology, but is a those kind of material DUIM kind of develop handed out to us orientated by DUIM center, then I willing to spread all this great tool to use our community also face community. That's my hope and dream, to be continued. We can be change, we can be changed a monoculture church should be changed that I'm really dreaming they should have changes sooner in Canada. Thank you

Unknown Speaker 46:08

along the same line. So I think one of the facilitator of the course suggests to me that if we can

come up with some kind of VBS summer VBS program for children, that's a miniature to what the program that we did for about a week could be created and offered to children. That could be something fascinating. But I have no idea where to start. So that's something that we should look for and for youth as well. I noticed that for youth, there are some intercultural programs that are available out there actually, and that's already happening in Toronto. But I don't know whether it's faith based or not, but regardless, just getting the message across to high school students. That intercultural perspective, their worldview is something that they really need to hear and consider at least once in their lifetime. It's your preference, but at the same time, something like this is available to love your neighbors and respect others who are different than you could help them in a long run in their life. So, yeah, and that could be something exciting to look into as well. Little further if I want to dream about it. If this DUIM program can be applied in the public school system. If it's difficult, go for private Christian school system or Catholic school system. I think it will work. But it's just a matter of how are we going to advocate it so that they understand that the is something that children and youth need. That could be, yeah, amazing.

Unknown Speaker 48:06

I'd like to echo the intergenerational piece and like name that one of the struggles. I've surface in conversations with colleagues who are in youth ministry, or in youth ministry that there's a component of a very white normative way of doing things that there's not within a lot of our church structures. The intercultural conversation has not really touched how youth ministry is carried out. And for us here in the West, that's one of the few dedicated areas of program staffing that's continuing, although much reduced, and so that's a valuable resource and Mike, free intercultural stuff into things that are already happening elsewhere. And so that's just one that's surfacing for me during this conversation. And the other is my dream is I would love to see some, how would I express this, some structured, intentional storytelling that's shaped by intercultural principles and practices in their community barrier there I find is convincing people they can in fact with this, we keep running into problems where people like I love the DUIM but I could never facilitate it. I could never do a similar thing in my community. Or they're scared. They're scared of having conversations about racism, which for me is where some of the intercultural work needs to lead. So I still am sitting with some of the thoughts we came up with a never implemented at the end of our Saskatoon training that was really about structured, structured, supported storytelling with food X, completely agree that that helps a lot of things happen. I'll leave it there. There are thoughts there, but none of us know what to do with it. But I'd like to see people doing this in their own circles in their own communities and as to support and enable that somehow. That's my dream.

Unknown Speaker 50:14

Hi there. I think that for me, it's really encouraging to hear the talk of diversity, multi generational diversity. We were just planning a day camp or a VBS last night and occurred to me were you trying to use a theme around connection to creation in the environment, etc. which is important, but I think that introducing intercultural would be good. So how does that connect with DUIM? I would think maybe some sort of a program in the future that perhaps is directed specifically at for young people and or people that work regularly with young people and having my six month old granddaughter in the room gives me a dream for the future. That Generation following myself, at least, with the much work can continue to be open and maybe much more

open than my generation has been used to I, of course come from white male privilege and try to challenge myself around that on a day to day basis. But it needs to become just part of who we are as a society, I think. Thank you.

Unknown Speaker 51:31

I've got a whole bunch of thoughts bouncing around in my head because of what everybody around the table is said. So, my first thought is that making sure that participants in the program have a chance to come back together or almost, I would say forced to come back together after a year or two in this kind of conversation because hearing you folk who are obviously much wiser and have better memories than I do speak of the different elements of the program and specific graphics like all Yeah, you know. So it's great to be refocused and reminded in in some way. And, Okay, I see the one minute. And just, I can't help but say my some of my frustrations are in terms of the church structures or the people who people, the church structures who expect to make decisions according to not just white, but white, urban suburban decision making processes and it... I've had running with that from rural perspective, but also trying to walk alongside the congregational kind of authority. And trying to confront the church hierarchy alongside to people who got us talking.

Unknown Speaker 53:11

It is Okay, I can just add one more item to X is that as a layperson is a for DUIM one week of program is a cost has to be consider some but I did mention a miniature over some context of developing it then we don't need to really come up the five days over a workshop attendance as a layperson we don't have a such a continuing education fees or whatever with a very hard to come out of 50 years as a layperson, very hard to attend it just exciting course. And find the bursary is not that easy. So hopefully get some idea for layperson who willing to attend some way of beside the already existing bursary so some miniature over context so we can deliver the congregation. I'm repeating myself, so please consider for their cost of DUIM cost to lay people who are low income one. Thank you.

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Unknown Speaker 54:46

I hope to see this program bigger right? It can be accessible to as many people as possible. I don't know how you guys are living over there but here in Quebec is something that is though the site Is fractured. The church is divided. The people are just on their own. There's no dialogue or I mean real dialogue people, they do masquerading things, folklore but no one sits down to listen to the other. I think we have we all do society that the possibility of really sitting down and discussing. I don't know how. I hope for that.

Unknown Speaker 55:28

And the children, children and youth Jonathan. Yeah, that was very strong and I really resonated with that. Or intergenerational.

Unknown Speaker 55:55

I concur with the people talking past each other being fragmented and not listening and that is getting dangerous. It always has been dangerous for some people and the danger of that is widening. And what are we about as church if we can't enable some of some hard conversations, some hard, spiritual listening to one another, that's what I struggle with, like daily.

Focus Group 5: Participants. January 21, 2020

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community.

You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Unknown Speaker 0:25 I'd like to suggest that during my experience of it, I'm sorry that I, I'm going to have to do a little catch up with what others experience was, but I was in the Toronto one. And while I, while I think the people's sort of cultural backgrounds were more uniform than might be hoped. There was a lot of denominational representation so we had some people from some denominations, there were Lutherans there, you know, it wasn't just United Church which is my milieu. There was Anglicans and Lutherans and just people from who came from very different places. And so there was this sense that it was not the insularity of even just a United Church ethos but that that this was this was a much bigger container for people who are who, who follow a Christian calling and I found that very, very refreshing and kind of permission giving. You couldn't you couldn't make too many assumptions maybe about where people were coming from.

Unknown Speaker 2:09

Yeah, so there were two times in our program, which was three years ago so it's, you know, not immediately in my mind, but two times that stood out. We had we had three sisters from the church in Winnipeg. Two of them were, one was from India, one was from Philippines, I believe, and then an Anglo settler sister who was older, and these two had come and they were getting used to Canada. And the order said, Let's send you to this program. And so they came. The moving part was when they did, when we did the what, you know how people gather in a line exercise where you go backwards how far you get. It was, you know, all the white men were way across the room the white women were sort of a little less and, and these, these two were kind of behind so they were, had a lot of experiences in Canada that that kind of were oppressive to them. And the sister, the older sister who was with them and in their same community, just kind of was very tearful at this and said, you know to be in this community, and here, we're talking about beloved community and we're in this community together and, and these ones are, are experiencing these things that I don't know about. So that was that was very meaningful to me. The other experience at that that DUIM workshop was at Sandy Saulteaux Centre was the opportunity to do a sweat lodge. And I was so appreciative of that. And so, it was so meaningful and I had not done it before. And so to experience the welcome that the leader of that gave to us

and to be in that place together, and it was a real experience of being able to be who you were created to be I found to speak, or say, or pray. It was just really meaningful.

Unknown Speaker 5:03

I had stories around the same lines as you. I remember the doing the color line exercise, where we answered some questions and people lined up depending on how comfortable they felt about different topics and we had the white, white men like myself at one end of the room and most of the Indigenous and Korean people at the other end of the room. And the year that I did it, we had planned to do a sweat lodge ceremony. That was the year of the Fort McMurray fire and it was a fire ban on here locally. And we were hoping to fire ban was going to be lifted and we can do the sweat. but that didn't happen. So we had a conflict around that idea of who was in charge of deciding whether we could have a fire or not. And the group got together and made a decision by consensus that the best thing to do would be to not have a fire. But that was after we'd had a we had a healing circle after that too, and everybody had a chance to go around and see how they felt about the situation of RM being in charge of telling us what an Indigenous people on that land could have a fire or not. And we did end up having a what we call the cold sweat. We went through the exercise of being in the sweat lodge but without the heat. That was a completely different experinec for me.

Unknown Speaker 7:08

I was going to echo exactly what Catherine said about the colour line. And it was, that was for me one of those moments where there was just a really a reaching across and some really deep deep understanding and not only for the sisters but I think for all of us of how that injustice can happen within our own eyes and within our own communities, and we're just we're just not clocking it. The other is slightly more personal in that towards at the end of the trip because of circumstances and things it ended up that Catherine and I in a third participant ended up going to back a Hotel and then we're flying out to the airport the next day and ended up sharing a room with the other participant and hadn't known each other very well. Our personalities sort of rubbed up against each other a bit during the week. But it came to the place where, you know, they were flying out, I happened to have a hotel room, they didn't have a hotel room, they were just going to go sit in the airport overnight. And there is for me, I think a real growth space to be able to say, you know, we have been together we have experienced this. So, then you just go the next step and you offer your offer the space that people need to be to have some dignity and some opportunity to get to be who they need to be. And it was for me one of those things moments of just growing a bit in my understanding of hospitality, but also just the gift of having more time with that person and in a different context as well.

Unknown Speaker 9:23

When I did the program last summer, the staff were noting that it was probably the most diverse group of participants they had. So something quite different from what you're talking about Ted. It was a highly diverse group of participants and a highly diverse group of leadership, united by, you know, the common thread of faith and this commitment to understand inter-culturalism to understand it experience, express it. So I would say the whole week was quite amazing. And the way in which both those in leadership and those who were participating really invited us not just to be a bunch of white very Western people in a program.

Unknown Speaker 10:37

Can you tell me where you took the program?

Unknown Speaker 10:39

In Toronto, at the Toronto School of Theology.

Unknown Speaker 10:45

But it was very denominationally diverse group, a really broad spectrum of theology. So, I guess that was part of the insight for me is, the first thing got challenged where my assumptions about who cares about being intercultural Then really broad participants who brought such richness. Very diverse participants, I would say maybe there were like, it was racially mixed and culturally mixed.

Unknown Speaker 11:35

I remember a couple of very positive lifegiving moments. One was as we struggled to work together as a team, two of us from one culture and the third one from another culture. And the third one was often not showing up to the meetings, but we struggled through to keep working together as a team and succeeded. This is another one was, I've been to sweat lodges dozens of times, but I really appreciated it at the Sandy Saulteaux Centre the leader, for the first time ever a woman, that was a new experience a female leader, but she took so much care to welcome and explain all the different ceremonies and symbols. I really appreciated this as a good model of making people feel at home and in a space that can be a little anxious anxiety provoking for many. The one that I really liked the best at Sandy Saulteaux, a couple of people came from United Church parish in the inner city Winnipeg and one of the Muslim was now a member of the community remaining Muslim and the other a Christian, were giving the reasons why they became involved in the church and the community there. And that was just so affirming of my own values and enlightening and how would it was about the welcome they received, things as simple as well they let us use the washroom and that was never forgotten. In inner city Winnipeg it's sometimes very difficult for people to find a washroom especially if they are not white. That was a really exciting evening for me.

Unknown Speaker 13:46

I, the thing I thought about was also the sweat lodge. I was at the same group as Thomas and I did not participate in in the actual sweat lodge. But what I found was really interesting because I don't, I don't like not knowing whats going to happen, which is like an exercise in and of itself in this kind of group. But what I found was really wonderful with the people who also remained outside. One of them was an Indigenous woman. And she, I found she was very willing to gently kind of guide so someone was coming along with their camera, they're going to take a picture of the, you know, the lodge and she's, you know, saying, No, we don't, we don't take pictures of this. And you know, just kind of we you know, exploring why we do things the way we do and what the benefits are and I just found there was there was in that correction, there was but also our real sharing of knowledge and I realized that in mine not appreciating, you know, not knowing that in fact, there was an opportunity for me to really just let that go and listen and be a be taught in a really gracious way. Um, the other thing I was going to mention, and I don't remember the details, but we had to work in groups, but one of the groups did this very powerful skit in which it was kind of like was it a church setting where they have thumped books down or

something? But it was it was like illustrating sort of the Indigenous experience of having someone come in and it was a kind of suggestive of that theme. And there was, you know, the, this the sound of something being thumped every time an outsider came in and said, this is the way we're going to do it and it was just, I found it a very evocative and powerful kind of way of learning about other people's experience.

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

Unknown Speaker 19:19

When I think about the program it helped me realize there isn't one perspective and invited me to see it from other people's perspectives and, to see sometimes that those perspectives did not experience the world as I did, that there was injustice in the world. And what I've valued since the program is there have been a few moments when my privilege has helped me crack open that possibility for other people who share privilege who do not see, who would say, they do not see difference, and therefore there is no difference and to challenge the presumption a) that they don't see difference, but also to recognize that people experience the world differently. And if we really care about justice, then we have to begin to be aware of the injustice. And those have been interesting conversations with people, where we came from very different beginnings to have kind of a heart to heart that I've appreciated the opportunity to do that. So for me the opportunity to take that experience of seeing the world from another perspective and encourage people to do the same. That that's been quite meaningful for me.

Unknown Speaker 21:26

I just wanted to pick up on the comment about white privilege and my certainly expanding understanding of what that is. I hadn't really thought about it too much before I took the program. And I had an opportunity to attend another program in Banff last May called, “On truth and reconciliation: right relations.” And that really helping happen really helped to open my mind, my eyes, as to what my white privilege had entitled me to and was still entitling me to and if I can use that to help other people to see receive some of the respect and dignity deserve. We also have in my community, so I came back to the community in which I'd been ministering for a number of years before I went to Korea, retired came back here. Now they have a Tongun Minister, so inter-racial, a different race, racial face in the in the pulpit and in the manse and it's kind of you know, it's interesting to see the congregation and different reactions to that. We also have a little Filipino community sort of starting in our very small community and that's been interesting and one thing I saw life giving here was the Tongan minister, there was a baptism the first of advent and, and he invited the Filipino woman and her child who live in the hotel and

work in the hotel. And he and, but they're Catholics and so they go of the Catholic Church, which is in the next community, which is also part of the pastoral charge. But he invited them to come to the baptism. And that was just really, really nice that she would be starting school and she knows some of the children who were part of the baptism, the family were of the baptism. So I found that life giving to me that the he would kind of go and say, you know, you go to the Catholic Church, but, you know, come and be part of our community for this day. And so it's as I get ready to sort of helping to organize the world day of prayer service, beginning of March, and I'm going to ask a couple of the girls who are Filipino background to, to come and be readers and so that I'm glad of that.

I was talking recently to friends. And I'm not sure, there was some kind of conversation that it was an organized conversation. But I was saying, I'm sad about myself that I don't challenge people often, you know, when there's talk about First Nations people or there's talk about immigrants, and I don't sort of make the make a challenge. And I have a friend who is she is very bold and she, I mean, she gets angry and she curses. She goes overboard at challenging and I just say how can how can I get some of her passion and, and get a bit of readiness to put myself out there. After the election, the federal election, you know, there's lots of anger in Saskatchewan and Alberta, about the government in Canada, and just the other day, we were having coffee together a group of us and someone was saying, Oh Trudeau is going to give money to the family of the Iranians who were killed and why should that be in and, and I did kind of say something and anyway, but not enough. So I'm supposed to be thinking of positive things. But anyway, it's nice to see even this very small, white settler community kind of becoming a bit intercultural That's really nice to see faces of different colors represented in our meetings and things like that.

Unknown Speaker 27:14

I think I think I come from perhaps a similar setting and I don't know if other people have had this difficulty and maybe it's been longer since I did the DUIM program then I suggested because I'm certainly I've done a lot of reading since that time and I feel like my eyes were really opened around privilege and my own unconscious, sometimes clumsy use of power. So, you know, some of this certainly, you know, my, my awareness was raised around DUIM but then I've been, I've been reading many of the books, you know that I'm indebted to the program for that because it brought them to my attention. That you know that the program was just one step along that along that growing awareness.

I kind of admired the way you're speaking about using power using that, that power and privilege in ways that maybe open doors for others that I feel like I've been more conscious and maybe I think sort of more open and trusting to share with my community and, and not only in the United Church community that I serve, but when we've been involved in interfaith events, which are usually in response to something terrible like the Tree of Life synagogue shooting, where, you know, where people from various communities went and worshiped together at our synagogue and after some regrettable events where members of the Community went and spoke up in the, in the context of, of our mosque in North Bay, where I'm feeling a greater openness and responsibility, although, you know, again, it's that the clumsiness with which we can use our power, but to speak up on behalf of the community in ways that I think are often admired by by the people, by our, by our police, and by our you know, our mayor and our council because they

want to hear people from in the religious community speaking very openly, about our relationships to other faiths and other cultures in ways that won't shut people down, but will that will build bridges. Like you mentioned, you know, speaking out against those moments of injustice, and I guess I find myself doing that sometimes, but because I'm in such a position of power, I think the strategy that has benefited me sometimes is more openness. So when I'm when I'm question about things like the recognition of traditional territories, instead of saying, you know that, hey, this is something we need to do, and here's how terrible we are, admitting from more of a place of vulnerability that our United Church is terrible that we, that we that we've been culpable for some of these things and we are going to be saying, sorry for a very long time because we were committing these unconscionable terrible acts for a very long time. And so, you know, helping people to see that maybe it's an expression of our own culpability and our regret that we we will have to do this as an act of apology and as a as an embodiment of the of the Spirit of the Jesus that we follow.

Unknown Speaker 31:23

I'll just say when I went to do the DUIM back in in 2017 I was new into my role here. And, you know when you apply for a job and sort of there is one vision in a job description and then you get into the work and things emerge. And so three years down the white privilege was not a phrase I had a whole lot of experience with or had really wrestled with a personal level. And so I would say in many, many ways, the DUIM experience set me up to then be much more aware of my surroundings and begin to look for moments where we were doing it well, and moments when we were being held to account for not doing it well. And I think both of those can be symbols of beloved community that when we're not doing it well and someone holds us to account, they're doing the heavy lifting, but it's about how it gets received. And anyhow, so there's lots more I could say, but I'll leave it there.

Unknown Speaker 33:04

Okay, I'll be quick. When we came back I was, I work with those four sisters, there's actually four of them now that we spoke of earlier and we came back was great to meet regularly with the rest of the team at the church that we're all at. But then we got a pastor, a new pastor, from another culture that's very hierarchical. And he came in within the first week firing people telling everyone that what we were doing was no good. And everyone just kind of ran for cover and to protect themselves. And I've been trying to look at it as this is an experience of many people from minority cultures, from when a European comes in and is in charge in many instances. And how crushing that can be to the spirit. So I am trying to take that, now that I'm stepping back, I've stepped back quite a bit from my parish community and to do some healing. That's, that's the learning. I'm trying to take from it.

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

Unknown Speaker 35:39

Um, I think one of the themes I am picking up and certainly if I had had a chance to share on the last one, it would have related to this is the struggles that we face when we try to engage in inter-cultural work in the, I don't know if anyone talked about this, but certainly there are misunderstandings. There's in X's story, there's an external authority imposing some kind of decision. And what are we going to do with that? X spoke about the group trying to do work together when one person has been didn't show up to the meetings and how to kind of make sure that he had a voice in that. So I think that, you know, it's very interesting to me how it is in those struggles that we move forward and somehow, I mean, sometimes we don't do that well, for sure. But when we do work it through together, there is definitely some glimpses of beloved community because people are, you know, sharing their voice and being invited to speak when they might not have otherwise been.

Unknown Speaker 37:10

I'd like to suggest that a one of the one of the themes that I heard there was that, and mostly with reference to the line exercise, the stories you guys had around the line exercise. It's just the, the power that is unlocked when some of these realities are personalized, like I think it was really about that, you know, that there were faces of beautiful, interesting people who were, who've been kind of brutalized by racism was the eye opener, right. This kind of a lesson about political messaging that I mean, it's anecdotal, but it's way more powerful than then statistics. It's statistics come alive, right.

Unknown Speaker 37:57

One of the themes I heard was really about finding our voice or trying to find our voice. And part of that, I think, in that theme was having some new tools or some new language to equip our voice with.

Unknown Speaker 38:23

I was thinking about the opening of possibilities. So, you know, X was talking about the white privilege and she worked with white privilege at the national office. And I was part of that group and brought home here, sort of knowledge of the Indigenous community here that I have, you know, it's been opening I mean, I've been open to just new learnings and new understandings and to the books that we kind have read since the time we took the program. Last summer I went to the murdered and missing Indigenous women had a kind of closing ceremony at Pot-ash. And probably I never would have even noticed that it was happening, but, before I took the program, but in, in the work I've been doing since I did and so I went to it and it was it was very wonderful. It was it was a kind of non-governmental agency sort of event, but it was just really, really powerful and so something that I wouldn't have done, you know, so it kind of tied the sweat lodge experience to this new experience of you know, we had a feast and celebration at that and, and there's different things that have opened to me since the program we took

Unknown Speaker 40:17

I was struck by the line. I don't remember doing the line and when we were at Sandy Saulteaux centre but these two stories spoke to me of how much we take for granted and the need to find tools. To very consciously try to find out what's going on within people, that isn't being spoken,

and that's what that line was and we don't often in our work, stop to do that. To find conscious ways to dig underneath.

Unknown Speaker 41:02

Which brings me to a to another thing which is it raised are aware I think, I'll speak for myself, raised my awareness so that not only do I not take things for granted and dig a little bit deeper I think I carry with me, if I go back to my theological training people often would talk about a hermeneutic of suspicion. I tend to go into a space now with a more question curious mind about you know, how safe is this space for people who don't look like me? How, how welcoming is this space for folks who don't look like me? How can I operate in a way that might shift that dynamic? I think the theme is, I think it's looking. It's not just the digging deeper, it's looking beyond what's presented. So I did hear that as a bit of a theme.

Unknown Speaker 42:20

I was just going to add, I think it's related to that, although it's not best words, but paying more attention to power dynamics. Right. And maybe that Hermeneutic of suspicion about my own exercise of that power.

Unknown Speaker 42:46

I think I'd like to go back to your word struggle, because while I've been able to challenge some people individually, I continue to remain frustrated at how we challenge systems, or how we have this conversation with a gathered community, not just an individual, in a way that invites engagement rather than defensiveness: no I'm not racist, no, I'm not exclusionary, No, I'm not. I'm not, I'm not, I'm really this loving kind person. And, that's true, but the other is true to it. And so it's that it's that it's a discussion. It's interesting, you know, a minister from Africa was recently in touch and said, you know, do you think your churches are open? And I said, we have some wonderful success stories, but I'm not going to tell you that it's always easy. And I don't know how we can set it up. You know, my line is what are we going to do go in when a congregation is going to have a racialized Minister say, by the way, we know you're all racist, so let's help you be less racist before this person. Like, here's the question of tools. X raised like, like, how do we get up that in a way that is respectful and engaging and transformative and not just changing? You bad people. And like, I think that is a theme I've heard in different things people said.

Unknown Speaker 44:22

One theme that I heard was around the recognition of white privilege. And to definitely be more conscious of that and to I know working here at the center, I try to be open to the differences of the people that come here, from different cultures and to not look at condemning them or anything for anything that they believe in, but to be open to accepting to have who they are and what they bring

Unknown Speaker 45:01

The way I encounter that is a meeting in an intercultural group and biting my tongue. So.

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

**As a group you are to have a conversation around
“What might be?” or “What is God calling for?”**

**Mindful of what you identified as life giving:
What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening
Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?**

Unknown Speaker 46:19

One of the things that just popped into my head, relates to what X said. So how do we help communities of faith really engage intercultural ministry when they're like X said, you know, mostly White, and then they say, well, there's nobody here that's intercultural. So a) why do we need to bother and b) who are we going to talk to? And I think X's point has just shown that there are everything community has people, but better looking and seeing them, and knowing them, finding out who they are. And so is there a way that this program I'm thinking about a program our congregation is participating in because we have a new minister, and I'm not going to be able to remember what it's called, but it's like different modules and someone comes in and we identify which modules might be best for our community to grapple with. “United Fresh Start” Is there a way for Intercultural Forum to do sort of a module using all these people who've been trained to do some sort of fresh start thing, which would be really great. I also know that our region has really thinking a lot about how, like there's a tool that used I think in our DUIM that looks at the white privilege, white things versus another cultural ways of doing things. And we've, our Regional Council has really been trying to wrestle with some of those things and how can we let go of the way we've always done things so the conversation has been going on about how can we have a regional meeting without an agenda. That's cares people.

Unknown Speaker 48:52

Yeah, I've been struggling with the dream because I think one of the real gifts of the program, as it exists now, is sort of the five-day intense kind of experience. But I know that there is at least once it's been done in sort of two, two weekend pieces. I don't know what that was. I know that somehow it needs to become more accessible. And I'm not sure I've wrapped my head around quite what that might look like. I mean, I really appreciate what X saying about the United Fresh Start and the modules and how that's that's helpful in that context. And that that may be one, one approach.

I also am aware that that we're trying we've been trying to figure out how to support the folks who go through the program to do the work and ministry they're called to so there may be some imagining about the support systems. And I know we've tried to work on some of that. And there have been some successes, but maybe there's something around more intentional learning circles as a follow up that keep us accountable. I know, for example, when we took a group to the white privilege conference a couple years ago, we did an orientation and then we had a call sort of at this, I don't know, a couple of different points along the way, but there was a little bit more of a sense of accountability and follow up. And I wonder if there's a way of building that in a little bit, not in terms of holding people to account but supporting them and doing what they're feeling called to do.

Unknown Speaker 50:54

I wonder about what X was saying in terms of, you know, how do we have something that that is a tool kit that you're that's, that is around engaging this topic locally in the congregation. And I know we try and do that with, with the programs that we do, but kind of a set out, "What would it mean for you to do this and engage this?" And I wonder about that kind of thing. And then the piece I worry about, is that while, I applaud the number of congregations that are engaged in the affirm process in the United Church, which is being welcome particularly around sexual orientation and gender identity. The reality is, sometimes I feel it's like a box they check off. You know, like the congregation that couldn't come to our annual meeting because they were celebrating being affirming. And the conference was inducting, the first openly lesbian president, and I think you're confused about what it means to be affirming.

Unknown Speaker 52:17

I would like to center line I think some of what I heard. We had talked a wee bit about, so many of us from the Winnipeg area have now taken the program. And we talked about follow up getting together. And I didn't do anything about that and neither did it anyone else but as the months went by, I said that it could have been a great support circle for us, when we started having these intercultural themes, and I would be good to find if we could have part of the closing of the program would be to set up a tool that would make it possible for people from an area to get together and have a circle regularly to talk about this and these issues.

Unknown Speaker 53:16

I was thinking that too when X mentioned about the sisters and meeting with them, I thought how wonderful that is. I've continued meeting with Korean who are working in United Church in Canada, not so not part of this program, but just because I do and so, I think all these connections I really life giving and can encourage growth.

Unknown Speaker 54:08

Initially my reaction to where the dream for the program would be, would be to say let's have it back attending Sandy Saulteaux Centre three or four times. But to definitely see the program continue, I'm not sure if it exactly in its current form or in different forms, I think as X had said, the five day like so the program might be a discouragement to some people. So some other way so that more people might be able to attend that type of time commitment as opposed to the full weeks. One tool that I was thinking could be done with the local community of faith level would be to have a color line done. Have people being willing to do that, I don't know, in some congregations or some communities of faith whether you'd have everybody all in one area or not, but I'm sure that there is a diverse community out there in every community of face.

Unknown Speaker 56:09

Well, I've got a question that I don't have much of an answer to it. And it's, it's how to bring this work to communities that at least don't think that they have anything in the way of that, of that diversity. You know, but I don't I don't have a good answer for my own question, but sort of equipping communities, far flung communities who think that they are a uni-cultural. or may in fact be to, to open those eyes. I it's a question for which I just don't have anything any real response yet.

Unknown Speaker 56:55

Yeah, I actually made a note of that one at the beginning too. We just we didn't speak about it directly. But is there a way to, for the program to help congregations see the diversity in their midst? I mean, most literally, even the smallest community, has a Chinese restaurant. So Indigenous people close by, I'm sure.

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Unknown Speaker 58:30

I was excited when X said, just to open people up to the possibilities of the intercultural reality that we all live with. And so I think important to highlight some way to open the program to congregations, I guess, whether that means going away to a residential event or having something some locally.

Unknown Speaker 59:10

I heard a couple of times the idea of providing support to pass participants or DUIM alumnus group or some kind of way to keep connected. I don't know that that's entirely the program's responsibility, but that might be something that's built in a little bit.

Unknown Speaker 59:50

I think one of the things for me would be just to continue to explore an experiment with some different models that that encompass more and different people.

Unknown Speaker 1:00:14

The point that sort of formulating in my mind doesn't reply directly to the question, but what I'm just thinking about is ways of making people aware of things like White privilege. And the book white fragility is coming to mind, helping to make people aware of that, without causing that knee jerk response of telling everybody that they're racists, you know. And one of the ways that that I'm here that we all discover that is by meeting people who were, you know, adversely affected by that racism and opening our eyes to something that may have otherwise been invisible. The other way that that I think the program certainly helped me explore was talking about it theologically, you know, to say that we are all we're all embedded in, in a in a in a world where there is, sin by any other name, you know that there are principalities and powers and which act on us and we're better off knowing what they are. It's developing ways that are Invitational to find, to see these dynamics, ways that are Invitational rather than confrontational because the confrontation, it seems just makes us more makes us resistance and drives that sort of bipartisan wedge that we see so alive in politics right now.

Focus Group 6: Participants. Jan 23, 2020

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community.

You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Were there times during the program when you saw glimpses of this happening or movement toward this?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Unknown Speaker 0:16

I remember in one of those sessions when we did the blanket exercise, and that was so profound for me and for others in that in the session at the time I saw how, yes, I saw that where we could become a beloved community, if we're willing to open ourselves let go of them not seeing looking at his situations as they am or them more but as us, and how can we function within the parameters and navigating ourselves without adding these labels to the movement.

Unknown Speaker 1:25

There was a time in our circle that I remember looking around the room and seeing everyone laughing and everyone's smiling and feeling quite joyful. And I'm it feels, I hope I'm remembering it, I think it had a lot to do with when we was one of the group presentations on, they were speaking various languages and X I think you are one that shared and there was sort of sort of a shock and awe in all the languages that people had and that could be understood by some and others in the room that understood nothing but could sort of grasp a feeling from the language being spoken that could be shared. And it was when everyone looked like they were feeling comfortable enough to smile and laugh, it felt like beloved community to me.

Unknown Speaker 2:59

I would call to mind a few things. One was right near the beginning of the program when we had an opportunity to reflect on our names, and to share about our names. And I found that to be a really rich time of getting to know each other. And it was a space in which people were really interested in learning about each other. And that was a really important beginning towards building that beloved community. The very fact that event that I took part in was bilingual helped to create that, because I think it's very easy when we all come in with the with the same language was at least one language or that is predominant, we can we can be less attentive to our language, but our care in our use of language and our desire to make sure that people were included, who might not necessarily completely understand, really work towards building community. And the third thing that I would say is, and I particularly remember the exercise,

near the end of I think it was throwing yarn around, and catching it, and really embodying connection and the joy in being together and doing that.

Unknown Speaker 4:36

I felt the sense of the Beloved Community many times over the course of the week, but one thing that stands out in my mind was the time that we were preparing for the small group presentations. And I have to say I hate small group presentations, but while we were preparing for that, I just felt a sense of being included, and of mattering to the group that I don't always feel in a group. And it was a real sense of community where we all mattered and we all had something to contribute. That was important to me.

Unknown Speaker 5:34

Maybe I'll jump in just as well. I see there's 1234 or five, a few of us here that were all together in this most recent summer. And one of the moments a few of us will remember, I think it was one of the optional evening sessions. But X's husband came to teach us Cuban dance and I can't remember his name at the moment but you know, we've had kind of an intense day as I recall. And that just really made space for us to loosen up. And to move into that. It was also for some of us, me included a bit uncomfortable the space I'm not a, you know, experienced dancer really. But we were laughing that came to mind when X was sharing about a moment when we were all laughing during one of the workshops that that came to mind again is something where there was connection and interaction and levity. And looking back, that was a really beautiful moment to me of Beloved Community.

Unknown Speaker 6:53

As a group when we gathered at the Jesse Saukteaux centre, it was fairly I think of us as being fairly diverse. We had a speaker come in, who was an Eritrean priest and he was just so far beyond any of our experience in terms of most of us had never spoken to somebody of that cultural background of his sort of life experience. And I think I think it just really us out of ourselves out of our own situations and pulled us into a place of imagining ourselves in such a very different background, such a very different country. And I think it just, I remember the conversation afterwards just being most of us just trying to wrap our heads around that experience of being in a place that was so different and having such a different life experience and coming and sharing it with other people. I just remember, for me personally, that was a real, a real eye opener and made me a lot less complacent. And I think that really shifted our community into a sense of the importance of the work that we were doing.

Unknown Speaker 8:29

So several things that really stand out in my mind. Although this was three years ago, so hopefully I'll get the details correct. One was just the opportunity to sit in, circle together and we started that way. And the sacredness of that circle and the way in which that sacredness manifested itself throughout the week. It was wonderful to be with a diverse community, a diverse ethnic community diversity in ecumenical experiences, and the richness that just came out of people's reflections. And the freedom that we received in the circle to speak our own truth and to reflect on our own experiences was quite life giving and I would contribute that to both the leadership of Jonathan and then some of the past participants that came in to lead us. One of the, I guess, one story that I would lift up I believe it was toward the end of the week, and we had

we were doing a morning session and we had looked at a I believe it was an early 19th century hymn that had some language about, that just suggested the superiority of both Christianity and of Western culture. And I believe it use some fairly derogatory language about other people's and other lands. I don't remember specifically what the language was. And so we were reviewing that and talking about that, and two participants in the group were preparing, they were part of the course and they were preparing to go and teach in Africa. And there was, I guess, in their table group, there was a negative comment made or a derogatory comment made about missionaries. And it wasn't necessarily aimed at them, but

I think they heard that and one of the participants was quite I think, shaken by that. And so we had a bit of a break. And then we came back in a circle in the circle, and we started to do some additional work, and it was clear that she was in distress. And so I named that because I had overheard the remark. And what I found life giving was that we kind of left the agenda of the day. And then we moved into kind of talking about that, and there was quite a bit of conflict. And it was uncomfortable. And there was, I think, disagreement. And it, it created a challenge, I think, for us to continue to, to be in the circle. But I found it so important that time was given to that that we moved away from the agenda. And that we took the opportunity to have that conversation.

Unknown Speaker 12:19

I think it was our homework after the first day and to go home and, I don't remember what the thing was called, but it was basically like check your privilege. Looking at the spectrum of things that you've had to process, depending on your upbringing, and how you experience the world day today, and when we went over that the following day. And we all stood in a line based on our number of what came out. That felt like it was devastating, I think, at least for those of myself who have certainly experienced a lot of privilege and ability to walk freely and day to day life to most extent. But I think the thing that felt like that beloved community, to me in that space was everybody having the opportunity to share their story. And I think a scene for the reality of what life looks like in their environment, and that was challenging and encouraging.

Unknown Speaker 13:35

Quickly, I might just say I wouldn't describe it as Beloved Community but maybe a feeling of solidarity. When our working group went away to talk about what it would look like to set the program for the first time in Quebec, and just the sense of while coming from different traditions, working with a similar set of constraints, limitations, and I think dreams to have what the program could potentially address in our context. For me, that was a definitely a feeling of connection I would describe as solidarity.

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

Think about your ministry setting, workplace, or community.

After the program have there been moments when the program helped you see or encourage Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of your involvement in the program?

Unknown Speaker 16:21

I could maybe jump in and get the ball rolling as I have an idea very freshly in memory from just last night. At my church, we're hosting our third, it's our third annual, I guess it's something we've been doing now for three years and interfaith lecture series. So each of those last years we've been doing three nights in January, engaging different traditions and how they might interface with Christianity. Its been well received, well attended. And so last night is our second of the three this year. And we had Helen Woo. A Doctor and expert of Chinese medicine and Tai Chi and she represented Taoist tradition. And the whole thrust of this year's Lecture Series is not just intellectual and learning in that way, but engaging in spiritual practice. So we learned a bit from her. She taught she kind of guided us through a brief Tai Chi session, and we shifted into yoga. And we had Maheshwari, a teacher from Toronto and Brampton. Again, brief overview, more intellectual and then inviting us into embodied practice. And after a break, then we had a group of Suffis whirling, dervishes sharing and music in the dance. And it was a beautiful progression the way that it came together. And I'm just sort of a support member of the churches interfaith circle. And the reflections afterward we're just how what an opportunity so if not beloved community exactly, at least encouraging deep respect and some deeper experience of other traditions and the sincerity of the prayer and practice of each of these that we were invited into, it was a really beautiful night and you could feel that certain spark in the air. So maybe I'll just leave it at that for now.

Unknown Speaker 19:36

I'm curious about the question saying about ministry, into my ministry work, which is important. I recognize that but I think a big one of the biggest....What I want to say is, it was very helpful for me to remember that it's about my day to day living. It's about who seek out to spend my time with, whether it's in ministry or if it's in social circles or what kind of entertainment I take in, Any of those things. I feel like my eyes are wider, or my scope of wanting to take in more has been broadened. And I feel like that I try to, I hope I'm thinking of that on a regular basis, when I'm making decisions about how I'm going to, you know, spend my time in my life and who I'm gonna try to seek out to have to be in relationship with because my life so far has been pretty narrow in my it's not been very, it's very homogeneous and in many, many ways in all the capacities of my world. And I think that that's been a missed. I missed things.

Unknown Speaker 21:07

Two things that I would just identify that I'll try and go through quickly. One is it as a result of some conversations that took place at our last general council meeting. And people raising concerns about marginalization of different voices in the United Church and racism that still exists in the church. We put together a couple of opportunities for people here in the congregation to come and talk about what came out of that meeting. And then to review our own thoughts. And we utilized some of the resources from the handbook that was provided. So we utilized the sheet on white privilege and on cultural identity and the Ice Berg of culture. We utilized some of those resources when we had those education sessions, so that was quite helpful. The other piece I would identify is that not just myself, but multiple folks had participated over the past several years in the experience were part of the coming together of the intercultural

ministry network in our new predefined region. And there was a meeting this past spring, where we had some conversations and several people mentioned the experience with DUIM and some of the learnings from that. And as the conversation continued through that day, the group was encouraged to put together what they call “the call to change”, a document to help the to help our region in developing intercultural ministries and they used, I was not a part of the smaller group that put that document together, but I know that they utilize some of the material from the DUIM. So that was very helpful. I could

Unknown Speaker 23:34

I can imagine as hard as it is, for those of us who just did this summer had to think back of like, how are we using I imagine for those who took it while a while ago, it's even harder but I think for me, since the summer, I've tried to be a lot more intentional with observing who is not in the picture like who are not part of the conversations, whether it's in leadership. I should say I'm a pastor at a church that has multiple locations across Ontario. And I'm in Richmond Hill, which is predominantly Asian, predominantly Hong Kong, second generation immigrants. And I think in my own leadership, but then also in the spectrum of our church, who is not there, who's not able to participate. Abilities has been an area that I've certainly been trying to look more into to, like where do we need to structure some of our programs and life as a as a church community, a beloved community to make sure that those who are not present can be.

Unknown Speaker 25:02

I guess our experience here in [overseas] is a little different from the rest of what you're talking about. But I just was really aware of the sense of Beloved Community this past Sunday. I was invited to attend the service. It was an English service. But it was all [people from overseas context] in the congregation and in the leadership, and it was a wonderful, wonderful experience to be welcomed in their midst. I was asked to introduce myself, and, you know, say what I was there for and so on. And I mentioned that X had a problem with his eye and that he would be joining In a few days here, and I said we covet your prayers for the ministry. And in the pastoral prayer, he was mentioned. And it really gave me the sense of being included. So I don't know that I have done so much to include others, but I have been included by others. And that too is part of Beloved community.

Unknown speaker

[overseas context people] people are very welcoming, and very, I think they understand community better than we do.

Unknown Speaker 27:13

So a couple of words. There were two things that came to my mind in particular. One is using some of the techniques and resources in in the congregations and as we've had conversations about reconciliation. And one thing in particular is, we've discovered there are a number of people within the congregations who have Indigenous heritage and there has and there's been a real sort of a suppression of their cultural identity. And really encouraging people to become more comfortable in sharing that and recognizing that we're not as homogeneous as we may think. And the other area that I've particularly found it helpful is in our involvement in refugee support group that we're part of. And the last quite a few number of families who have been

sponsored have been non-Christian and that's been most helpful in some of the conversations around what that means in terms of being a support group

Unknown Speaker 29:05

We had invited a couple of Indigenous people to come and talk to us about land acknowledgments and, and their perspectives on church and on Indigenous spirituality. And so, the chair said to me, so the meeting they can come at seven and they can have 30 minutes till 7:30. And I said, Well, they will come and we will welcome them whenever they come and will be can speak as long as conversation is fruitful. And so sure enough, they showed up late and we had we talked to them for probably an hour and a half, which was, and I just at that point, I said, I love this community because nobody looked at their watch. Nobody, you know, started pointing at the agenda or making any moves that they should, you know, their time was up. And people just found it such a profound experience to listen to somebody else and just to let go of the time limits that they, you know, just part of our culture as the church.

Unknown Speaker 30:24

I think for myself, I can't say that it's fundamentally transformed my moral perception, which I think is how I read that question in some ways. In part, because my own research has been in relation to that intercultural work. That said I found it is a really helpful resource, our diocese is in, in the process of creating intercultural ministries specifically and so with the Priest who's been helping to organize that, who's from Rwanda, trying to understand what it means to be an Anglican priest from that context and who's lived there his entire life understanding now on how to minister in this context, which kind of flips the tables, I think, from my perspective, when we did our group, which was predominantly white folks trying to understand intercultural ministry, so it was engaging with him and talking about the program, and then talking with him after he did the program. It was interesting, because he was kind of at it from the other. Trying to understand our context is intercultural, which is another I think, way that we see white privilege actually, I think, showing up.

Unknown Speaker 32:02

I was going to say something earlier but a lot of the conversation mimics some of what I was gonna say, too but having said that, I'm just to weigh in on what X just said, it's interesting because I one of the things that I found after attending the sessions was that I looked at things like, especially as we look at things through a Caribbean lens, and it was very interesting to make the transition to keep making that transition in my head and doing and doing trying to integrate it. With my current situation, and it was very hard because there were certain there we see we're seeing so many things that oh my gosh time thing, but how can I use what I have I've learned to bring it to it to. With an intercultural lens.. So that's that, for me is an intentional ongoing thing. Yeah.

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

Unknown Speaker 34:38

One of the things in all that I have heard is how important it is to look at things through different lens and to not have tunnel vision but to expand our vision.

Unknown Speaker

Maybe just very briefly, I feel like I wouldn't be able to identify exactly where I heard this echo but certainly in X sharing something around just the intention to step out of it can be very easy to be in our own homogenous communities and experience, but setting the intention and just stepping out. So that's one basic theme that I heard.

Unknown Speaker 35:47

I'd like to offer that a common theme I think I was hearing was the opportunity to find ways of lowering walls or breaking down differences in a way that could let people share common experience like common joy or common struggle, or that where everyone is included in saying we're all hurting here or we're all laughing here, that feels like a time where it feels like the ground shifts a bit in a way that, this is for me, this is really hard work, I feel overwhelmed by it and even makes me kind of cracky. Because I feel like I'm, I am so embedded in my culture. That's another thing that I wished I shared earlier, that awareness about white people have culture. I think I was like, what, that was huge, that was a big, So intercultural minister doesn't mean that because that anyone comes in and just experiences other people culture, we're experiencing our culture too and being aware of our culture so I when we get the breaking down on some of the things that making a common experience happen especially embodying with deep feeling.

Unknown Speaker 37:18

To jump off of X. I think the theme I kept hearing was the awareness part of like just us opening our own eyes as we went through understanding a little bit more of others experiences and then awareness of the world around us, like trying to, to see things through those different lens - but heightened awareness.

Unknown Speaker 37:44

The other thing that to that I heard is that in the different when we spoke about the first question is making space for each other, making, lessening the is a voice there are other voices and given that voice opportunity to be heard, because that is so important when you're around a table or when you're in an environment, and you're speaking loudly, but you still no one is hearing you and, and that's a very, very big challenge. And so as I heard it, everybody was sharing their experience. It was it was wonderful because everybody got, every voice got to be heard. Everybody's voice was heard and acknowledged. That's That's it. That's the thing.

Unknown Speaker 38:48

Much like what X said, I think creating opportunities to be challenged and hear other voices. I think that's really important for us in communities of faith because we do sometimes get caught up in our own issues, our own problems and we think it's the center of the universe. I always

have to be creating that opportunity to be to be challenged and to be knocked up knocked off our pedestals that

Unknown Speaker 39:53

I think I would just echo some of the things that I've already heard. The experience of joy in community and in relationship. Intentionality, of being intentional about drawing the circle wide. The importance of inclusion. And the celebration of difference.

Unknown Speaker 40:20

He summed it up so well.

Unknown Speaker 40:26

And I, sorry, I'm speaking twice, but that, I think you started talking about. I don't know if this is today's conversation about breaking bread or eating together or doing things that we all do. Everybody does some things every day. And to that those were times in this experience that I went, Oh, yeah, this feels, this feels like beloved community when we all sat at a table or ate the same thing or, you know, didn't mean we all really like enjoyed it. Like we didn't all love dancing, but it was done together.

Unknown Speaker 41:03

We took that leap.

Unknown Speaker 41:06

We ate kimchi, made kimchi.

Unknown Speaker 41:10

Yeah. That's great.

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around “What might be?” or “What is God calling for?”

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

Unknown Speaker 42:47

So, for me, drawing on some of the themes I think I heard and my own experience of where the program has been helpful. I think my dream or my vision for this kind of program would be that it's something that could be used in the context of ministry in Quebec City, that it would be accessible in multiple ways from linguistic divisions that are in our communities to financial ones and I think what it does well, at its best, is to create unlikely encounters. And I think if it's able to take, you know, create a space where unlikely encounters can happen, and that can help expand people's moral perception in our context. I mean, that that'd be the vision

Unknown Speaker 44:12

I think that we have to be intentional, and we have to look at ourselves first. And really, are we willing? Am I willing to go that mile? Am I willing to put myself out there? Oh, yeah, I know, I know that this is this and this and so on. But am I willing to take that step, boldly. And that is where I think we would have to begin because then we're hearing all these wonderful things, but we're in the circle. We're in that context. What about when we leave? Can I take this outside? Am I willing to do that? And knowing that there is a possibility that I'm going to be ridiculed, I'm going to be this. So whatever But here we have the tools. Now what are we going to do with it? Are we willing to, so that's where I am right now and how can I be. Having this work is a beautiful thing. And for myself, I work on, forget about God or at this moment, look at you, look at focus on you and this is what I say to people. What would you like how do you feel when such and such? Do you enjoy it? Did you like it? How do you feel about doing that to someone else or recognizing that and so putting it in in that context for them, as opposed to telling them okay, this is what it should be your, you know, whatever it is, but helping them to recognize the need and walking with them on the journey.

Unknown Speaker 46:16

I think one of the hopes I have, and maybe this gets a little bit too practical or contextualized. But I think as a student studying theology, the opportunity that this has given me to even look at the syllabuses, syllabi and see like all the different white male authors that I'm reading in the courses and who are the professors and all that kind of stuff. And I wonder if a course like this can help even, yeah, again, bring our awareness to these things and then help us to have the position to advocate for deepening our theological training, theological understandings and academics around the world.

Unknown Speaker 47:00

Yeah, it's a dream.

Unknown Speaker 47:03

X, I'm right with you. And it's so important. That is an excellent idea to incorporate because, I mean, when I was in theological school, you didn't hear this, right? And I remember going in and I was the only black person in this whole environment. And it was like, how come nobody can see what I'm seeing here because it was not brought out. So, you know, we have an opportunity to dialogue with what do you think? Okay, I maybe you may be white, I be black, but how do you see it? And how are you? encouraged to look at it from a different perspective? Yeah. So Jonathan, that's your thing to introduce it to Me the theological schools.

Unknown Speaker 48:08

I would say on that more practical note as well, I would love if there were and maybe this is kind of a spin off thing. I think the course that we participated in is wonderful. I know in my area, I'm finding it difficult to build any kind of enthusiasm for anybody else to take that time to make that kind of time commitment. And I would love if there was some mini module that we could be offering that would be kind of enticing people to consider going further in this.

Unknown Speaker 48:53

Yeah, I would echo that and, and I've continued to try and encourage some of my own folks to

attend Because I think the on-site in person experiences so important, but I'd love to see the forum work with somebody like the folks that produce the living the questions curriculum in the States could offer a video or web-based curriculum for us to use in our local congregations. I think that'd be a wonderful resource to have

Unknown Speaker 49:37

A module or videos or something like that would definitely make it more accessible I think

Unknown Speaker 49:45

I'll just come in kind of affirming and echoing that. I find my mind doesn't automatically go to the future, as many people are gifted with. As we're doing here following up opportunities like this to keep the conversation alive as I look back on an intense week of learning, since in many ways, I'm a slow processor and then after that, you know, there were different ways we still had because a few of us were doing it for school credit. We had projects to continue digging into it, but I, you know, just the sheer business of work and then other school and it was beginning and life in general. I'm glad I've had a few opportunities to connect through zoom and things like this, just to keep the conversation active, obviously, so important.

Unknown Speaker 50:49

I wonder if there is a way to use some of the networks to the, you know, the, the intercultural forum to build some teaming or some partnering between different congregations, different denominations, different cultural backgrounds, whether that's a way to, to start opening our eyes I find so often when we talk, talk about intercultural work, it's like how do we get those people into our church? And maybe the question is how do we engage people outside the church to build those intercultural understandings.

Unknown Speaker 51:35

Another thought on tying resources together, being in the midst of the week of prayer for Christian Union, knowing the Canadian Council of Churches involvement in that, possibility for building more of an emphasis on that inter-cultural component into resources perhaps for next year or in following years.

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Unknown Speaker 53:16

Just thinking about how difficult it can be to coordinate schedules for something like this, if there were a place or some team developing video resources, like a number of folks mentioned, then that can just be shared or taught at the pace and schedule befitting each individual community. So it seems like a strong intuition or idea.

Unknown Speaker 53:50

I think I would frame that theme as accessibility in relation to, you know, when I think of the people who might benefit from this or who, who I would ideally hope would engage with this. They're often not the kinds of people who have like a whole week, to leave their home context to go to different place and take that entire chunk of time unless they're already people who are deeply committed and already know, often have some engagement with intercultural work. I think so often the communities who I think could really help in having this kind of conversation initiated, or the folks who would find that a major obstacle to participation

Unknown Speaker 54:50

I'm thinking of the model of circles of connection and thinking that part of what I'm hearing is the importance of maintaining that core still having these intense opportunities that we've all been part of that creating that that core community, but of having opportunities for others to be drawn in closer to the center through online resources and that sort of thing.

Unknown Speaker 55:40

Saying that a hope is that, you know, for those of us who attend these sessions, that we find ways whether it's a small group, whether it's in doing a Bible study, whether it's maybe one Sunday instead of standing and giving a big sermon or reflection or whatever, bring this stuff up and raise awareness of it and in ways that will cause people to, oh, I never thought of that. I never thought of it like that, you know, at least start somewhere and even if we throw that out there and throwing that out there they would, it would peek some more interest in wanting to or even for their in their own lives. You know?

Unknown Speaker 56:44

I would hope that some things continue that are being kind of mandated certainly, I think in lots of denominations around mandatory racial justice training and things because we still get a lot of pushback on that. A lot of folks saying I don't need them and I am just really glad that it's not an option. And I'm not a big push person to always be thinking there's sort of rules and regulations but that has been one that I know whatever flavor you come into the to that training with your moved in some capacity by it. There's I hear over and over again, people having reactions to it, and I think it it needs to continue. And some of what I took from this event that I took was better than some that we are using in our training now. And I would hope we could, that could be influenced into the trainings of all our denominations and all our work that we're doing the best of this course in those other programs.

Focus Group 7: Stakeholders. January 23, 2020

Question 1 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

The first question is about the impact of the program on individuals from your organization who have participated.

“Beloved Community” includes creating community in which each person can fully be themselves, have voice, and shape the community. You might see these as moments that were “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want it.

Think about participants from your denomination, institution, or organization and their experience of the program.

After the program have there been moments when involvement in the program encouraged Beloved Community?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because of their involvement in the program?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Unknown Speaker 0:23 Well, maybe, let me just pitch an initial thought and one is that I, I love this approach. I've been a practitioner of appreciative inquiry for I guess since the 90s. And I am a complete convert in terms of its ability to reframe the lenses by which we move from looking at community as a problem to be solved into community as a set of assets that can be identified and organized and mobilized from within. So the alignment between this program and what we're trying to accomplish with the community development program at Wycliffe has been strong from the beginning. So we're trying to figure out how we approach intercultural Learning and Leadership from the standpoint of assets based community development. Ie. As a profoundly appreciative lens rather than intercultural leadership and learning as a problem that needs to be solved in ministry and in community development. So I'm just really affirming that basic approach.

Unknown Speaker 2:27

Actually, the way the way you put that David was the first time that I thought about the marriage of appreciative inquiry and intercultural things .I will confess to frequently seeing racism or white privilege or an absence of intercultural presence as a problem to be solved. Rather than seeing diversity, I mean I definitely seeing diversity in as an asset, but then actually using an appreciative inquiry way of thinking to build on it that that's, that's a new connection for me. I guess in response to the question that that was there. What came to mind for me is a group called kenosis. That's a group of people in the Hamilton area, somehow connected to the Christian Reformed Church in some way. Also connected to Bernadette Arthur, who was the racial reconciliation facilitator and participated in some DUIM, and FILL programs and so on and that

has her work has spun off into a new community a new movement they'd like to say, of white folks working to, to end privilege. And that's, of course, part of this bigger picture to have a just intercultural community and beloved community. So I guess I have seen moments of, of life transformed transferred from participants in DUIM that's now taking life on its own in another expression of this broader work. Yeah, they call themselves kenosis because it's about emptying, emptying yourself of unearned privilege privilege. I guess that's my language but it's about humility and as Christ said, Of emptying oneself.

Unknown Speaker 9:39

I have a story. This is from a participant who says, "I found the Canadian churches forum deepening understanding for intercultural ministry to be extremely helpful, well presented and resourced and motivational. I returned home and began planning an intercultural event sponsored by my Parish, for the seasonal Caribbean harvesters in our area. The program provided me with teaching tools. A grassroots group are currently sponsoring a Syrian refugee family and considering educational events in our community, and because of the DUIM, I have something to contribute to this.

Unknown Speaker 10:38

There is a group from last year's DUIM in Toronto. I think the group that went there from the United Church. So we've had two meetings since, just a follow up, and the request actually came from them. They want to as a group to keep going. And so every three months we've been meeting and the next one will be in March. The reason for that is that they found the land was very helpful, but there is still have questions out after it. And the meeting actually is just a continuation of everything that they've learned and sharing of how they are applying it into their ministries or in their lives. But more than anything else, it's a continuing conversation of what the DUIM had raised or had produced within their minds and even changes of behavior. One of those things one of one of our workers, was involved in camping ministry, asking the question, why do we have only white kids coming? And just to raise that question, I think it means a lot. It opens up another space for not just a conversational space, but to ask the question, then where do we go from here? Or where do we go from here? And you're talking about structural changes. And just to raise that question, I think it means a lot. It opens up another space for not just a conversational space, but to ask the question, then where do we go from here? Or where do we go from here? And you're talking about structural changes.

Unknown Speaker 12:25

So a personal story that I might just pop in from engaging with one of the students who came back from the summer course involved both the normal delegates from the denominations as well as TST students. This woman is from [X country]. And she came back quite troubled, personally with the challenges that the course brings up, in a part it was her relationship to the construct of whiteness. And it was a fascinating conversation, it probably has had three or four episodes in the last few months with her. She has, I think as a consequence, been rethinking her relationship with [X country] She's a bicultural and woman who works in two or three languages and has been in Canada for a dozen years but is now really asking what her vocation is in relation to her location in the [X country] situation, especially regarding violence and gangs and her old neighborhood and her relationship to the power constructs of those cultures. So I think

it's sort of, it was the course was a gateway, it cracked open some deep personal questions for her vocation which been fascinating to engage with her on.

Unknown Speaker 14:35

Okay, um, one experience that we had a number of years ago with the DUIM here is, when we've had it here, we've had a sweat and one spring, we had a fire ban. And so there was a big discussion because everybody was looking forward to the sweat and so some people were saying, you know, this is white man's rules, and there were passionate desire to go ahead and do it, do it anyway. And then there was the obligation to observe the fire band. So there's a big discussion. And I've spoken to several people that were involved in that. And it was very impactful. The discussion of some, some real conflict over what people should do. And ultimately, they decided to have a have the teaching of the sweat done by the person who was going to do the sweat, but not in the sweat with the fire and the rocks and all. So I keep hearing from various people that were in involved in that how, though it was challenging. And though people that were very passionate, may not have gotten there, you know, particular way of working it out. It was nevertheless a good experience, a deep experience, a passionate desire and like the resolution was unique to so I just hear people talking about that part of the experience. And then a second experience was the last time that the DUIM was here, I did a presentation on what Indigenous testamer would mean in the United Church in the Haudenosaunee community. And I did a presentation of how do you respect Haudenosaunee culture and ceremony together with anishinaabe elements and then Christian relationship and ceremony. And I hear from several people that that was very instructive and really helped them to think outside of the box in their own context. And was there is the intercultural mentor that that year. And so, our own students are going to experience that next week as well because she, she, as much as our context of Indigenous people has been a huge part of us hosting DUIM our own students need clarity as to what does this look like in interacting and working in other Indigenous communities that have differing spiritual values and ceremonies. So those are two good stories. And the feedback that I've received has been encouraging from DUIM

Question 2 for conversation. (15 minutes)

Remember to listen to each other for themes that emerge:

The second question is about the impact of the program on your organization.

Think about your organization or denomination as a whole.

After the program have there been moments when involvement in the program encouraged Beloved Community in your wider organization?

Have there been moments that are “life giving” or glimpses of community the way God would want because members of your organization or denomination participated in the program?

You are encouraged to use stories to share.

Unknown Speaker 19:52

Well, I mentioned one in the beginning, and I mentioned that again. So this was in a slightly different context, than the DUIM course, let's say but in a presentation that Pablo and Jonathan did at our most recent governing board meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches, they lead a workshop with DUIM content and in particular, the graph that we saw a moment ago, there around just inter-cultural community and how that's different from other models. It was striking to me that later that day, when we were talking about strategic directions, people were naming that that's the kind of model we want to live into and our own strategic thinking as an organization, or as the whole Canadian Council of Churches. So the power of the idea is making its way into some choices about what direction the council ought to focus its efforts. So, in some ways, also FILL is now more than just an addendum or appendage of the council, it's fully merged and integrated into the life of the council so that its priorities are now seen to be, are beginning to be seen to be also priorities of the Council for the future.

Unknown Speaker 21:18

In the United Church, I think there's a lot of intersecting with in this whole this whole program on intercultural, interculturality and the DUIM. We have a number of people who've actually in the past and Jonathan would know for whom this people are but who participated and are actually a couple of them if I'm not mistaken with three or five now what we call the White people working group and the main objective is to dismantle white privilege within the United Church. That alone as it was supposed to have completed its term last year, but was extended for another year because the questions that were raised last year did not satisfy the previous working group. And so they wanted to extend that you requested extension of that with the general council executive. And they were given that one year extension and so this time, however, the working group is working with the, what we call the racialized reference group as well as the Indigenous reference group. And rather than standing alone on its own, there's more collaboration. So we kind of learned structurally how that works, but in a sense, we're hoping in and although it's that intentional, despite this point, there's some modeling that's happening in not just how to do this, but within the organization itself. We're trying to figure out at the end what it's going to look like down the road. So I think that this a lot of that has got to do with the participation DUIM and bringing some of the principles into the church, this case United Church of Canada.

Unknown Speaker 23:34

In 2015, or in 2016 we invited, Jonathan to help us plan an intercultural experience involving 25 Cuban Episcopalians and 25 Canadian applicants to meet together in Matanzas Cuba at a local Roman Catholic seminary there and together, learn with them and from one another about justice issues pertinent not only to the Cuban context or the Canadian context, but regionally within the Americas and particular justice concerns that they shared. And I think what was result of Jonathan's intervention, but also the principles, the lessons of being intercultural, clarification of what it is to be intercultural, perhaps rather than cross cultural or more multicultural was really a very helpful clarification and frame for us to do the planning as well as to continue to offer opportunities following the Justice camp for clarification about what that means and to be able to say that the DUIM program and other similar opportunities would be available and we would be pleased to support participation in those programs with bursaries and so on. So I feel that the

contribution of the DUIM program to our denomination and to the other resources and ways that the resources are shared with the denominations and have been shared with us has been very really helpful. Someone else said it in, opening up or breaking open the ground for new sense to grow and emerge in our understanding of what it means to come together across diversity and difference to be, as was expressed in that first video, what God means for us, but God calls for us and our communities to be.

Unknown Speaker 26:44

Well, I think there's so much to this question, Jonathan. From my perspective, I guess I see bubbles of possibility in my own program, in Wycliffe, in Toronto school theology in the church around the study of theology. There's so much evidence that we need more and more of this. And it feels to me like the little, the breaking through that we've had in the past year is fragile, but it's full of possibility. I'd like to see this TST version of intercultural leadership and learning as a course, become a bit of a juggernaut for a much broader conversation within the college and within TST. I hear from the Bishop of Toronto, for example, he's saying, Don't send us any more students unless they've had some engagement with racism, intercultural engagement. They want to be quite deliberate about that. I see hope here for much more deliberate response to the TRC which has been happening across TST but not in an organized and deliberate and intentional fashion. So and then within my students, I see the possibilities for broadening the questions that DUIM and the I.L.L. course are raising, like, What does human flourishing mean? What does good community look like? What does the good city look like, where I'm from as an international student from Ghana, or from Hong Kong or from Korea or Honduras and how to engage the course in that sense from a whole multitude of global perspectives as opposed to a particularly Canadian centric-one. So, that's not very coherent. But those are some of the bubbles that I'm seeing begin to rise up as possibilities that are first attempted running the course.

Unknown Speaker 29:32

For us here at Sandy Saulteaux I've noticed most of the effect in the United Church community here. In particular, there's been a couple of Korean pastors that have joined us and that has been a good openness to learning. And in and just kind of understanding that I really appreciate that. I think it's like a garden that needs to be tilled and seeded and watered continually. Because I think it's a, there are systemic issues that need to change and that doesn't change quickly or overnight. And sometimes it's a very deeply rooted thing as well, you know, the rigidity of some of these structures that hinder the dignity in connection with each other. And, and so, again, with X being quite involved in several of the deliveries of the DUIM here I can see how that, I just hear in her in her sharing with her learning circle students just a very solid and broad understanding of this cultural interculturality and the respect that's necessary to be at the heart of that. So that you know, good engagement with people happens and not, you know, not just presumptive behavior, etc. So and then X is also been engaged, in different ways. And, and I think he was involved in that discussion, where there was big conflict about the fire ban, etc. And, and so I'm thankful that, that we have been able to be a host for this and to kind of just really expand the culture of interculturality and not just be limited to thinking in terms of Indigenous realities. So I think that that's always a good thing and we're glad to have been able to be the, the place where these kinds of conversations, important conversations and important understandings have been shared. So that's how we're directly benefiting from our hosting

Question 3 for conversation. (10 minutes)

Take some time as a group to identify themes that emerge from the stories.

These might be themes that ran through several stories or emerged from a single story.

What are the themes that you think important to highlight?

Unknown Speaker 34:09

So I think when we're talking about organizational impact, ultimately, I think we're looking at a heading down the road of what we call a paradigm shift for the organization. We're both in the idea level, as well as in the behavioral level. And I think if that's happening, let's say even with the board, and the Canadian Council of Churches, that's good, right? Is that those are the people that will impact that can mandate some of those changes. I'm flippantly saying that but you must lead by that. And again, we understand what I'm putting out. So I think that's a very, that's very affirming, that if it's happening there, even the at the United Church, we're talking about the white people working group, trying to make sure that the system gets changed. And so we're dealing with Empire structures here that we are dealing with, power structures, basically. And how did we do make it equitable for the people in our organizations.

Unknown Speaker 35:27

I'm also very happy to delegate this to X and X.

Unknown Speaker 35:47

I'd like to say that, this may be a bit selfish, but I think that what I can hear in our statements together is we are strengthened by this, we're kind of encouraged along in this work, by the DUIM and by the stories of what is happening, to hear that there's self-discovery, especially about a deep issue like privilege, to be somebody who doesn't walk around with all of that privilege, I have privilege as a male but as an Indigenous person, not in the general society, not experiencing that privilege to hear that that's happening and people are making those efforts is encouraging to me. I hear the encouragement and people's voices. And I think that that's an important part of what this is doing. Because we're kind of like the, the choir. And we already are believers in this and are pursuing it in our efforts in life. But it's just good to hear those things coming from other leaders. It makes me feel like I'm not alone. So, to me this idea of support and encouragement that's coming from, I feel it from Jonathan, and then I hear it in what we're talking about today.

Unknown Speaker 38:19

Reflecting on your comments already and reading through over some of the notes that I took, and the thing that that pops out most clear to me is the chain reactions of people who are involved who are engaged who are participants in the programs. And the impression that they become more thoughtful. I was intrigued by your use of the phrase, "less presumptive." They're more confident. I think X you mentioned they feel equipped. They've got some tools in the tool bag. They are disturbed in a good way if I could pick that from you, X. Cracking open, opening up. So that chain of people who are more confident, thoughtful, disturbed and changing themselves. That's the, that's the key, it seems to me. And then maybe a secondary piece is that the course,

the learning opportunity, but more the community of people who do it can also spark some organizational change, which I mentioned and Emo mentioned, but which may, in the end also be longer term more sustainable kind of change.

Unknown Speaker 39:44

I suppose one thing that we haven't talked about quite as much but is a theme here, even from the beginning with Jonathan's introduction is that intercultural leadership and learning is in this particular context, also, a deeply theological and spiritual question, and I, I think that's a theme but perhaps less explored in this immediate conversation. Some of the students that are, have participated, have also engaged in, for example, in Parkdale community where we have a partnership with X and some of the local organizations there at X is very keen about figuring out, I don't know if you know, but Parkdale in Toronto is potentially the fourth largest Tibetan expat community in the world, along with a bunch of other ethnicities and races, and he's really interested in exploring the question of the spiritual Commons. What is the spiritual Commons that is shared in In a space on a land, like Parkdale in Toronto in an urban setting, and that question of engaging intercultural, spiritual, theological as a theme, I think is I think we're all very interested in that. I hear that implied but I'd love to know what the content of that is more.

Question 4 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group you are to have a conversation around “What might be?” or “What is God calling for?”

Mindful of what you identified as life giving:

What are your hopes or vision for the future of the “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” program?

Unknown Speaker 43:39

In the United Church we frame interculturality, or the work around intercultural ministries, and in doing that we somehow limited the, I guess what we mean by intercultural. And in the United Church It revolves around justice. And so we have made mentioned that what is an intercultural church is a church that is engaging justice. Jonathan and I had a quick, just a passing by, talk about this and the difference in that or commonalities or whatnot. But I what I'm seeing is that, or perhaps perceiving down the road is a more intentional engagement and beyond, say, differences in ethnicity, differences in our culture's, differences in our languages and, and the racial racialized issues. Perhaps the space to see that within the matrix style of justice. Something that we could dig into.

Unknown Speaker 45:09

X was called away, but in the chat room he just said, “I will say that I think that interculturality conversation should be done interdenominationally. And that's his contribution to this question what he hopes for?”

Unknown Speaker 45:49

Maybe I'll jump in because that comment in some way dovetails with what I was thinking. I'm

not sure, but my impression is that the program lives most strongly in the United Church and in the Anglican Church maybe. And then there are others: Catholic, Presbyterian, but probably in the mainline or historic Protestant denominations, mostly. And I am interested in growing the movement so that maybe we're more intentional about inviting in people from some of the newer churches who were members of the council, and themselves also come from other cultural communities. So that we find a way to broaden the base. So I wonder if that's like, what was the phrase there? What's God calling us to be, what might be? How wonderful would be if there were a graduate or graduate or three from every member Church of the council.

Unknown Speaker 47:04

I guess I have as many questions as I do dreams. In some ways, I have questions like, how does intercultural leadership and learning fit with church growth and church death. We were going through some pretty dramatic convulsions in mainline churches. And I think some of that is a result of a lack of intercultural skills and capacity in the church. Not to mention, you know, our entire history. I have questions to about you know, very pragmatic questions like how from a theological college standpoint do we not I think maybe X was implying this, but how do we not make intercultural something special that we take care of enough in a corner or in the silo, as simply a lens. But how do we actually mainstream intercultural in everything. So, there should be an intercultural dimension of every activity, every program, every sermon, every street based ministry, every non-profit. I think sometimes, just because of the way we construct our institutions, we end up having these either or arguments about something like gender or something like your cultural being specialized and as a result marginalized rather than woven through the entire tapestry and fabric of who we are. So, I'd love to see how something like intercultural leadership and learning becomes just core to the training and the growth and the practice of every leader at any level in every in every vocation and call to ministry. But that has to be reflected first and foremost, I think in terms of how people learn and engage it. So, I guess I've got lots of questions like that, that I'd love to explore, but perhaps that's helpful a bit.

Unknown Speaker 50:33

X mentioned the word mainstream, how do you mainstream it? And when I'm trying to correlate that with what X mentioned about making it interdenominational and in the making it as part of the bigger, and I will use the term ecumenical community. It just makes it, as opposed to engagement then, becomes plural in very different intersectional layers. And it becomes part of who we are and what we do. And it grows. And I think I think that's part of the intent of the DUIM program, but it's good to be reminded that, although I fear the word, making the word "mainstream" in that sense, but I do understand how do we make it so much as our being, that we don't think of it as a methodology toward something, but as part of we live it. And in the stories that I've heard from people even outside United Church, it's I mean, it's grown it's there. It's more how to get the word here now is sustain. That's the stage we are in. I think that's what I'm hearing. Make sure that sustaining part is part of the program.

Unknown Speaker 52:10

There is kind of a Paulo Freire thing for this right? I mean, I guess I wonder what concientization looks like, around intercultural engagement in multicultural settings. So I've got students, for example, who come from lots of different countries, and lots of different cultural backgrounds. And it just strikes me that it's not enough to be in a multicultural setting and to work well

interculturally. So that the fact that we are multicultural in many settings doesn't solve the issue. So how does that conscientization take us from our unconscious? That lack of intercultural engagement to a conscious, that so permeates who we are that it becomes unconscious again, but in a far healthier form. So I'm just really, I'm intrigued by the challenge, the the pain that's involved in moving to making that first movement from the unconscious and not engaged to the conscious and engaged. I mean, as an old guy, I'm very aware that my intercultural engagement has to be conscious because I've got 60 years of work that I'm fighting against, in some ways. My hope is that my students who are a generation ahead of me don't have to follow the same path but can get through what I've gone through much faster and become naturally and subconsciously the cultural.

Unknown Speaker 54:08

The word that comes to mind is “unlearning.” An it connects to the X’s phrase, which I still like to not be presumptive. And assuming the way things are going to go or the way a conversation will happen, or decisions we made, but checking, being careful, listening, and unlearning. And how do you invite people into making a decision to do that? You know, that actually gets to some of the other questions too, about how we invite people to join in and how people are selected to join and the whole process around that, no doubt, there's much to learn there, too.

Unknown Speaker 55:02

I'll just throw the in the basket the whole, I don't think it's a methodology but it's again, the living out of a decolonized mentality. You use the word consciousness. Freire’s term, deconscientization, and how do we make sure that the decolonizing that's happening through the DUIM is sustaining? Somebody asked me the other day, so when does the decolonization process stop? It doesn't stop. Because the moment it stops iwe get back into colonizing others. And the key thing is that we always engage in that in that process. And I think I'm hoping that DUIM will continue to, well, we'll find space to co-relate it, in a more clear, clearer way, a delineated way? On how it actually helps with the decolonizing process that each one goes, we're not just talking about the white people group, but for each ethnic linguistic grouping of people. We need to go through that, whether we're the victims or the victimizers, we need to go through that decolonization process.

Unknown Speaker 56:30

I had a really interesting conversation with a student who graduated a couple of years ago, is now doing a PhD. And from her [X West African country] background she was commenting on how the Canadian wrestling with issues of privilege and whiteness and colonization was inverted in a whole different way into her background in West Africa, where questions of privilege and race in a post-colonial environment has become something very different. And I was so pleased to see her taking the principles of that. That discovery over the last few years and reapplying them in a totally different context, and that's I guess, if I have a dream, particularly of my context for students and for people going into development in ministry and all these areas, it's that they get through the personal experience to the principles and you know, can, they then have a hermeneutic for whatever it is, Empire, colonization, power construct. Even with digitization, the same kinds of principles in some ways apply. Our relationship to land. I'd love to talk with X about that and how intercultural engagement best takes us back to place and location. Anyway, I would just really, as a story that would probably was one of the most encouraging pieces that are

indicators that came up for me around somebody taking it fully through to a personal hermeneutic. A [West African country] hermeneutic in her case.

Unknown Speaker 58:43

I mentioned earlier that I do some work for the Canadian Baptist ministries and I actually am out facilitating and training translators in Maguindanao language which is a Muslim, a solid Muslim, big community, over a million people in southern Philippines. And throughout the time that we've worked with ever continue with that the interculturality framework, as well as AI, appreciative inquiry is what we've been using, together to the point now that we're there is the Muslims are being given or at least politically are will in within the next year or so will have their own governance, which they've been asking for. The translation project was picked up by the religious leaders, and looked at it and said, and actually are using the translations in the mosque as their sermon pieces, because not all of them can read Arabic. And so in that sense, there's that a whole lot. We talk about interculturality without naming it, without using the word intercultural, they were actually living it, that the leaders themselves, because they're Muslims themselves and they then went out the Muslim community and they continued their Muslim which can be used to be part of their identity. But for one reason or the other, the stars align in this case, and God's Spirit right working, so that they've been what is being used inside the mosque.

Question 5 for conversation. (10 minutes)

As a group what are 5 of these hopes you think important to highlight?

Which 5 gave you the most energy, or hope for the future, or might have an important impact toward moving the church toward “Just Intercultural Community?”

Unknown Speaker 1:01:48

I want to see more, call it ecumenical engagement. Interdenominational engagement is a little weak as term, but lets say ecumenical engagement, to see that happen. I think the DUIM has, has an open space for that and moving forward it has to be more intentional. And you're right, X, we need to bring you know, pull a little bit more outside the mainline denominations towards this, but my fear is if we don't, but anyway that's my other problem, but that's, that's not what we're talking about here, my fear, but just that whole thing about becoming ecumenical. That space where everybody

Unknown Speaker 1:02:58

You know, I guess my theory of change includes a kind of snapback thing that as hard as we try to bring about change and the direction that we'd like to go, things have a way of snapping back to the way they were before. And so unless you can find some way, I was off sometimes I've seen it as, you know, a rubber band that you hold up and you know, you can move it over to the one end, but if you happen to let go, it just goes back to a default position. And so the one that still is strongest for me is the cultural shift. So call it the decolonialization. Call it concientization, call it becoming the beloved community. It's got to be something different than what we know now where there's a particular dominant culture that sort of sets the stage. So an intercultural community would look and act differently. So getting there is to me an organizing

process of both that individual change, broader individual involvement and engagement, greater numbers from more spaces. And because they then can hold each other accountable a bit. And beyond that journey together, pushing in that same journey together, and will spark the kind of organizational change that that might make it possible to change the culture in the long run.

Unknown Speaker 1:04:43

I'm struck that this is a really keen audience issue here. Because I think people we all work with and know well, and people who are in our circles are all in such different places and so I was talking to somebody the other day who was just so angry when I use the term settler. People are in very different moments of readiness to engage the question so I don't know what the implication is there for DUIM and FILL. But there is a risk, I guess, that goes so far with it and becomes so deep that that we forget that we've left most people behind. I don't know what that means, I think our institutions are, by nature, conservative, and by makeup, they're hierarchical and so on. So that's a challenge and I guess I look to champions I look to what champions are experimenting with. And I mean people that I really, really just get a lot of energy from these days could be folks like Willie Jennings down at Yale who is if you haven't read or watch or listen to Willie Jennings, I highly recommended it He's quite phenomenal and his own journey as an African American. Such a powerful story I admire what Ched Myers and Elaine Enns are doing as white people should get it. Working with watershed discipleship issues. The wrestling's with champions like you know, Terry Leblanc, Ray Aldred, and others, Mark McDonald on the Indigenous side. And Adrian Jacobs. But I don't know can we grow the circles of voices and champions and not in a way that creates heroes out of them but this is like a pantheon of wrestlers that can help us slowly push this thing up the hill and actually decolonize the gospel and so on. I think there's just some really interesting possibilities from what we're doing and, and I think FILL has a very particular clear common contribution it can make. So I'm happy to be a wrestler with it.

Appendix 6: Interviews Summary

Themes identified by Focus Group Participants

Participants were asked to tell stories of their experiences and glimpses of Just Intercultural Community within the DUIM program and because of their participation in the program. They then identified themes that were either common to the stories or important to highlight.

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 1

- The importance of bringing together a variety of different kinds of intercultural experience and background. The experiencing of intersectionality and diversity.
- Addressing complex problems and challenges and not just avoiding them.
- take responsibility and lean into the discomfort, lean into it with intention, and with tools and resources and understanding to move forward
- learning how to listen
- humility
- learning a new way
- the value of time
- taking the time to listen to really listen to others and to allow people the space and the time that they need
- honouring of experience
- intersectionality
- more effort, more listening, more time
- creating trust and vulnerability and the intentionality toward a space that the participants felt like they could trust and they could be vulnerable
- trust

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 3

- language: being able to tell your story and the language that you know, as your first language or the language you feel most comfortable with
- the whole question of language
- saying a simple welcome of different languages is, you know, it's drawing people together
- like-minded deviants huddling together against the sense of despair
- there is a diversity in a White congregation
- the difference that I hope that DUIM makes is we come from the energy that people already have that that are not overcome by the sense of despair and the lack of hope
- More hopeful narrative.
- team building
- breaking barriers
- after the DUIM we are well equipped for the working in our communities.

- that it's more difficult to bring the local residents into the picture.

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 4

- leadership theme: opening participants where they can expend energy in supporting or, or actually leading programs, open people to where they want to expend energy to bring some goodness to the world.
- small and large impacts They all they all add up
- trying to really listening attentively and create safe space
- creating safe space is vital in all the work that we do
- the creation of the working of creativity.
- there's a working of creativity that could be a term that could be exploited.
- there are different diversities.
- Integration
- The power of storytelling

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 5

- the struggles that we face when we try to engage in inter-cultural work
- the power that is unlocked when some of these realities are personalized
- finding our voice or trying to find our voice
- new tools
- new language
- the opening of possibilities
- new learnings
- new understandings
- how much we take for granted and the need to find tools
- To find conscious ways to dig underneath
- raised my awareness of need for an hermeneutic of suspicion
- Hermeneutic of suspicion about my own exercise of power
- How challenge structures in a way that invites engagement rather than defensiveness
- the recognition of white privilege
- conscious

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 6

- look at things through different lens and to not have tunnel vision but to expand our vision.
- the intention to step out
- the opportunity to find ways of lowering walls or breaking down differences in a way that could let people share common experience
- was the awareness part of like just us opening our own eyes as we went through understanding a little bit more of others experiences and then awareness of the world around us

- heightened awareness
- making space for each other
- giving voices opportunity to be heard
- opportunities to be challenged and hear other voices
- The experience of joy in community and in relationship
- Intentionality, of being intentional about drawing the circle wide
- importance of inclusion
- celebration of difference
- we all sat at a table or ate the same thing

RESOURCE AND FACILITATOR FOCUS GROUP 2

- sitting with the discomfort and staying with it
- being with others who are really committed to creating spaces where all belong
- good to be able to know that there are others who are committed to this work and who are doing this work
- being seen and heard: having a safe space and feeling safe to be seen and heard and to speak your truth or to push back.
- Possibility
- there are always disagreements and tensions and I think that for a community to build itself as a beloved community: that disagreement should be taken positively
- the willingness to listen
- developing the sensibilities to listen to the story of another
- build relationship between people of different backgrounds
- we build trust in relationship
- giving a voice to this place to speak for people who feel marginalized.
- sense of beloved community and feeling welcome and being able to embrace that
- enthusiasm for people to spill out into their contexts
- openness to change and that perceptions changed and realizations
- possibility of discovering something or seeing something in a new way

REPRESENTATIVES OF STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS GROUP 7

- organizational impact
- reaching the people that will impact / that can mandate some of those changes.
- trying to make sure that the system gets changed
- importance of hearing/knowing that people are making efforts to bring change is encouraging
- the encouragement
- support and encouragement
- the chain reactions of people who are involved who are engaged
- they become more thoughtful
- “less presumptive”

- feel equipped
- more confident, thoughtful, disturbed and changing themselves
- maybe a secondary piece is that the course, the learning opportunity, but more the community of people who do it can also spark some organizational change
- that intercultural leadership and learning is in this particular context, also, a deeply theological and spiritual question
- question of engaging intercultural, spiritual, theological as a theme

Hopes Identified by Focus Group Participants

Participants were asked to name their hopes for the program and spent some time naming which of those hopes gave them the most “energy” or would want to highlight as moving the Church toward “Just Intercultural Community”

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 1

- Importance of opportunities and sustainability. The program be supported so that people can continue to participate
- The programs be accessible to encourage diversity of people participating
- The [programs be invitational: economically invitational toward participation
- Interfaith
- Widen the circle...including beyond the church
- Depth of participation: more people from an individual community participate in the program
- Increase the depth of and breadth of our experience of intercultural world as reflected in (within) the workshop

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 3

- Reflecting on settler privilege, as even as a newcomer or even as an immigrant
- newcomers themselves should learn what privileges they have: patriarchy, heteronormative
- humility
- having a DUIM component of all seminary education, and possibly also for clergy retreat type situations
- address the bigger challenge to get the local community to participate in into the any intercultural kind of activities
- learned from the DUIM that culture is not just about geographically from different locations is about their own personal habits, lifestyle, everything
- program can be a very good instrument for the reconciliation process in this nation

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 4

- I hope to see this program bigger, accessible to as many people as possible

- Intergenerational
- enable some of some hard conversations, some hard, spiritual listening to one another

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 5

- open people up to the possibilities of the intercultural reality
- to highlight some way to open the program to congregations
- some kind of way to keep connected
- experiment with some different models that that encompass more and different people
- ways of making people aware of things like White privilege
- way that that I think the program helped me explore was talking about it theologically

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP 6

- developing video resources
- accessibility: beyond kinds of people who have like a whole week, to leave their home context to go to different place
- include people who would Find time and cost major obstacle to participation
- circles of connection
- opportunities for others to be drawn in closer to the center through online resources and that sort of thing
- bring this stuff up and raise awareness of it and in ways that will cause people to, “oh, I never thought of that”
- program mandated like anti-racism or boundaries training in some denominations

RESOURCE AND FACILITATOR FOCUS GROUP 2

- a solid theological understanding
- addressing how we recreate, I guess the status quo of the dominant culture in minority, minoritized communities
- extending this other languages and also the secular circles.
- full social justice work because it's like a beloved community and Shalom full social justice
- how do we break down the resistance to engage

REPRESENTATIVES OF STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS GROUP 7

- more ecumenical engagement
- decolonialization / concientization / becoming the beloved community
- individual change
- organizational change
- grow the circles of voices and champions and not in a way that creates heroes out of them but this is like a pantheon of wrestlers that can help us slowly push this thing up the hill and actually decolonize the gospel and so on

- “unlearning”
- Not be presumptive
- how do we actually mainstream intercultural in everything.
- what conscientization looks like, around intercultural engagement in multicultural settings
- the fact that we are multicultural in many settings doesn't solve the issue. So how does that conscientization take us from our unconscious? That lack of intercultural engagement to a consciousness, that so permeates who we are that it becomes unconscious again, but in a far healthier form.

Initial Research summary and reflections

Focus Groups: Engage Difference! DUIM participants, resource people, and representatives of stakeholder organizations.

Summary

In 2012 there was an ecumenical collaboration to create and facilitate what has become the 5-day program, “Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry.” The goal was to provide a program that would provide the tools and attitudes for leaders to use in their contexts to resource intercultural ministry.

What is most interesting from the focus groups is an unanticipated outcome. Within the program itself participants have had profound experiences and glimpses of Just Intercultural Community/Beloved Community/Shalom.

While outside the circles of the program it is common to encounter confusion about the term intercultural—including multi-cultural communities seeing themselves as intercultural. The focus groups show that among those who have participated in, facilitated or resourced, or provided institutional support for the program there is a very clear, well articulated, integrated common understanding of Just intercultural that resonates with the content of the program.

The pedagogy of the program has also had an important impact. Understandings of conscientization and liberation theologies hermeneutic circle shaped the program. Research participants use terms such as “becoming conscious” and share theories of social change that resonate with the pedagogy. There is a sense that as a community we are active agents in history, of change, and co-creators with God. There also is a strong sense of a community of co-learners as opposed to a banking model of learning. Universal design and engaging a breadth of learning styles that shaped the pedagogy show their impact in participants reflection on their experiences of inclusion and diversity in the program.

The community of people who have connected through the program is identified as important. Of note is a theme of being strengthened in this work by knowing that they are not alone and having encountered others who are doing this work. Notable are the ways this was spoken by people who would self identify as marginalized.

The program has provided tools and attitudes—but transferring those to, and inviting in, local communities are identified as struggles that need more resourcing.

Overall most of the hopes identified can be described as a desire for this work to reach more people and institutions. There are questions about how to make it more accessible to a wider audience as well as how to engage people who don't see the need.

There is a desire to see the work permeating more deeply across areas of the life of the Church and beyond.

Another hope is a strengthening of the networking, competencies, and mutual support of the community of people that have connected through the program

There is an enthusiasm for the work and the program, a desire that it reach more and have more of an impact. There is a strong sense of “possibilities” both tangible and easily envisioned—as well as a strong sense that this work has provided space for possibilities not yet envisioned by us. A real sense that we are part of something important and transformative that has not yet been fully revealed.

Deeper Details

Some words, ideas, themes, that emerged out of the focus groups:

- The program has brought about change in the participants. They are described/self describe using terms and ideas such as:
 - Less presumptive
 - Recognize complexity of issues
 - Heightened consciousness
 - Better able to “stay with”
 - Intentionality
 - Humility
 - Trust
 - Vulnerability
 - Discomfort
 - Learning to listen
 - A (self) hermeneutic of suspicion
 - Thoughtful
 - Disturbed
 - Changed
- They describe:
 - Space and time for voices to be heard
 - New learnings and understandings
 - Intersectionality
 - Creating spaces for all to be heard
 - Diversity
 - Celebration of difference
 - The importance of listening
 - New attitudes
 - The importance of story telling and new ways of listening to stories
 - Becoming conscious/conscientization
 - Impact
 - Understandings of intercultural that go beyond multi-cultural, diversity, tokenism
- They describe having been equipped with tools to engage conversation in local contexts
- There is some frustration with transferring the experience of the program to the local context or wider institutional life. They talk about finding others don’t feel the need for the work and

wonder how better to invite others into the work.

- There is some lack of confidence in being able to lead/design/ facilitate learning experiences like the DUIM program in their own contexts.
- The community of people they have become part of through the program is noted as important
 - Being with others who are committed
 - Knowing others are doing the work
 - I am not alone
- It is noted that this is deeply theological and spiritual work

The hopes that emerged out of the focus groups:

- There is a strong desire to widen the audience for this program reflected in ideas of:
 - Opportunities to engage
 - Sustainability of the work
 - Accessibility of the program
 - How engage those who can't give time to participate in 5 days
 - How address financial cost of program
 - Increased diversity would include: economic, interfaith, intergenerational, more lay rather than clergy, languages
- Helping newer immigrants to reflect on reconciliation and their privilege as settlers as well other ways in which they might experience intersectionality of privilege (ie hetero-normative, patriarchy, etc) while also experiencing intersectionality of oppression.
- This program is an important way toward reconciliation
- That intercultural training be mandated in denominations, component of seminary training
- More and better networking of alumni
- Continue to provide a deeper theological understanding of intercultural ministry
- The work become more (and broader) ecumenical
- “mainstreaming” intercultural
 - a broader understanding of justice / justice issues are intercultural /shalom issues
 - organizational change
 - intercultural everything: all areas of church life (and beyond) be seen as transformed by intercultural
 - individual and organizational change
 - decolonization, concientization, becoming just intercultural community
 - invite in changemakers and people with institutional power to shape

- grow the circle of voices and champions
- Better equip the DUIM community to invite the local community into intercultural
 - Find ways to get local community to engage intercultural, particularly those who don't see the need. Provide other tools for people to engage such as video-resources, workshops, on-line resources
 - Equip/give confidence to alumni to design/facilitate/lead programs

Appendix 7: Transcript of FILL Reference Group recommendations

FILL Reference Group: Recommendations emerging from the study

February 27, 2020.

A summary of research findings was shared orally. Before the gathering the summary of findings and listing of answers to “glimpses of intercultural community” and “hope for the program” documents were shared as word documents..

Videoconference participants went into break-out rooms for conversation about the findings:

- *Conversation: what emerges from the report: what are we doing that is most life-giving?*
- *What does this point us to for future work for FILL? Each break out make 3 recommendations*

As a full group they gathered again to listen to recommendations and think about how they might resource them.

Unknown Speaker 22:23

I'll speak from what kind of emerged and folk from the group can correct me when I don't quite get it right. One of the pieces that came up was the need for or possible role for coordination with a variety of side initiatives that might be going on around intercultural training or orientation, those kind of things, and that being affiliated with a sort of central coordinating body. The Canadian Council of Churches seems a natural place. It doesn't have to be a position above coordinating everybody in that sense. But a link or a communication point or a clearinghouse maybe makes it sound too formal, but I don't know what the word is, but sort of in the center. Not necessarily controlling outcomes, but just a place where we can draw links. So that we can have communication with one another. It was also stressed that it b a place where we learn from one another. And related but a little tangential to that was also connection with the seminaries such as Toronto School of Theology and, and what they're those kind of places are providing in terms of ministry training.

Unknown Speaker 24:13

I think we didn't get that specific. Space doesn't need to be a physical space. But now, it might be a kind of an emotional or personal space, it was, I suspect more of a perceived need for some sort of place where people could connect with one another, learn for one from one another, and be aware of some different initiatives that are happening. And then just kind of draw some links some how I would put it maybe recommendation is might be too strong a word it might be more of an impulse or a felt need or something like that.

Unknown Speaker 25:27

We didn't really fully get to the recommendations, but I think one thing that came up was definitely the continuance of the DUIM program. Also intensive retreats where there's enough time and space to get to really know people of different cultures and to have the community

building that gives the sense of belonging and the sense of not being alone and the common understanding of what intercultural or just intercultural means or could look like. And that was what was recurring. Everyone brought it up in some way about what was life giving. And we attributed that to being able to spend enough time together to like, sit with the discomfort and work through some of that early hesitancy or whatever to get to that space.

Unknown Speaker 26:39

One of the things that came up from our group is the need for training facilitators. There is the modeling during the DUIM by the facilitators, but there's actually a need to get people who are interested to facilitate DUIM at the local level. How do you prepare for how do you shorten the materials?

And the last question was, how do you reach out? Or who do you reach out to attend and to participate? It's probably easy to say all your people, people in your church or people in your faith communities, or in your community or basic communities, we outreach or within your reach. But to get there, who do you want at that table? Or who could be interested? How do you interest people to be in that table?

I'm not sure if going to be part of the view and training itself or it's just I think it's more or less what I heard was It could be a separate thing that FILL might be able to, to offer. Because we're utilizing the learning process and a pedagogy of Freire or of dialogue education. How do you then use that those things that the methodology in a live workshop?

Unknown Speaker 28:38

That also ties into what was included in the summary that program has provided tools and attitudes, but transferring those two and inviting local communities are identified as the struggles that need more resourcing.

Unknown Speaker 29:02

I would just add, one of the things that I mentioned when we were talking is and came out from the research notes, we have a common understanding of intercultural having been exposed to the DUIM. but others may not.

And in reaching out to get others to attend, maybe even that first step we have to be able to give some sort of initial understanding because I think from my personal experience that sometimes when people hear intercultural it sets up like a scared kind of, oh my god, we're going to be going into issues that we don't want to deal with. So I don't know if in that reaching out to get others to attend, we somehow have to give a little information of background on what we mean by intercultural.

It's partly having a common language as well and feeling (we didn't we didn't get there but like one of the recommendations that we were we're kind of circling around) is some way to express to people who don't see the need for the program or who don't yet have like a glimpse of what just intercultural community looks like. An understanding to reach out both to our own local context where we are having trouble transferring the tools and skills, but also to the wider or wider communities.

Unknown Speaker 31:33

I wanted to add a thought, but this isn't from the group is just from me. I've been fumbling around with the language. What I've come up with is talking about "intentionally open." And that within the particular context of the Canadian demographic shifts, that has a particular focus on intercultural. But the stance is one of is being intentionally open. And I have no idea of that kind of works for anybody else. But as I've been fumbling around with language, that was the best I came up with, and it seems to be working with some of the material I've been trying to work on.

Unknown Speaker 32:59

Just to be intentionally open is dance, the approach and but within the Canadian the shifts in the Canadian a dramatic shifts in the Canadian cultural landscape. intercultural is a primary way in which that is expressed. But it's not the only way it might be expressed. For example, it would be the same sort of thing if you were looking at people engaging with people with intellectual disabilities, if you were working people, active addictions, there could be a whole variety of ways in which the same thing of being intentionally open. It's just that in our particular context, often that their cultural is the thing,

Unknown Speaker 33:50

As for the person who is in a Mennonite background, I feel like "shalom" or "peacemaking" can also be part of that. For the for the mainline Christian denomination, I guess, "hospitality" or "being a welcoming church" could also be to be used in that way expressed in that way.

Unknown Speaker 34:27

I think what became clear is that there's a need for gatherings to do this work. It's not something we can just hand out paper and documents and talk about it. But there's something that we learn from each other when we're gathered together. And so that kind of becomes like a mini microcosm of community to test out all the theories that we're hearing and to work together towards not only learning the material, but also to becoming intercultural in that particular moment. So for me that that's an important piece to keep lifting up, that it is about a gathering space. And when you create safe space in a gathering, it's a model for moving out into the community.

Unknown Speaker 35:22

I'd like to lift up some aspect of community empowerment which was coming out as one of the hopes to keep fostering or, or building on that sense of agency that comes out of liberation theology and our ability to respond in our call, our responsibility to move toward towards more just intercultural society.

Unknown Speaker 36:08

I was raising the addition of psychological support skills in in our work, thinking of the actual gatherings and what the forces for change that people will be experiencing and discomfort and so on. But I did a whole service this Sunday on beloved community and now I'm beginning to wonder if we're trying to promote the importance of diversity skills or intercultural training and we sense resistance maybe we also need to bring through some of these promises that have been expressed today, like the dimension of peacekeeping and Shalom or welcome. Really don't run away from the fact that this will be discomfoting or vulnerable for many people, but there are

these spiritual sort of benefits at the end of it all, and that we talk about that somehow in our promoting of it, as well as when we do it.

Unknown Speaker 37:31

What you said made me think I had the privilege of being in a congregation where one of our ministers had been with DUILM and she kept every now and again, she would talk about this concept of beloved community. And I think that she, I can't remember her using the words intercultural, she may have, but the thing that stuck in my mind and got me to think, wow, I want to find out more about this beloved community thing and this course that she's doing. So that those were the words that sort of drew me in.

Unknown Speaker 38:50

Here I, I brought up in our group. I wonder if it would be interesting tapping into Scarborough Missions. Because some of our students do placements with them before they start ministering to refugees and their families. And they go through a series of training and workshops, on addressing intercultural, multi faith, sensitivity training. So I wonder whether they would be an interesting resource. And then the other thing came to mind for me is, in our tradition, most societies in the country have an office for refugees migrants, and they also trained volunteers and people to work in an intercultural contexts. So, just wondering if at some point it would be interesting to do a survey to get a sense of what's already out there. I believe someone mentioned it a few minutes ago. Just getting a sense of what's happening at the formation level at all colleges around dealing intercultural issues and pastoral care.