

The Church of All Nations

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BY JIN S. KIM

In January 2004, a group of mostly second-generation Christians from a Korean immigrant church in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area was blessed by their “mother church” to launch a multicultural community called Church of All Nations. The church was chartered with great fanfare, but no one knew whether 100 mostly young Korean Americans actually could become a Church of All Nations. Many thought the name was a bit premature, if not presumptuous.

Church members were committed to not simply living out the gospel of peace, but doing that as a multicultural church, where each culture would be affirmed as a gift from God. In addition to serving as a witness for all nations, the Church of All Nations sees reconciliation—racial, cultural and generational—as integral to its mission.

These ideals have drawn 250 adults from more than 20 national backgrounds to join the church. Membership is 32 percent Asian, 37 percent Caucasian, 20 percent African and African American and 10 percent Latino. The session and the pastoral and teaching staff reflect a similar diversity.

From the beginning, nurturing the congregation’s identity was paramount. In January 2006, when the Church of All Nations moved from its “mother church” to a declining white



Members of the Church of All Nations

PC(USA) congregation called Shiloh Bethany Presbyterian Church, members of both congregations were skeptical. For decades, Shiloh Bethany members had prayed that their sanctuary would be full again. Could God be answering the prayers of this typical, declining white church through a young, multicultural church? Would the differing cultures and world views add to the complexity of congregational dynamics?

Multiculturalism, Ecumenism and Love

The worshipers found multiculturalism a blessing. The very decision to join a church in which one chooses to be a minority seems to draw the kind of people who are willing to “lay down their sword” of power and

privilege, and to walk humbly with God. By the end of 2006, Shiloh Bethany had a congregational dissolution and all of their members became members of Church of All Nations. One of the key reasons for this union was the growing recognition of the need to be a new kind of church for an increasingly multicultural area. Church of All Nations fit that need very well. In August 2007 an independent Pentecostal Brazilian congregation with a multicultural vision also merged with the Church of All Nations, making the church 10 percent Latino overnight!

In addition to racial ethnic diversity, the Church of All Nations has denominational diversity. The church’s strong commitment to ecumenical unity draws many worshipers who have no Presbyterian background. Members of this PC(USA) congregation include people with Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Baptist and Evangelical Free roots.

Members of the Church of All Nations witness many exciting signs of growth, but are most encouraged that they are filled with joy, hope and genuine love for each other across all kinds of lines, and dissolving barriers erected by church and society, history and culture.

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