

## An introduction to Diversity

Ephesians 3:10

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

Manifold = Polupoikilos = of different colours

Wisdom = Sophos = wisdom, skill

Creation is so diverse. Look at the hills and the dainty flowers and rugged terrain; yet it reflects God's beauty.

Why is Diversity important?

It's important that we study diversity from a biblical perspective because the world is teaching it in a way that puts us under pressure to do it their way. Their understanding of tolerance means we can't have a view against them. However biblically I can still love you even if you have an opposing view to me. That's exactly what Jesus did.

When you do not manage diversity you become irrelevant. You become an exclusive club that people can't relate to. In business you lose sales. You also end up doing adverts that might be offensive due to your blind spots. **Maturity is seen in your ability to celebrate diversity.**

Their behaviour that pushes your buttons is just one aspect of them but does not always define them. EQ involves adapting and connecting with people. You can only do so with humility when you don't see yourself as superior. We need to move from Eurocentricism and Afrocentricism and become aware of other groups. E.g. English boy giving directions to Korean gentleman. When we don't embrace diversity it leads to stereotyping, prejudice and racism. We are also limited in the number of people we can influence.

We have to learn to lead beyond the old boys' club.

There are many people how are not like you who you will need to lead and influence.

Can you lead people from a different academic background?

Can you lead across gender, generation, lower qualified people and ethnicity?

People don't have to become like you in order for you to relate to them. E.g. friend saying I am becoming more white to him.

We don't deal with these issues because it's not politically correct to accept that we have gaps in these areas.

We learn largely by observation, so my kids are asking questions:

Why are the teaching assistants at school all people of colour?

Why are black people the only ones that use taxis and love in those shacks?

The great paradox of life is that God calls us to be one and united yet makes us so different.

The key to managing diversity is humility, empathy, curiosity, and suspense of judgment.

Let's examine diversity in the bible

1. The churches were different.

| Jerusalem   | Antioch   |
|---|---|
| Inward focus (Acts 2) Fellowship and dedication to apostles' doctrine                   | Very missional  |
| Daily meetings  | Very prophetic (Acts 11:27) <i>During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.</i>  |
| Temple services and strong Jewish traditions. Jewish church plus proselytes.            | Strong Grace of Giving  |
| Impact of persecution (Dispersed before AD70 and refounded as a gentile city in AD 135. | Sending Church (Acts 13:3-4) <i>So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. 4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.</i>   |
| Dangers of cultural uniformity and legalism   | Diverse church (Acts 13:1) <i>Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. Cyrene was a Greek colony in North Africa (Present day Lybia).</i> |
|   |   |

2. The Disciples were different

E.g. John lying on Jesus' chest, Matthew was a tax collector, Thomas questioning and doubting, Peter impulsive (cutting off the High Priest's servants ear), Judas deceitful, no guile in Nathanael, and then Thaddeus/Jude: By character he was an intense and violent Nationalist with the dream of world power and domination by the Chosen People. In the New Testament records (John 14:22 NIV) he asked Jesus at the Last Supper, "But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Judas Thaddeus was interested in making Christ known to the world. Not as a suffering Saviour, however, but as ruling King. James and John were known as the sons of thunder, perhaps speaking of their temperament. Their mother was Salome who might have been Mary's sister so they were possibly Jesus' cousins. Peter was married as there is reference to his mother in law and Paul makes reference to other apostles taking their wives with them. This is the same of Philip.

3. Diversity in the early church

Acts 13:1-13

1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and

Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

#### 4. Diversity in the Godhead

Each person of the Godhead is God not just a third of God. For example, in Creation this diversity of function is clearly present. The Father planned the creation (Genesis 1:1-2; Jeremiah 51:14-15; Psalms 33:9), the Word executed the Father's plan (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-2) and the Holy Spirit completed it (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalms 104:30; cf. Genesis 2:7). **Their relation to each other is much like that of Architect, Contractor and Carpenter.**

#### 5. Diversity in the animal kingdom

Gen 1: 24-26 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. 25 God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."... The only distinction in man was gender.

It's interesting that man was made according to God and not to different "kinds". We come from one man and one woman.

#### 6. Diversity of function and gifting in the body

1 Cor 12:12-27 NIRV

There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. 13 We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit. And so we are formed into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink. 14 So the body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts.

15 Suppose the foot says, "I am not a hand. So I don't belong to the body." By saying this, it cannot stop being part of the body. 16 And suppose the ear says, "I am not an eye. So I don't belong to the body." By saying this, it cannot stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? 18 God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be. 19 If all the parts were the same, how could there be a body? 20 As it is, there are many parts. But there is only one body.

21 The eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you!" The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 In fact, it is just the opposite. The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are the ones we can't do without. 23 The parts that we think are less important we treat with special honour. The private parts aren't shown. But they are treated with special care. 24 The parts that can be shown don't need special care. But God has put together all the parts of the body. And he has given more honour to the parts that didn't have any. 25 In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of one another. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honoured, every part shares in its joy. 27 You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.

7. Diversity of Personality

What is your behavioural profile?

1. Cool Blue; High Compliance; Analytic

Possible Characteristics – cautious, rigid, sober, pessimistic, reserved, unsociable, quiet, task and thinking oriented.

2. Fiery Red; High Dominance; Driver

Possible Characteristics – touchy, restless, aggressive, excitable, changeable, impulsive, goal-oriented, optimistic, active, task and thinking oriented.

3. Sunshine Yellow; High Influence; Expressive

Possible Characteristics - Sociable, outgoing, talkative, responsive, easy-going, carefree, lively, people and feeling orientation.

4. Earth Green; High Steadiness; Amiable

Possible Characteristics – Passive, careful, thoughtful, peaceful, controlled, calm, even-tempered, people and feeling orientation.

Most of us are a mixture of these but will tend to have one which is more dominant than the others. The goal is to be able to recognize and then adapt and connect with various styles. Each style has gifts it brings to team settings but also has over-extensions and liabilities. It is good for us to be aware of these in ourselves and in others.

DISC Profiles in the bible: Paul – DC; Peter – ID; Moses – SC; Abraham SI.



| Leveraging off your Differences                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |                                  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Plot Positions for Self and Spouse on the continuum |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |                                  |
| <b>Justice</b><br>Truth oriented                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Mercy</b><br>Grace oriented   |
| <b>Rigid</b>  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Flexible</b>                  |
| <b>Confronts</b>                                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Avoids</b>                    |
| <b>Thinking</b>                                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Feeling</b>                   |
| <b>Reliant</b>                                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>High Personal Freedom</b>     |
| <b>Extravert</b>                                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Introvert</b>                 |
| <b>Night Owl</b>                                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Early Bird</b>                |
| <b>Spender</b><br>Likes the flashy, ostentatious    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Saver</b><br>Simple/practical |
| <b>High need for inclusion</b>                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Low need for inclusion</b>    |
| <b>Includer</b>                                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Excluder</b>                  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>High sexual needs</b>                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Low sexual needs</b>                        |
| <b>Task-oriented</b>                         |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>People-oriented</b>                         |
| <b>High Recreation</b>                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Low Recreation</b>                          |
| <b>Concise</b><br>To the point               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Longwinded</b><br>Contextualizes everything |
| <b>High need for authority</b>               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Don't need to be in charge</b>              |
| <b>Healthy Eater</b>                         |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Unhealthy Eater</b>                         |
| <b>Goal Oriented</b><br>Focused & determined |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Laid Back</b><br>Enjoys the journey         |
| <b>Active</b>                                |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Sedentary</b><br>Non-active                 |
| <b>Strict Disciplinarian</b>                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Relaxed Disciplinarian</b>                  |
| <b>Serious</b><br>Takes self too seriously   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Jovial</b><br>The life of the party         |
| <b>Detached</b>                              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>Enquiring</b>                               |

## 8. Diversity in tribes and cultures

Jeffrey Kranz describes the different strengths and redemptive purpose of each tribe. It's the same with nations today.

### 1. Judah.

The tribe of kings, and the most preeminent of the 12 tribes in the biblical narrative. Judah "prevailed over his brothers," (1 Chronicles 5:2), and the tribe's territory included the city of Jerusalem and the holy temple. King David was part of this tribe, and his royal line ruled in Jerusalem from around 1,000 BC until the city fell to Babylonian forces in 586 BC. Jerusalem was the capital of Israel and the capital of the Southern Kingdom after the nation divided. Jesus is of the tribe of Judah (Matthew 1:1–2). Notable tribesmen: Jesus, David, Mary, Solomon, Caleb

### 2. Reuben.

Descended from Jacob's firstborn, whom Jacob said was as "uncontrolled as water" (Genesis 49:4). The tribe chose not to settle in the Promised Land, and instead asked Moses for some of the territory that they conquered east of the Jordan River. Moses agreed to this, on the condition that they assist the western tribes in conquering Canaan (Numbers 32:28–32). They did so, but they did not assist the other tribes in battle during the period of judges (Judges 5:16), and the tribe falls into scriptural obscurity.

### 3. Simeon.

The man Simeon (with his brother Levi) slaughtered the men of an entire city to avenge his sister (Genesis 34:25–31). The tribe's portion of land was within the midst of Judah's territory (Joshua 19:1); however, Simeon did not grow as

rapidly as Judah and seems to have dispersed across multiple territories (1 Chronicles 4:38–43; 2 Chronicles 15:8–9). This is consistent with Jacob’s prophecy concerning Simeon and his brother Levi: “I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”

#### 4. Levi.

The tribe of the priesthood. The tribe of Levi stood by Moses (a Levite) during the golden calf incident at Mount Sinai (Exodus 32:25–29), and later took their place as ministers to the tabernacle, and later the Temple. Levi had no tribal territory—the Lord was the tribe’s inheritance (Numbers 18:19–20)—though they did receive pasture lands for their cattle (Joshua 21). Levitical duties were extensive (read Leviticus!), but Moses gives a brief summary of their significance in his blessing for the tribe (Deuteronomy 33:8–11).

Notable tribesmen: Moses, Aaron, John the Baptist, Barnabas

#### 5. Zebulun.

Zebulun doesn’t get very much attention in the Bible. The tribe does boast a strong, loyal fighting force during the days of the judges and King David. In fact, Zebulun had the largest presence in the army that made David king of Israel at Hebron, and they served him with “an undivided heart” (1 Chronicles 12:33).

#### 6. Issachar.

Issachar has even less biblical presence than Zebulun, but the tribe was loyal to Deborah and Barak (Judges 5:15). They’re also remembered as “men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do” (1 Chronicles 12:32).

#### 7. Dan.

We don’t read much about the man Dan, but we do see his tribe up to no good in the book of Judges. The tribe did not secure their original portion of land (Judges 1:34; 18:1), and instead migrated northward. In the process, they took for themselves other gods (Judges 18:14–17) and set up a new priesthood (Judges 18–20). The tribe later joins Jeroboam in idolatry when the kingdom of Israel divides (1 Kings 12:28–29). Notable tribesman: Samson

#### 8. Gad.

Little is said of Gad, the man or the tribe. They, like Reuben, settled east of the Jordan.

#### 9. Asher.

Jacob prophesied that Asher’s tribe would enjoy rich foods (Genesis 49:20), and the tribe went on to possess a region of eastern Galilee which is still known for its olive groves.

#### 10. Naphtali.

Naphtali, with Zebulun, is mentioned by the prophet Isaiah in a passage we read often during Christmastime: “For a child will be born to us . . .” This promise was given concerning the land of Galilee, specifically, the “land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali.” You can read the whole prophecy in Isaiah 9.

#### 11. Ephraim.

This tribe is named after Joseph’s son. Joseph received the birthright from Jacob, and instead of just one tribe, he is the ancestor of two (Manasseh is the other). After the kingdom divides, the Northern Kingdom’s capital is in Ephraim’s territory, and the prophets sometimes refer to the entire nation as “Ephraim” (Jeremiah 31:9, Hosea 5:3). Notable tribesmen: Joshua, Samuel

#### 12. Benjamin.

This small tribe has played several important roles in Israel’s history. Benjamin stood against the rest of Israel in a national civil war (Judges 20:14–21:24). Saul, the first anointed king of Israel, was from Benjamin. The tribe was also loyal to David’s descendants when the northern tribes seceded (1 Kings 12:16–24). Notable tribesmen: King Saul, Mordecai, Paul

#### 13. Manasseh.

This tribe descended from Joseph’s firstborn son, and uniquely settled on both sides of the Jordan River (Joshua 17:5–6). The eastern settlement is often referred to as the “half-tribe of Manasseh.”

Today different nations and people groups have unique redemptive gifts and purpose.

Canada – Mercy and refuge

USA – Giving (look at how much US government gives)

Zulu – Warriors (Strong in warfare)

Xhosa – Education and Teaching eg young guy who has started a tutoring programme.

Switzerland – Reconciliation and healing

## 9. Diversity of beliefs

Acts 17:16-34

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) 22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. 24 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’[a] As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’[b] 29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” 32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

It’s interesting how non Christians might be interested in hearing from Christians. Are we willing to listen to them?

*If I use Facebook to stay in touch with my high school friends who are church-going Republicans, I may be getting more ideological diversity than in hanging out with secular progressives on the World Politics sub-reddit.* Ethan Zuckerman (Dot.com guy and director of Center for Media at MIT).

Let's ask God to open our eyes and see some of the positives in our differences. Let's ask God for patience, empathy, suspension of judgment, love, authenticity and all the other attributes of relational maturity leading to management of diversity.