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EDITORIAL

God's New Society:
Multicultural Churches in Today's Europe

"Thirty years ago, many Europeans saw multiculturalism—the embrace of an inclusive, diverse society—as an answer to Europe's social problems. Today, a growing number consider it to be a cause of them." **(Kenan Malik)**[1]

The demise of multiculturalism is now taken as a given by many politicians and commentators. It is seen to have simultaneously failed the minority communities it was set out to support and fuelled nationalist movements in Europe which see migration as an existential threat. From Breivik to Brexit to Berlin's Christmas Market massacre it is easy to point to multiculturalism as one of the root causes. Surely it is time to consign multiculturalism to the cemetery of failed political philosophies and to declare *"Requiescat in pace"*.

So the theme of this edition of Vista may raise some readers' proverbial eyebrows. Yet it is precisely because multiculturalism has been given such a bad name recently that we may have been blinded to perhaps the greatest example of successful multiculturalism in Europe today: Europe's churches.

Across the continent multicultural Christian communities are thriving and multiplying. They take many different forms, from congregations of ethnic minorities that are invited to use the premises of a local church, to multi-congregational churches where ethnic difference is celebrated and maintained through regular worship in a language and form that is familiar whilst preserving unity under a common leadership, to international churches in urban centres where members from many different cultures come together

to worship in English since this is *lingua franca* which unites them.

Such is the diversity of types of multicultural church in today's Europe that we decided the best approach would be through a series of case studies. As an introduction, Darrell Jackson sets out a framework classifying how Christian congregations engage with the issue of ethnic diversity. As you read the rest of this edition and reflect on your own situations we would encourage you to consider where they fit along Darrell's continuum.

The first two case studies are of international churches. The first case is located in Karlsruhe (Germany) and describes the evolution of a traditional German congregation into an international one over the course of 15 years, setting out some of the lessons they have learned. The second case study is an example of an intentionally planted international congregation in the outskirts of Geneva and highlights some of the unique opportunities that such congregations possess.

Following that there are two articles which set out examples of multicultural church different collectives, the first for Romanians living in the UK, the second for Muslims. Chris Ducker's article on the Romanian diaspora in the UK illustrates the widely differing degrees of engagement that a single cultural group may develop within a host culture. Ishak Ghatas, a church planter amongst Arabs in Brussels, considers four different models for multicultural churches that might engage Muslims. This edition of Vista concludes with a review of Hardy and Yarnell's *Forming Multicultural Partnerships*,

a passionate plea for churches in the UK to reflect the greater cultural diversity of 21st century Britain by becoming more intentionally multicultural, or as they put it: "Trinity-shaped multi-ethnic missional communities".

A few months ago I had the privilege of visiting the Reformation Museum in Geneva. During the 1550s thousands of Protestant refugees from France, Italy, Spain and other parts of Europe, arrived in Calvin's Geneva. In ten short years the population rose from 12,000 to 20,000. The "migrant crisis"

of Calvin's day posed a similar challenge to that we face today: how do we build God's new society whilst recognising and celebrating ethnic and linguistic differences that give us a sense of uniqueness and belonging and are part of God's creative plan for humanity?

At a time of resurgent nationalism this is a moment for the church to speak and act prophetically, to demonstrate that in Christ there is something, or rather someone, who can overcome racial and cultural differences. Let us not forget that the Christian *telos* is a multicultural one. The failure of multiculturalism is not

the result of a mistaken objective but an inadequate basis on which to achieve it. And that is where the gospel comes in.

We hope you find this issue of Vista stimulating and would welcome your response and challenge on our blog: https://europeanmission.redcliffe.ac.uk/.

Jim Memory

[1] Malik, K. "The Failure of Multiculturalism", Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/western-europe/failure-multiculturalism (Accessed 22/12/2016)

"EVERY NATION, TRIBE, PEOPLE, AND LANGUAGE"   DARRELL JACKSON

You can learn a lot from a church noticeboard. Every year I have my students make a list of the ethnic mix of congregations meeting for worship in their neighbourhood. They have to do this on the basis of what local churches display on their noticeboards. Debriefing them afterwards is always fascinating!

The cities and larger towns of Europe are alike in being home to a wide variety of Christian congregations. As migrant Christians have moved within and into Europe, they have engaged with the existing local Christian congregations in a variety of ways.

Several years ago, I attended traditional worship at All Saints' Anglican Church in Rome and, during the after-service tea break, remember hearing the African congregation meeting in the hall below. Theirs was a very different style of worship. This type of shared building arrangement is perhaps the most common way that Christians from the same denomination but with different cultural backgrounds, negotiate their ethnic and cultural diversity. However, it's not the only way that ethnic diversity is handled and in this short article I want to try and point towards the range of models that I have observed over the past thirty years. Over this period, I've led or attended several ethnically diverse congregations and I continue to minister within such churches. From Norway to Rome, from east to west,

Photo: Darrell Jackson, used with permission

ethnic diversity has shaped the content, conduct, and communication of Sunday worship that I have been privileged to observe.

During March of 2016, I guest lectured at a number of US Seminaries and Christian Universities. In several places I was asked whether it was desirable, or even possible, to imagine ethnically diverse congregations when, after all, most of the successful church growth strategies are among mono-ethnic churches.

On first glance, that seems a fair question and in my replies I tried to suggest that my own experiences in particular contexts might not be applicable everywhere. I was also quick to point out that there are no well-tried or proven strategies that guarantee the establishment, growth, or success of ethnically diverse congregations. I suggested that the momentum towards more ethnically diverse congregations involves a miraculous and organic convergence of 'emergence' and

'intentionality' but that it cannot be organized or planned.

My experience suggests that there are more than just two ways of understanding the ethnic make-up of congregations; more than simply either mono-ethnic or multi-ethnic. What I've found is that congregations exist on a continuum of possibilities. Two of the key aspects that help to locate them on the continuum are whether they are mono- or multi- *congregational* and whether they are intentionally inclusive or exclusive with regards to their ethnic composition.

A continuum like this reflects the range of options from intentionally and exclusively mono-ethnic churches (as with the churches of the apartheid era in South Africa) through a range of multi-congregational options (which represent many of the current accommodations to migrant Christians in the host countries of the western world) through to the intentionally ethnically-diverse single congregation churches which I have

Figure 1: Christian congregations and ethnic diversity

Mono-congregational			Multi-congregational					Mono-congregational	
Intentionally and exclusively mono-ethnic (Apartheid era South Africa)	Intentionally mono-ethnic (Homogenous Unit Principle type)	Unintentionally mono-ethnic (default mode for many churches)	Shared building. Mono-ethnic congregations. No effective relationship.	Shared building. Mono-ethnic congregations. Informal joint activity.	Shared building. Mono-ethnic congregations. Formal joint activity.	Shared building. Mono-ethnic congregations constituting one church.	Unintentionally ethnically diverse and mono-congregational	Intentionally ethnically diverse and mono-congregational

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been privileged to call my spiritual home on more than one occasion. It's possible to depict this continuum graphically (see Figure 1).

These nine models represent the range of ways in which I have seen congregations dealing with ethnic diversity. Although I'm trying to be largely descriptive, I recognise that developing a model such as this one does tend to assume that we should all be making steady progress in a rightwards direction! Of course, I'd love to see every congregation in Europe in the right-hand box; intentionally ethnically diverse. However, I'm enough of a realist to understand that many will find themselves in the 'unintentionally mono-ethnic' category towards the left-hand side of the continuum. For some congregations, their geographical location will make it almost impossible for them to be anything else. However, if your congregation is surrounded by a highly culturally diverse community and it remains resolutely Caucasian, I might be asking it one or two questions about its understanding of mission.

The mid-section of the continuum is where many urban congregations scattered across Europe are likely to find themselves. In my view, these models contain the germs of a Spirit-inspired momentum towards the type of closer ethnic integration and deeper mutual cultural understanding that I think characterises the Body of Christ at its best.

The continuum I've developed is more than a theory; it reflects my own experience, but my experience is limited. The framework suggested by the continuum needs the kind of reflection on case studies that this edition of Vista offers with what immediately follows this article. These descriptions of a wide range of various European experiments, in turn, help to shape and improve the framework outlined in this article.

I doubt that any reader of Vista believes that they have experienced the fullness of 'every nation, every tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb' (Revelation 7:9). I'm still living a pale reflection of the future reality, but I still feel excited by being a part of the regular dress-rehearsal, every Sunday!

Darrell Jackson

The Karlsruhe Free Evangelical Church (FeG) is a relatively young church in the second largest city of Baden-Württemberg in southwest Germany. It began with just twenty local people in 1991 but by 2000 had grown to approximately 170 members. Since its beginnings the church has had a strong emphasis on home groups.

From around 2002 a number of Latin American Christians started to attend and in response to this the church began a Spanish-speaking home group. The language and distinct culture of this home group attracted others, not all of them believers; some with a religious background but others with none.

One of the characteristics of the Spanish-speaking home group was its missionary character, since the believers were always inviting their friends to come along. And since the group met in homes, the religious prejudices that might have existed were not the problem they could have been.

Some time later, a monthly Spanish-speaking service began in the church building. The meetings were always on Saturdays so as not to interfere with the Sunday worship gatherings.

At the beginning the Spanish-speaking group comprised of Latin Americans who were in Germany for a number of reasons: for work, study or because they were married to Germans. Becoming part of a German church allowed them to meet German Christians and familiarise themselves with German culture but also grow in their faith without language problems.

One of the most important steps that the church took to help the integration of Spanish-speakers was to offer simultaneous translation of the Sunday services, Alpha course and other activities. The church purchased translation equipment and this led to a greater participation of Spanish-speakers in the church services and activities.

The work among Spanish-speakers grew rapidly and in 2009 the church decided to employ a part-time Spanish-speaking pastor to support this ministry. The vision was always to integrate the Spanish-speaking ministry fully into the church, not as a church within the church. The Spanish-speaking pastor therefore became a member of the pastoral team along with the two general pastors and the youth pastor.

A consequence of integrating these Spanish-speaking members into the life of the church was an increased openness of the German believers to receive other foreigners. As a result more and more people from other parts of the world began to join the church, which in turn made it necessary to offer simultaneous translation of the gatherings into English, since the majority of the foreigners who visited the church didn't speak either German or Spanish but did speak English.

The arrival of a missionary family to work with refugees and asylum seekers in the city only increased the church's international ministry. A work group was established to support the integration and spiritual growth of the non-Spanish-speakers.

> **The vision was always to integrate the Spanish-speaking ministry fully into the church, not as a church within the church.**

Why would a foreigner be interested in joining a German church? For a variety of reasons. Many come to the church as a result of an invitation by a friend. Others are from a Christian background and are looking for a church where there is translation to help them understand the service. Most strikingly are those who come to the church looking for friendship with Germans or to learn to integrate better into German society. Whatever the reasons, students and workers from 55 countries and nearly 30 different languages and from all different walks of life have come through the church over the last few years.

We must recognise that foreigners in general suffer from loneliness. Away from their homeland, their family and their friends, they often feel alone and

need friendship. We see this as a huge opportunity that the church can be a spiritual refuge but also meet their family and social needs.

Lessons Learned

Though the work of the FeG Karlsruhe has grown rapidly over the last few years, this hasn't meant that problems or mistakes that have not been made.

One of the first lessons we learned is that language isn't the only barrier in working with foreigners. Evidently language is a significant obstacle in verbal communication but when it comes to intercultural communication it is just the tip of the iceberg. People from other cultures may think and live very differently to the way that we do. For example, the German language is very direct and so is the culture in general. People get straight to the point without talking around the topic since the culture is oriented towards efficiency and timeliness. In the eyes of some foreigners this directness can seem very rude.

For a Latin American friendliness and giving time for people is very important and not to do so is offensive. So if when a Latin American arrives at the church, no one is friendly or stops to give them some of their time and attention, they may well never return. Or conversely if they go straight to the point without bearing in mind these cultural factors, they may be offended and disappear.

On one occasion, one of the leaders of the church's international ministry didn't understand why some of the foreigners, who he had invited to an activity and had said they would participate, didn't turn

up. In German culture, when someone says they will attend an event, they will put it into their diary so they don't forget it and can plan accordingly. In many other cultures where friendliness is highly valued, an invitation will be accepted even when the person has no interest in attending, or the concept of living by a diary or organising life is done differently. There are many people who never use a diary or calendar since their lives are not as structured or planned as the life of typical German. Meetings are easily forgotten and as a result it is necessary to remind people frequently of upcoming events, especially if time has passed since the original invitation.

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And sometimes insisting on the invitation is a sign of genuine interest and something which is highly valued, so as a consequence the person will make a special effort to attend. It is fundamental therefore for those who work with people from other cultures to invest time in getting to know this other culture and try to understand the way they think.

Our vision as a church is to integrate the foreigner into our congregation, to give them space to live their culture (through home groups in other languages and encouraging the international groups to organise their own activities), but maintaining the unity of the church (a single membership and one united worship service with translation) since this is a sign of both our diversity but also our unity as the body of Christ where "there is neither Jew nor Gentile... for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Of course it would be easier to work with just one monocultural church but for today's multicultural European society, one that seeks to integrate the foreigner yet often fails because of the differences that exist between cultures, we believe that this is a challenge that God is putting in front of the churches of today. What globalisation cannot achieve the Church is able to do in the power of the Spirit of God.

René Mansilla

Pastor FeG Karlsruhe

THE MISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHURCH
LISA LLOYD

How often does a person have the opportunity to regularly meet, converse and share significant life experiences with people from over fifty different national cultures? I have had this privilege for almost fifteen years as a member of Crossroads Church, an English-speaking international church for the greater Geneva area in Ferney-Voltaire, France. My husband Larry serves as Crossroads' senior pastor and I recently completed a formal study of the congregation as part of my MA thesis at Redcliffe College.

Although the "many-coloured" nature of our international church is one of its most visible distinctives, my experience at Crossroads has revealed unique, often overlooked mission opportunities that challenge the long held view of the international church as "a social club for the diplomatic and business community who refuse to integrate into the host culture"; a "place of refuge...rather than a place for outreach" (Pederson, 1999).

In contrast, I argue that the international church provides a valuable and distinct missiological context from which all churches can benefit. It provides a wide open door for the gospel, it models unity in its cultural and theological diversity, and it transforms and sends a unique and mobile mission force into an increasingly globalised world.

A Wide Open Door

Crossroads has a wide open door for the gospel. Its multi-ethnic and multi-denominational character means it is a big tent which gathers not only those from many nations but also those from nearly all church (or non-church) traditions. There is no typical profile for those who are welcomed through Crossroads' doors each week. This openness matches the open-minded nature of those attending—many who are not in their home culture and have had to adapt to the diversity and frequent change characterising the transience of our region. This means the congregation is constantly adapting, which allows for a unique freedom; the church is flexible and open to worship in different styles, languages and forms borrowed from various Christian traditions. This stretches personal comfort levels, but the shared respect for those of different Christian expressions allows for new growth and understanding and an openness to something that is not "church as usual".

Crossroads' common language of English can define and unite the church. But rather than creating insularity, I have seen its potential to be an open door to faith for non-native speakers; those attracted by the opportunity to learn and speak English and those who are drawn spiritually by another language. I spoke with Miriam Phillips, executive pastor at Crossroads International Church in Amsterdam who observes:

"People who hear about Jesus in their second language, also experience hearing without some of their cultural baggage against the Gospel (bad experiences, church history, etc.). An international church reaches a different part of the population than a local language church [and] can offer additional opportunities for the Gospel."

A French member of our congregation told me, "We come to this church to find another kind of thinking...another mentality"; a Brazilian woman said she feels there is "nothing to learn" in her home church. The inherent flexibility and difference of the international church means its doors are open to people at all stages of their faith journey.

A Model of Unity in Diversity

The multi-ethnic nature of Crossroads is often compared to Revelation 7 as a

5

future picture of "every nation, tribe, people and language" standing before the throne of God. What I find even more significant is that the international church stands as a small-scale model of what God is doing across the world today, when world divisions based on ethno-national cultural difference are all too real. In the midst of our very secular and increasingly polarised European setting, we can look around the church and be reminded that God's Spirit is alive and well in Europe and beyond. One leader calls Christian unity across racial and cultural divides "an amazing sign of God's power in our broken world". The multi-ethnic international church has an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences, leading to what pastor and author Jack Wald calls, "great possibilities for mutual correction". International churches may serve as a model for other churches wanting to reach out to a more racially diverse or immigrant population.

This church model is especially inviting for those in mixed race families and for those who would be a more visible racial minority in a local congregation. One woman told me she was very aware of being "the only black" in her Swiss church; the reality that in comparison there are "all colours at Crossroads" was very important to her. A woman at an international church in Strasbourg wrote, "For our own interracial family, it was like a glimpse of heaven on earth" (Wilson, 2012). A couple from France and Madagascar expressed, "We are a normal couple at Crossroads, a normal family".

Recognising the many church cultures and traditions represented at Crossroads highlights the need to prioritise the core truths of the gospel message, or as author Stephen Covey would say, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing". Attending an international church challenges its members to re-examine which Christian traditions are more ethno-cultural than biblical and to put aside personal preferences and

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Ferney-Voltaire, near Geneva, is home to Crossroads Church.

secondary doctrinal issues that so often divide congregations. The International Church in Surrey makes this point on its website, stating, "In focusing on our core beliefs, we enjoy a wonderful sense of unity". One Crossroads member uses the metaphor of a quilt:

"You have many patches of different colours but they are bound together in a framework. You are allowed to be different, but Crossroads shows you that you are connected somehow. There is a framework that binds us together."

A Mobile Mission Force

A key characteristic of the international church, along with its diversity, is the mobility of its members. The mission for Crossroads is to train and equip a mobile mission force; I see this happening in at least two ways. First, the nature of the church context provides great potential for personal challenge and transformation; as one man shared, "Once you have experienced it you can't go back to being the same person anymore". This practical and transformative training in cross-cultural ministry benefits not only congregants but also short-term ministry interns invited from around the world, who then take a different world-view into their future churches and ministries.

The church also serves as a spiritual anchor to counteract the instability often experienced by a largely expatriate congregation. Everyone has a particular call in the Great Commission - for some in our church it may be bringing a Christian perspective to their UN organisation, fellow CERN physicists or international school. These are mission fields of rocky soil so the church is, as one member says, a "place of replenishment"; a place to be equipped and encouraged as God moves these world leaders to new assignments.

In conclusion, international churches such as Crossroads have unique opportunities to reflect the true international nature of the Church of Jesus Christ. Each international congregation, within its particular local context, has been called to be a wide open door where many will find faith, present a model of unity in diversity and to be a mobile force for the gospel message both locally and globally.

Lisa Lloyd

Lisa Lloyd completed an MA in European Mission and Intercultural Christianity at Redcliffe College in 2015. She and her husband Larry have served at Crossroads Church in France since 2002.

Pederson, D. (1999) *Expatriate Ministry: Inside the Church of the Outsiders,* Seoul, Korea: self published, Korean Center for World Missions

Wilson, S. (2012) "Searching for a Church: Life on the Ecclesiastical Frontier",*Christian Century,* 26 July, https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2012-07/searching-church,(Accessed: 3 January 2015)

Upon arriving in the UK, Romanian migrants who in one sense or another identify as Christian face a range of options if they wish to meet with other Christians and enjoy fellowship with them. This article describes some of the choices they have made, including attending local churches or ethnic Romanian churches. Of these, my preliminary research has identified at least 83 Romanian Protestant or Pentecostal churches or 'mission points' throughout the UK, in addition to Romanian Orthodox churches.

Since Romania joined the EU in 2007, significant numbers of Romanians have migrated to the UK. Initially there were work restrictions on Romanians (and Bulgarians) but these expired in 2014. Consequently, the number of Romanians in the UK rose from 136,000 in 2013, to 220,000 in 2015.[1] Given that the 2001 Census recorded less than 8,000 Romanian-born residents in the UK,[2] this represents a huge increase in little over a decade. Romanians are now the sixth largest foreign-born nationality in the UK (after Poland, India, Pakistan, Ireland and Germany) and the UK has the fifth highest concentration of the global Romanian diaspora (after Italy, Spain, Germany and the USA).[3]

Given the relative religiosity of Romanians, it is worth asking where this new group of immigrant is worshipping: are they forming exclusively Romanian monocultural churches? Are they integrating into existing British churches? Or are they joining in with – or forming – multicultural churches that reflect Britain's cultural and ethnic diversity?

With research in this area only at a preliminary stage, we can claim neither a comprehensive answer nor to have a representative sample. But we can look at some interesting case studies that shed light on the religious experience of Romanian Christians now living in the UK. This study has limited itself to non-Orthodox expressions of church, though these too are significant.[4]

Case Study 1 – The Mono-ethnic Romanian Church

Whilst staying in London in 2013, I was visited by a Moldovan pastor and, with Romanian being his mother tongue, we decided to visit a Romanian church. We did not have to look far: there are approximately 35 Romanian churches in London alone, and we chose to visit the Romanian Pentecostal Church meeting at Kenton Baptist Church. Despite it being a Thursday evening, there were 120-150 Romanians present for the lively service.

Pastor Victor and I noted a few differences between his own church and this diaspora one. But these differences stemmed from his church being rural, not urban; and in the former Romanian territory of Moldova, rather than modern-day Romania. In most aspects, the service was strikingly similar to those we had attended in Romania and Moldova: the format of the service (conducted entirely in Romanian); the worship; the style of leadership; the dress of the churchgoers, etc. This was a thriving church, clearly attractive to many Romanians but making little or no concession to British culture. This observation is not a criticism but it does illustrate a popular form of Romanian ethnic church in the UK today, with little contextualisation and a faithfulness to traditional forms and expressions of worship. This tendency will be familiar to those who have seen or experienced diaspora churches in many other parts of the world.

Case Study 2 – The Romanian Church Plant

Emmaus Church, Birmingham, is at the centre of a growing network of Romanian churches in the UK. It was initially planted in collaboration with the Baptist Union of Romania and today works with George Road Baptist Church, Birmingham, the Heart of England Baptist Association and a number of other partners.[5] Emmaus describes itself as a "kingdom minded church… making disciples and planting new churches mainly focusing on East Europeans." This mission mindset has led to an emerging network of churches as part of a vision for planting 12 churches

In the last 15 years, some 80 Romanian churches have been established in the UK (shown in red).

in towns and cities around the UK, the most recent of which was in Coventry in February 2016.

This is a well-established and well-connected church network. At its centre, Emmaus Church is active in many domains, including overseas mission trips, evangelistic events and a considerable social media presence. This last factor is an important one: Romanians throughout the UK are well connected, especially through Facebook, sharing news, contact details, clips of worship songs, spiritual encouragements and online sermons. Emmaus Church operates chiefly in Romanian, though with some sermons in English and once a month has a joint service in English with George Road Baptist Church.

Case Study 3 – The Romanian Church with a 'British Infusion'

An interesting, alternative picture emerges from Bristol, where *Creștină Dragostea* Church has been meeting since 2011.[6] This church has up to 100 adults and children worshipping there in each Sunday, and up to 250 coming for evangelistic outreach events. What is striking about this church is its multicultural leadership: Pastor Adrian Carey-Jones is a Welshman; he is assisted by two Romanian deacons, Cornel and Daniel. Their church has Baptist roots but now identifies denominationally as Evangelical.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

A typical service at *Biserica Creştină Dragostea* consists of Romanian worship songs, Bible readings in Romanian but sometimes also English, a sermon in English that is translated into Romanian, and prayers typically in Romanian but with scatterings of English thrown in. The congregation is almost entirely Romanian but the service is bilingual, with Romanian church culture being replicated less rigidly than other ethnic churches.

Pastor Adrian is open to "reciprocal learning" between Romanian and British Christians but at the same time worried that if Romanian Christians were "assimilated" into British churches, they would forfeit the opportunity of inviting other Romanians to a shared cultural experience; and that Romanians would lose the support of being with compatriots. He argues against "intentional multiculturalism [being]… biblically mandated" and potentially being a "mis-prioritising" distraction. One current priority for the leadership is pastoral: addressing the "clear sense of rejection and hurt in the fellowship" as a result of the Brexit vote, which has led to racist insults and a sense insecurity for members of his church.

Case Study 4 – A British Church with a 'Romanian Infusion'

Larne Gospel Hall in Northern Ireland has recently witnessed an influx of Romanians – up to 30 on Sunday mornings and 48 on a special Romanian-themed evening. According to one definition – which gives 10% from one minority culture as a threshold – this church is multicultural, or multi-ethnic.[7]

The church is an independent local church, overseen by three elders, one of whom has been learning Romanian and has been able to preach some short messages in Romanian. As well as attending Sunday services, the Romanian members of the congregation meet on a Friday afternoon to have fellowship together in *limba română*. The elders encourage the Romanian members to maintain their identity but without splitting from the rest of the church; they work hard at promoting unity within the

Romanians worshipping at Larne Gospel Hall in Northern Ireland

Photo: Dessie Colvin. Used with permission.

church and do what they can to promote this on a practical level, by using bilingual Bibles, worshipping in both languages in the main service, and translating the sermon into Romanian.

Elder Dessie Colvin believes multicultural church is important: "the bottom line is we are one local church made up of different facets of the community." Significantly, the church has been prepared to change some of its practices (such as introducing blessing meetings for new-born Romanian children) and not expect all change to come from the Romanian minority. Dessie reflects that "as time evolves our Romanian community seems to be integrating reasonably well."

Outside of these case studies, I have met many Romanians – from Harrow to Gloucester and Finchley to Diss – who either as single people or married couples have chosen to simply attend their local church, whether Anglican, Baptist, free evangelical, or other. These Romanians may be more confident in their spoken English, and perhaps married to an English person. Such 'Anglicised' Romanians represent the other end of the spectrum from monocultural Romanian churches in the UK, with their ethnic identity not being a factor in where or how they worship. This may stem from a desire to blend in, a kind of cultural Anglophilia, or from a theological belief that 'neither Jew nor Gentile' (Galatians 3:28) should be a principle for our churches today.

Conclusion

These preliminary sketches show a diverse range of responses to the basic questions facing Romanian Christians in the UK: where to have fellowship? How to express it? And with whom? For some, there is the further question of how to lead such a congregation.

Each of the different responses is of course legitimate, and may be determined by pragmatic as much as theological or biblical considerations. As we have seen, Romanian churches in the UK may be monocultural or more multicultural, monolingual or bilingual, independent or networked, contextualising or not. It will be interesting to see how these churches continue to develop – especially their relationships with "Anglo" churches, their understanding and practice of mission, and their interaction with the local culture – familiar issues for missiologists the world over.

Chris Ducker
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[1] https://www.ons.gov.uk (accessed 19/12/2016)
[2] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/countries/html/romania.stm (accessed 19/12/2016)
[3] http://www.dprp.gov.ro (accessed 19/12/2016)
[4] There are Romanian Orthodox churches or priests serving in at least 42 UK locations: see http://www.mitropolia.eu/ro/site/173/
[5] http://emmauschurch.co.uk
[6] http://www.biserica-dragostea.co.uk
[7] Kathleen Garces-Foley in *Crossing the Ethnic Divide* (2007, 22-24).

This article by Ishak Ghatas is a condensed and revised version of Chapter 12 in *Church Planting in Europe: Connecting to Society, Learning from Experience* by Evert Van de Poll and Joanne Appleton (eds., 2015)

Muslims are not the people who live somewhere else, but are our neighbours in all European states. They are in Europe to live and stay, and they have the right to hear the good news. The universal church should include all without missing any people groups in its memberships. The redemptive plan of God (John 3:16) includes all people, and the image of the church in Revelation 7:9 portrays the church as including all nations.

Many individuals and churches in Europe have begun to face the challenge and have developed strategies in response to the Islamic presence. However, there remains a great need to plant more churches for those who may come out from Islam to Christ.

Church planting among Muslims in a European context

In general, the average person who comes to faith is encouraged when attending a local church service in which he feels comfortable and understood. For the Muslim convert, the feeling of being at home includes the aspects of fellowship ("sharing things in common"), and growing into a sense of shared ownership as partners. This type of church is even more important to Muslims who are used to thinking of the mosque as not only the centre of religious life and a meeting place for prayers, but also for public announcements, and for obtaining counsel and permission for major life decisions of all kind.

Given this context, Muslims in Europe are different from the average European, and therefore need a church model that is different from the typical European church. "Human beings exist not as discrete individuals but as interconnected members of some society," as Donald McGavran has pointed out. Muslims living in Europe

clearly demonstrate this principle and may extend it as a means for protecting their identity. Older generations have often rejected integrating into the new society, while many of the younger generations struggle between the two worlds. In many European countries Islamic organizations have been created not only to protect their prospective communities, but also to influence the legislation of the host country so that it becomes more favourable towards Muslims.

At the secular level, the full integration of Muslims into Western societies still remains a complicated issue. Finding the right church for those who may accept Christ is critical. The question is: which kind of church or fellowship would best fulfil the goal of bringing the converts to the place of becoming vital, responsible members of a church? Which kind of church would be most able to help Muslim converts during this process?

Different Church planting Models

To my knowledge the church planting models for Muslim converts in the European context could be summed up in the following four categories:

(1) The autonomous ethnic church model

This model stands for ethnic churches that use ethnic languages. It works better if the selected ethnic group is big enough. Such ethnic churches may remove the feeling that Christianity is western and irrelevant, or that it may damage the ethnics' identity. Ethnic churches show the Christian faith as an applied dynamic for "life change," and may have a more direct impact on the community. Ethnic churches in Europe serve as living examples of expressing ethnic converts' new life in Christ without any fear of losing identity or feeling unbalanced due to major unnecessary changes. Through this model, Christian faith can be better translated into cultural forms, emotional factors can be adequately recognized, and the new converts can feel the side of Christianity where their emotional needs are met in a more family type atmosphere. Ethnic converts could be better trained and

The Arabic-speaking Protestant Church in Brussels

given leadership which would positively affect their growth and witness. They may easily develop culturally acceptable ways to reach their own people for Christ.

Ethnic churches in Europe may be less attractive to the younger generations due to their greater desire to be integrated into European life. They may see such a church as a cause for more isolation and foreignness in the host country. Christians from hosting countries may see a foreign element in ethnic churches as well, and may feel foreign in its community, which would keep them from being helpful to such groups and even more sensitive towards them. However, strong ties within the ethnic families will make it possible for the younger generation to accept coming to such churches with their families. The ethnic churches should be part of the wider European church, and if languages of the host countries are used side by side with ethnic ones, it may encourage European attendants, especially of mixed marriages, to feel part of the ethnic church. The use of European languages is also important for younger generations who may speak an ethnic language but are unable to read or write it.

(2) The European church with a sister ethnic church

According to this model, a European church plants an ethnic sister church or fellowship that uses the building of the mother church. This model works for European churches who may want to engage in Muslim work. When they have converts they encourage the forming of ethnic fellowships. The mother church and the ethnic groups may or may not have separate membership and leadership policies, so there are two types of this model:

9

Type 1

- Sunday worship together, and weekly ethnic fellowships are encouraged.
- The European and ethnic church form one membership and one leadership for all attendants.
- European language for church services and Sunday school.
- Ethnic and European languages are used for house groups/fellowships within the sister church.

Type 2

- European churches with sister ethnic church(es).
- Separate membership and leadership, but not totally independent from the mother church.
- Moral responsibility of mother church.
- Ethnic church uses the building/ resources of mother church.

(3) The model of a multi-ethnic or international urban church

The church in Antioch as described in Acts 11 and 13 could serve as a model for a multi-ethnic or international urban church. It works as a "melting pot" for people from different racial and religious backgrounds.

Planting such a heterogeneous church is in some situations more in keeping with the demographic makeup of the local population. This model could work in urban areas where different but small ethnic groups are living side by side. It demands more cooperation and equal involvement from its members. In such a church different languages, thought patterns, growth speeds, and value systems may co-exist, although it often chooses the language and leadership model of the host country. This church will encourage small ethnic Bible study groups, and youth and women meetings with its respective leaders. However, in order to enhance growth, the gatherings during the week should not merely be an "add-on" to the Sunday worship. The multi-ethnic church should adopt a holistic ministry strategy in order to meet spiritual as well as social and other felt needs of the community.

This model may give a positive image of the church in the multicultural society, as a community where people from different ethnic, social, and linguistic backgrounds are at home and care for each other. As such, it is an eloquent witness to the reconciling power of the Gospel.

(4) The integration model

According to this model, Muslim converts will integrate into existing local European churches. Integration is an option for a newcomer in a host church when he chooses it of his own free well. It implies that he or she agrees to respect the basic guidelines of the host church, while possibly retaining some of the original cultural identity. This model may appeal to second and third generations who may prefer European culture. This model assumes that complete integration of Muslim converts into existing churches in Europe is possible, and that it would be relatively easy for them to adapting to Western style church worship, evangelism, and fellowship.

However, it is important to consider that integration is a dynamic two-way process. It demands some efforts from the side of the receiving church as well. Integration into existing European churches should be accepted by both parties, which is a key factor. Otherwise, the process of belonging will be hindered, and both groups will not really be united. Existing churches are not expected to become like ethnic churches, but they should develop an appreciation for other cultures. As long as Muslim converts feel foreign in the host church, they will be hindered from functioning effectively. Sooner or later, this may result in opting out or even falling away.

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The starting point

The best starting point is an adequate understanding of our Muslims neighbours in their context, especially in the areas of family life, loyalty, and concept of community. We should not lump all Muslims together into one category. Muslims in Europe are not a single homogeneous group; there are differences in religious practice, language, ethnic background, and cultural traditions. Church planting for Muslims should therefore be selective. It is important to identify the community in which one wants to work, and to ascertain the perceived and "felt needs" of the people. Church planters must learn to look at the population from both an anthropological and a theological angle.

Culture shapes the human voice, and when people become Christians, they carry their culture with them. It should not be required from new Christians that they refrain from all cultural aspects, as long as they are not anti-Biblical. Some cultural aspects can be retained. Some aspects may be transformed, while others will need to be rejected.

It is a mistake to confuse the European culture with the Biblical model. European churches ought to consider that their worship, music, and leadership patterns are not above culture, but are to a large extent culturally determined. Converts should be encouraged to develop habits in conformity with Biblical values, especially in areas where cultural habits are in conflict with contradicting Biblical teaching.

Furthermore, whatever model we adopt as being the most adequate for our situation, we should always take care to equip and help the members of our community to face spiritual warfare and possible persecution. At the same time, converts may expect to experience the power of Christ demonstrated through visions, dreams, healings, or any other dramatic answer to prayer.

Conclusions

First of all, regardless of the church model, converts desire to be received for who they are as brothers and sisters in Christ, without having to jettison their whole past. They may have different patterns of worship and leadership than what Europeans adopt.

Second, church planters should not focus on the religious side and limit interchange to this level. The lack of personal contact between Muslims and Christians is one of the obstacles in Muslim evangelism. Developing "interfaith dialogue" provides good building encounters.

Third, church planters should develop distinctive holistic ministries that may open new doors and increase ministry opportunities. Holistic ministries take the Gospel beyond being just a theological abstraction and intentionally demonstrate it as a dynamic reality for all aspects of life.

Fourth, it is difficult to plant churches as long as the people concerned are mostly in a transitory or unstable situation, such as refugees. It seems to me that in order to plant stable and reproductive churches, we should focus on permanent groups, and give priority to "families."

The choice of the right model is crucial. I am deeply convinced that all models are relevant in some situation or another, but from my perspective, the model that best fits the European context is that of an ethnic church in which the leadership is in the hands of the ethnic group. There can be elders from the host country and career missionaries integrated into the leadership, and this should be encouraged. Sunday services should be in the ethnic language, with simultaneous translation into the language of the host country to meet the needs of younger generations, mixed marriages, and members from outside the ethnic group. Separate house groups for discipleship in both ethnic language and host country language are to be considered. The ethnic church must put more emphasis on evangelism and developing ministries to meet the felt needs of the community. It must never consider separating itself from the wider European churches.

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BOOK REVIEW: FORMING MULTICULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS BOOK REVIEW BY CHRIS DUCKER

Hardy and Yarnell, *Forming Multicultural Partnerships: Church Planting in a Divided Society*, Instant Apostle: Watford, 2015

Hardy and Yarnell are both church planters and missional thinkers based in the UK, and their book clearly draws upon considerable practical experience as well as serious missiological and theological reflection. *Forming Multicultural Partnerships* covers many of the hot topics in missiology today – from ethnic churches to hospitality, and from missional church to reverse mission – all in relation to either church planting or partnerships between different churches.

The book is arranged into three main sections which can best be summarised as framing; training; and engaging. Part 1 sets the scene by providing data on religious affiliation and on ethnic identity, together with a panorama of the missional and emerging church movements in the UK today. The authors argue that contemporary Britain (with urban Britain especially in mind) is characterised by diversity; they not unreasonably suggest that traditional models of church are failing to reflect, or connect with, that diversity. This scene-setting is followed by a different type of 'framing', a theological one: the Triune God is identified as a "multicultural Trinity" that serves as a model for multicultural church and multi-ethnic congregations. Throughout the book, Hardy and Yarnell return to this theme of *missio Trinitatis*, rooted in the New Testament and Luke-Acts in particular.

This sociological and theological groundwork is important because it helps formulate some of the key missiological questions in Britain today: what should mission look like? And what should the church look like? Hardy and Yarnell passionately outline a model of "Trinity-shaped multi-ethnic missional communities." Joining in God's "multicultural kingdom" in this way will not be easy but worth overcoming the pain, for two reasons: we will have a fuller experience of true worship; and this experience will be an attractive witness to our increasingly diverse world.

Part 2 of *Forming Multicultural Partnerships* explores how the

> **Multi-ethnic missional communities mean we will have a fuller experience of true worship and be an attractive witness to our increasingly diverse world**
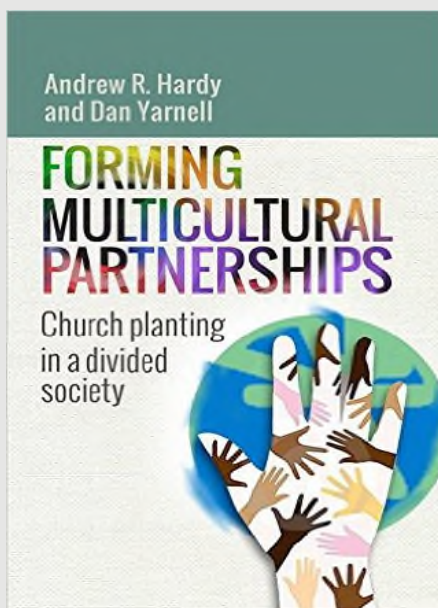
proposed model of church can be brought about through a combination of discipleship, cultural awareness, developing leaders and overcoming cross-cultural barriers. Given that each of these areas may present difficulties, successfully combining all four of them is clearly no easy task. There are some interesting thoughts from the authors here, such as missional multi-ethnic communities being mobile, with the image of the disciple as nomad and pilgrim; and the need for missional leaders to form "coalitions" that can help manage the process of change in

Three of the six main articles in this edition of Vista were written by former European MA students. Two of these went on to become Redcliffe faculty and continue to deliver the programme.

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BOOK REVIEW: FORMING MULTICULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS CONTINUED

congregations. A close-up study of Luke-Acts yields many precedents for the cross-cultural missional leader today, and solid advice on the need for flexibility, risk-taking and how to discern what is essential and what is fluid, or contingent on culture.

The third and final part of the book is somewhat disjointed and lacking in focus. The section is headed "Overcoming Obstacles to Engaging in Conversation" but the reader is taken on a tour of 'neuro-theology,' power theology, religious pluralism and comparative theology before arriving on surer footing in the final chapter. Here, we find five pragmatic ways of working towards multicultural mission and multi-ethnic churches. With no separate conclusion, the book ends rather abruptly, albeit on an optimistic note that encourages Christians to engage in multicultural mission to non-believers.

Overall, this is a well-researched book, which engages with much of the key missiological thinking in Britain over the last 50 years. The authors take care to say that there is no "one-size-fits-all" church solution and that monocultural churches should not (all) be disbanded – but their passion and preference for multi-ethnic churches is evident on every page. One may agree with this preference, however, while still acknowledging some of the limitations of this book.

Firstly, the argument for multi-ethnic or multicultural churches is not fully established, either theologically or practically. If, as has been claimed, monocultural churches are more effective at attracting members of one ethnicity, by what criteria do we decide whether such effectiveness is more or less important than a theological preference for multi-ethnic churches?

Secondly, there are very few case studies in this book. Such examples would have not only have illustrated what multi-ethnic churches look like but would also have been evidence that they are plausible. The reader is encouraged to imagine "breakthrough" multi-ethnic churches but the imagination would be helped by demonstrations of successfully integrated churches in the UK.

There are other limitations too: little discussion of multi-ethnic churches in continental Europe, for example, and insufficient engagement with the perspectives of those actually leading ethnic or "non-Anglo" churches (though this may reflect a wider deficiency within missiology).

Overall, though, the book's weaknesses are outnumbered by its strengths. Here is a timely and passionate plea for churches which are both more representative of Britain's diverse cultures and simultaneously more representative of the "great multitude" that will constitute the heavenly People of God. There has been limited progress towards multi-ethnic churches in the 60+ years since the modern migration trend began in Britain. Hardy and Yarnell rightly question whether the time is now right for the overcoming of cultural barriers within the UK church and, moreover, offer hopeful yet credible suggestions for how this can be done. As such *Forming Multicultural Partnerships* will be of interest to church planters and missiologists alike.

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