## Let's Stick to Our Mission! **Church Planting in a Continent Experiencing Rapid Change**

Europe has been described as post-industrial, post-modern, post-colonial, post-Christian and even postsecular. These terms suggest a continent in rapid change and church planting offers a key strategy in responding to that challenge in a very fluid and diverse culture. Part of that fluidity is a new openness to spiritual frameworks. In this session we explore the major currents that we need to be aware of and suggest key principles to adopt in our church planting strategies and practice in order to take advantage of the new opportunities that Europe presents us with.

Martin Robinson is Principal and Chief Executive of Springdale College: Together in Mission. Martin

was born in India of missionary parents and then brought up in Scotland where his father was a church planter. When Martin was in his early twenties he trained for the ministry, and his first church was in the inner city of Birmingham. This multi-ethnic congregation was engaged in church planting, and Martin together with his wife Lynda led one of the new church plants. After thirteen years in local ministry Martin went to work for the Bible Society in the UK in a variety of roles. In a period he was the Director of Mission and Theology. Martin has written many books on the broad theme of mission, including <i>Faith of the Believer</i> and <i>Invading Secular Space</i> . In 2002 Martin became national director of Together in Mission.
1. My journey in mission
a) Born on the mission field
b) Returning to Christendom
c) Leaving Christendom
d) Even solices are a set bestile exceptor material results
d) Evangelism amongst hostile, secular, material people
2. Describing Europe
a) Formed by the Christian story
b) Northern Europe – protestant and secular

3.

4.

c) Southern Europe – catholic and becoming secular
d) Eastern Europe – Orthodox and open
e) The Balkans – a mixed economy
What do we mean by secular?
a) Originally a Christian word
b) It has come to mean the exclusion of God from the public square
c) The dominant narrative is one of extreme individualism
d) Growing signs that God is back  Terry Eagleton: Culture and the Death of God, "The Almighty has proved to be remarkably difficult to dispose of."
e) The beginnings of a post secular world
Culture Clash
a) The world of the 1960's – defining each decade differently
b) The world of self (me, myself and I)
b) The self-actualization movement

Robinson, Paternoster, 2008

d) Displacing God from the public square

e) The experience of transcendence
5. Laying Foundations
a) Operating as a minority
b) Taking a longer term view
c) A missional church
d) Equipping workers for Europe
e) Beginning a conversation
f) Creating mediating spaces
Useful Resources The Religious Crisis of the 1960's, Hugh McLeod, OUP, 2010.
Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity (Published in association with Theory, Culture & Society) by Ulrich Beck, 1992
Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age, Polity, 1991. Metavista: Bible, Church and Mission in an Age of Imagination, Colin Greene and Martin