

How Can European Churches Respond to the Nations at Our Doorstep

There are over 33.5 million people born outside the EU living in the EU and many more pouring in daily due to recent refugee crises. The situation is continually changing. How can we communicate the gospel to them? How should churches attempt to build relationships with these newcomers? And how can we be the hands and feet of the Lord to people from many cultures living in our communities?

Colin Mitchell is chairman and leader of a local area network of the Evangelical Alliance in East Dorset, England. He teaches theology part-time at Moorlands College where he earned his bachelor's degree in applied theology. Formerly a manager in the health service, for 20 years he served on the leadership team of a church plant that flourished in Bournemouth. His responsibilities included ministries to the poor, directing a language school, mission to an unreached people group, and directing a Newfrontiers training base for leaders. He is married to Chrissy, has three grown sons and one granddaughter.

I. The opportunity to communicate the gospel to the nations in Europe

A. Surveying the scenario today

1. Embracing the challenge

- a. Changes to freedom of movement into and within Europe
- b. The response ability of the church
- c. Why and how to pray (1 Tim 2:1-6)

II. Identifying obstacles to building relationships

A. Overcoming fear?

1. Understanding the diversity of peoples at our doorstep

- a. Are we reaching out to friends or foes?
- b. Appreciating our growing diversity as churches in many parts of Europe today

III. What can your church do?

A. Making room for new priorities

1. What might need to change?
 - a. Considering who to partner with:
 1. Specialist agencies
 2. Other local churches or agencies
 - b. Cross cultural mission at home
 1. Growing with existing structures
 2. Identifying training needs to equip your church
 - c. Pruning for growth
 1. Recognizing and releasing church members to any new initiative
 - d. Keeping it simple
 1. Loving our new neighbours
 2. Making room for new friends long term
 3. Listening to their story

Suggested Readings & Resources:

John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad*, Third Edition, (IVP, 2010)

John Klaassen, *Engaging with Muslims* (The Good Book Company, 2015)

David Garrison, *A Wind in the house of Islam*, (WIGTake resources, 2014)

<http://www.refugeehighway.net>(particularly: Best Practices for ministry among Forcibly Displaced people)

www.europeanea.org