

The Macedonian Call “Come Over and Help Us”: Evangelical Migrant Churches as Mission Partners

It was the case that Europe and the West more widely represented the secure mission base and the rest of the world represented the mission field. Today, mission is from everywhere to everywhere. It is still a relatively new experience for Europeans to receive missionaries, especially from the former mission fields. Working out how this modern Macedonian call might work in practice is both challenging and complex. The potential for creative partnerships is huge but so too is the possibility of misunderstanding, confusion and even conflict and division. This session will explore some key principles in creating healthy working relationships with our fellow believers from other cultures.

Martin Robinson is Principal and Chief Executive of ForMission College. 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 that period he was the director of mission and theology. Martin has written many books on the broad theme of mission, including *Faith of the Unbeliever*, *Invading Secular Space*, *Planting Mission-Shaped Churches Today*, and *Practices for the Re-founding of God’s People: The Missional Challenge of the West*. In 2002 Martin became the National Director of Together in Mission. In 2008 he became the Principal of Springdale College. These two organisations are now known as ForMission. The goal of ForMission is to prepare workers for the harvest.

I. A Changing World – the Global Growth of Christianity

A. The Changing Shape of Mission

1. Global Christianity in the year 1900
2. Global Christianity in the year 2000
3. The post-colonial shift (approximately 1960-1970)

B. Mission to the West: Mission Models

1. Historic churches bring missionaries to the West, primarily as clergy
2. Economic migrants in the West pick up the challenge of mission
3. Individual Christians come to the West intentionally as missionaries
4. Sending churches from other continents send missionaries
 - a. Anglo sending churches (Australia, New Zealand and USA)
 - b. Sending churches from other cultures (South Korea, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe)
5. Churches in the West and churches from other continents covenant to partner around mission in the West

C. The Contemporary Challenge for Migrant Churches in the West

1. Failure to move beyond their particular culture
2. Failure to keep their young people
3. Loss of numbers as migrations, slows or even reverses
4. Failure to train for cross cultural mission

II. Key Principles in cross cultural mission

A. Successful cross-cultural communicators are not common

1. Generally they are people who have grown up in more than one culture
2. Training by itself is insufficient
3. Language and even accent is a barrier

B. The essential tasks of the cross-cultural missionary are two-fold:

1. Convert leaders from within the culture that one is trying to reach
2. Disciple them well

C. Foundations are key

1. The leadership team must reflect the culture(s) that the church is trying to reach
2. Worship style and particularly the make-up of the worship leaders (group) must reflect the culture(s) that the church is trying to reach
3. Homogeneous and heterogeneous strategies can be used in parallel
4. How someone *comes to faith* may be different than how they *live in a faith community*

D. Multi-cultural congregations grow more slowly than mono-cultural congregation

1. There are exceptions to this general rule
2. There is a potentially new multi-ethnic population emerging that is actually mono-cultural in its make-up

Suggested Readings:

Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, OUP, 2011

Harvey Kwiyani, *Sent Forth: African Missionary Work in the West*, Orbis, 2014

Harvey Kwiyani, *Multicultural Kingdom: Ethnic Diversity, Mission and the Church*, SCM Press, 2020.

Hirpo Kumbi, *The Culturally Intelligent Leader: Developing Multi-ethnic Communities in a Multicultural Age*, Instant Apostle, 2018.

Martin Robinson and Alan Roxburgh, *Practices for the Re-founding of God's People: the Missional Challenge of the West*, Church Publishing, 2018