



**DYNAMIC GOSPEL
NEW EUROPE**

CONVERSATION
AND GATHERING

September Conversation

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Welcome

Now it is September, many Impact Groups will be starting again after the summer and some groups will be starting for the first time. Either way, everything you need is right here.

One of the characteristics of the New Europe is the presence of many Christians from the Global South living, working, and worshipping here. From its inception, the Lausanne Europe 20/21 Conversation and Gathering has sought to bring people together across nations, cultures and generations, so that the new Europe might be impacted afresh by the Dynamic Gospel. The September 2020 Conversation encourages the Impact Groups to reflect on this new reality.

We will learn about intercultural church from a Zimbabwean pastor working in the UK. And, as we reflect once again on mission mobilisation, we will listen to an interview with a Kenyan missionary to Europe.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email us at conversation@lausanneeurope.org

And if you are just starting your Impact Group, or are confused about what they are about, then check out the introduction pages to the [Conversation](#) and [Impact Groups](#) to find out more.

Intercultural Mission

In our series of reflections on the key issues for mission in Europe today, we are looking this month at the issue of intercultural mission and intercultural churches. God has mobilised his global church to bring believers from the Global South to many of our cities and towns. Anderson Moyo, writes from his experience of planting an intercultural church in Sheffield, UK. Before you have your Impact Group, make sure you have read his insightful article.

Mobilisation

We would also like you to listen to another Podcast in preparation for this month's Impact Group. This is an interview with Brenda Amondi, a young Kenyan woman who came to Europe four years ago as a missionary. A transcript of the interview is also available to read.

Instructions

1. Introductions and Prayer

Give time for everyone to introduce themselves if this is your first Impact Group. Ask someone to pray that God would speak to us as we meet together.

2. Intercultural Church

Migration has changed the face of the European church. Of course, there are many Europeans living, working, and worshipping in other parts of Europe, but over the last few decades, hundreds and thousands of churches have been planted in Europe by Africans, Latin Americans, and Asians. Some of these are ethnic congregations gathering worshippers exclusively from their own diaspora communities. But many have a heart for reaching the population of their host country, and some are seeking to plant intentionally intercultural churches that reflect the reality of the New Europe.

Read the article by Anderson Moyo “An Intercultural Church Perspective on Mission in Europe” and then in your Impact Group discuss the following questions:

1. Anderson Moyo argues that intercultural churches are “critical to the advancement of the gospel in twenty-first century Europe”. Why does he say that? What stood out to you from his perspective as a Global South church leader working in Europe today?
2. All churches, but particularly intercultural churches, are an expression of “diversity in unity and unity in diversity”. Do you make a point of celebrating the different cultures in your church / organization / workplace and, if not, how might you do that? Have you seen intercultural events provide opportunities for sharing the gospel?
3. Anderson argues that the intercultural nature of the church is a challenge to church leaders to engage with

issues of identity and racial justice. Are the issues of race and justice dealt with from the pulpit, or in other ways, in your church? Is the church being a prophetic voice in your country in regard to these issues? What scriptures should be informing our behaviour and actions when it comes to situations of racial injustice and discrimination?

3. Mobilisation

We now want you to think a bit more about how God has been mobilising the church for mission around the world. You should have already listened to the podcast with Brenda Amondi before the Impact Group. When you are together with your group, we would like you to consider the following questions:

1. What examples have you seen in your situation, of God mobilising his people from across the world to share the gospel in Europe? What have been the challenges and opportunities of this for your church / organization / workplace?
2. Is there a church or organisation in your area, or elsewhere in the world, with which you could partner in

a similar way as what you heard in the podcast to foster mobilisation for mission in Europe today? What would be the strengths or weaknesses of such a partnership?

3. What are some of the issues that have come up in your church / organisation / workplace due to cultural differences and how did you handle them?

4. Prayer

Always make sure that you leave enough time to pray together every time you meet. Here are the prayer points for this month's Conversation:

1. Pray that as the Church in Europe (and the Global Church), we may acknowledge and celebrate our racial and cultural diversity, and learn to embrace the distinctive and rich contribution of the Missionaries from the Global South.(1 Corinthians 1:10-17)
2. Pray for God's grace to be able to put our focus on the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), so that we may raise disciples as a Church unified in Christ, even in our diversity. As the Church in Europe, may we be found to be people of peace who receive missionaries that God

sends our way, to help in building the Kingdom of God (Luke 10:1-12)

3. Pray for God's wisdom and discernment to be able to identify the areas of division between us and others- be it in our cultures or ethnicities, church practises etc. May we repent of these and seek reconciliation, as we celebrate the beauty in our diversity. May we be courageous enough to seek to build bridges, forgive and ask for forgiveness and use our prophetic voice to break the hopeless cycle of racism.

5. Make Your Contribution to the Conversation

We really want to hear back from your Impact Group after each session. Please find a few minutes to summarise what you hear from God, the highlights of the discussion, and any questions that were raised, in the comments box immediately below.

[GO TO THE CONVERSATION](#)

An Intercultural Church Perspective on Mission in Europe

By Anderson Moyo

[Go to the article online](#)

From the Global South to the Global North: A Missionary Story

One of the most daunting challenges I have ever faced in my whole life was relocating from the spiritually vibrant Global South to the spiritually tepid Global North, specifically when I moved from my native Zimbabwe to my adopted country of the United Kingdom, a different spiritual landscape but a very fascinating mission field. I was an enthusiastic young missionary from Africa tasked with establishing a multi-racial and multi-cultural church in postmodern society. My family had to navigate unfamiliar terrain in terms of the legal and social framework, cultural and spiritual context, coupled with the whole issue of

racial injustice and prejudice at different levels of life and ministry.

During seasons of seeking God, I understood that God was actually at work in me in the areas of prayer and faith as well as my capacity to develop genuine friendships interculturally. My outlook was being enlarged, and a global vision for reaching people from all nations was taking root in my heart. I realised that the face of mission has changed—It's European! Twenty first century Europe has become one of the fastest growing mission fields for cross-cultural ministry.

My story is typical of African missionaries in Europe. I was marked by initial culture shock, unpreparedness and

inadequacy. A significant reflection point for me was that, although I had done some ministry training in Africa, I found significant gaps in my understanding of the practice of ministry in a context that is dominated by nominalism, where Christian culture is intertwined with the 'gods of Europe'—money, wealth and consumerism.[i]

I had to discover that, in the European mission field, the issues of nationalism[ii], migration, diaspora, the relationship of the Church and racial injustice all affected *missio Dei* (mission of God) on a daily basis and had a direct bearing on *missio ecclesiae* (mission of the church).

Developing a philosophy of ministry for an Intercultural church in Britain

I am reminded of the extremely complex ethnic world of the first century evidenced by the multiplicity of nations gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost in Acts 2. The missionary agenda in Acts comes from a missionary God (Acts 1:8). The outline of missional discipleship was spelt out in Matthew 28:16-20. Facing many challenges, we have been on a journey to develop a relevant ministry philosophy and to plant an intercultural church.

An intercultural church is a community of believers centred on Jesus which intentionally celebrates God's creativity by empathetically listening to one another. Kirk Sims views the oneness in fellowship of Intercultural churches as a sign of the outworking of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and their love as a clear witness to the world around them[iii]. He says people in such churches recognize that their cultural blindness limits their perspectives of the Gospel and therefore, desire to have people different from them speak into their lives and vice-versa.

Characteristics of an Intercultural church

Firstly, an intercultural church must radiate an international flavour.

My wife and I are privileged to be part of a church in the UK that has managed to bring together people from various races, ethnicities and cultures. One of the strategies that we used was to create a 'safe space' for conversation and celebration of multiethnic diversity. One way we have done this is by hosting an international event called "Taste of the World", where we celebrate one themed topic or activity that is common to a majority of

cultures represented in the city, but expressed in a distinct way. Some of the themes we have addressed include hospitality, marriage practices, and celebration of significant events. We then use a biblical lens as the common denominator to frame the gospel message. This annual international event always ends with a 'feast' famous for its international cuisine. The various delicious dishes are prepared and presented by the people in our community from various cultures. Such events bring the community together and create 'a safe space' for multiethnic conversations to take place in an informal setting while at the same time enabling the church to present the gospel message in a contextually relevant manner. We have seen the community warm up to the 'church' and explore Christianity!

Most cities in Europe are seeing significant demographic changes, and it is often the intercultural churches that have their finger on the pulse of the social currents blowing in our communities, as well as a grasp of the diversity of God's world due to their reflection of the communities to which they minister. Thus, an intercultural congregation best exhibits the Trinitarian expression of diversity-in-unity and unity-in-diversity. Although

Intercultural churches are not a perfect mirror of heaven, they have made headway in breaking through the many barriers that inhibit the coming together of people from different races, cultures and backgrounds.

Secondly, a leadership team with a flexible mindset to expression of ministry

The leadership team in intercultural churches must be open-minded in their approach to ministry practice. Intercultural churches tend to be constantly adapting because of the intermingling of diverse peoples and cultures, different worship styles, various languages and forms borrowed, in some cases, from other Christian traditions.[iv] My experience from being part of a leadership team in an intercultural church is that, their models of mission must reflect the worldwide scope of the gospel and God's universal salvation through Jesus Christ regardless of its size or initial composition.

Our liturgy (prayer, singing and preaching) needs to be flexible enough to reflect diversity whilst at the same time remaining constant in respect to the one being worshipped, the centrality of the gospel message, and the core beliefs of our evangelical faith. It is the responsibility

of the leadership team to keep the missio Dei at the fore front of the church and its appeal can be evident, especially if the church “walks its talk” and “talks its walk.”

As part of articulating flexibility in mindset, the leadership team in an intercultural church has to engage in matters of identity and racial justice in as far as it touches on the Body of Christ. In order to process together the current world events around the issues of racial justice, the church has to think about how we can provide leadership during times like this. We have to frame our response to racial injustice in such a way that everyone can see the love of God lived out both in our messaging and our actions. The central command that Jesus gives is to love God and love your neighbour. An intercultural church is at a vantage point to live out this message and be a mirror for society to emulate. Our church has needed to have conversations on the issue of how race, injustice and the gospel intersect.

Thirdly, an Intercultural church initiates Social Engagement

Missionally-focused intercultural churches seek to overcome social and cultural barriers that stem from their

stereotypical paradigms by introducing social action as a mission initiative. Our church started a project of providing a two-course meal prepared in our church premises for the less privileged in the city. The project leaders put together a core team of volunteers to run the project, and also created an opportunity for those privileged in the community to volunteer in this ‘community initiative’ funded and managed by the church. The project attracted a diverse range of people from all backgrounds, as well as professionals who were keen to make a difference in their community.

Through this initiative, people were not only given a meal, but opportunities were created for ‘befriending’ people in the community. We could pray for those who were open to it, and offer practical support to those that needed it.

For a 21st century church that seeks to be relevant in Europe, the issue is not how well we know people but how well we treat people from all ethnicities and backgrounds. If our attitude is right (love and care), if our actions are right (serving with agape love), and if our availability is right (open to God to use us whenever He wants) then conversations may flow early on in a relationship which can then lead to discipleship.

Social engagement is therefore a channel for holistic mission and an effective strategy for building a bridge of social capital to evangelize communities. The Christian mission of a local intercultural church must also be redemptive in taking action on social and spiritual concerns in European societies such as drug addiction, alcoholism, pregnancy crises, spiritual oppression, and juvenile delinquency. In so doing, the church at large is proclaiming a holistic redemptive gospel that has social compassion and agape love transcending ethnic and racial barriers.

Finally, disciple making is a missional strategy for mobilisation

Whist all the above are important reflections of an intercultural church in Europe, the issue of missional discipleship cannot be overlooked. The church is called to be a missionary movement, dedicated to making disciples that reproduce themselves. The ethos and dna of a discipleship process is to make disciples that make disciples of all nations through building relationships. Relationships are indispensable in intercultural churches where discipleship takes place in diverse contexts where

people are at different levels of understanding and are faced with barriers such as language, resources and so on.

In terms of mobilisation, an intercultural church is not only training one people group but is privileged to equip emerging leaders from across the globe to reach frontiers beyond the Western hemisphere. This is where the idea of partnership comes in: like-minded churches collaborating to create a 'global learning space' for the sake of God's mission. The local intercultural church is integral to God's mission and purpose. Because of migration, we are privileged in Europe that we don't necessarily need to go away for foreign missions as was the case in the not-so-distant past, but nations are now on our doorstep! As mission partners from the Global South enter the Global North to proclaim Christ, the concept of mission being 'from everywhere to everywhere' is now a global reality. We therefore have the potential of reaching nations more quickly than we can imagine.

Conclusion

Based on the intercultural model of the Acts 11 Antioch church, my reflection is that intercultural churches are not only biblical but also critical to the advancement of the

gospel in Europe in the twenty-first century. There are several characteristics that can be gleaned from churches working in several parts of Europe, but I hope the few that have been discussed will stir you. This is an era of missional opportunity for the local church to participate in any way possible to make Christ known among the people you call your “neighbour”.

References

[i] Olof Edsinger, ‘How can we overcome the gods of Europe.’ *Vista* (35), 3 March 2020. Accessed on 6 August 2020.

[ii] Jim Memory, ‘Reconciliation in the Conflicted Continent.’ *Lausanne Movement Europe Impact Group Conversations*. June 2019. Accessed 8 September 2020.

[iii] Kirk Sims, “3 Things You Shouldn’t Expect in an Intercultural Church.” *Seedbed*. Accessed on October 26, 2015.

[iv] Lisa Lloyd, ‘The Mission of the International Church.’ *Vista* (26), January 2017. Accessed 6 September 2020.

Mobilization

By Janet Sewell

[Go to the article online](#)

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST ON [ITUNES](#) | [SPOTIFY](#) | [GOOGLE PLAY](#) | [STITCHER](#)

This is an interview with Brenda Amondi, a young Kenyan woman who came to Europe four years ago as a missionary.

Transcript

Billy Graham

We have one task to proclaim the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The whole Church must be mobilised to bring the whole Gospel to the whole world. This is our calling. These are our orders.

Janet

Hello everybody. My name is Janet Sewell. I am part of the team that puts together the conversation and impact

group material every month. This month we are looking at the mobilisation thread. And we are going to be talking to a Global South missionary who is working here in Europe and finding out how God is mobilising non-European missionaries that are actually working alongside European churches. So I am here today with Brenda Amondi. Hi, Brenda.

Brenda

Hi. Hi, Janet.

Janet

She's also incidentally part of the team that puts together the conversation and impact group material. So we are team members and we're just getting to know each other a little bit better in this conversation. So, Brenda, who are

you? Tell me, where are you from? Where are you based right now? What are you doing?

Brenda

Okay, as you've heard, my name is Brenda Amondi, and I am a Kenyan. So I come from Kenya originally, but currently, I'm working in the capacity of a missionary here in Europe, so specifically in England, and I'm based in London, so I work with an Anglican Church. And so we are a team of missionaries from Kenya, who got sent to this side of the world to come up and evangelise Christ.

Janet

That's great. So how long have you actually been here?

Brenda

So this is the fourth year, so we came here in September of 2016. Just in the middle of autumn.

Janet

Oh wow!

Brenda

Yeah you can imagine! Talk of weather shock!

Janet

I was about to say. What was the weather like in Kenya at that time of year?

Brenda

So, we are a tropical country. So you can imagine, we have sunshine most part of the year, we have one month of cold and when I say cold is like 15 degrees.

Janet

Okay, so just to put this in context, I was raised, born and raised in Iceland. We have one warm month of the year and that's about 15-20 degrees.

Brenda

Oh wow it's the opposite, we have one month of cold and its honestly, if it goes really low, say, 10 degrees? That's really cold for us. So yeah, that was a good experience, though.

Janet

Yeah, I bet. So tell me about the project that you are doing here in London.

Brenda

So, what we're doing here is a partnership between three continents actually. So three churches from three continents. So there's a church in Kenya, my sending church, which is Nairobi Chapel Church. And so Nairobi Chapel has been in partnership actually with a church in the US, in Indianapolis, it's called Grace Church. And I think the partnership has been there for over 20 years. Then recently, those two churches decided to partner with a church in London, actually the London diocese under the Anglican Church so that one of our visions of the church in Kenya is to plant churches. And so the vision was by 2021 to plant 300 churches and out of those 300, 30 of them would be gateway city churches, and London was one of the churches that was one of the cities that we had hoped to plant a church. So hence the partnership between Kenya and the US and London came to be. So yeah, the partnership, it started way before we came. So it was something that was being envisioned and backed and being prayed into, then 2016, four of us were sent here from Kenya and two families from America and our host church was, an Anglican Church, which I currently serve at the moment.

Janet

How has the partnership actually impacted ministry here in London?

Brenda

So our host church really is, I think it's a blessing because it's a church that I'd say it's a multicultural pack, because I think there was a Sunday we had over 30 nationalities represented. So annually, we decided to hold like an event that celebrates all the cultures that we have within the church, and through that so many people felt appreciated and seen and acknowledged. And, again, one of the partner organisations that we have with the church in London is called Lee Abbey London. And Lee Abbey is a hostel that hosts international students. So again, there you get a whole pot of so many people from different parts of the world. And we do pastoral ministry there, so we go there weekly for their weekly devotions. And through that, so many of them came to join our church community. And through that, because these are people who come to London for short term basis, two or three years at most. So these people have immersed themselves in the church with serving with some of them realising their talent in music, or teaching or just being part of the

welcome team. And as much as we get to lose them for two, three years, the impact that they have, the living with, is immense because someone goes back to their country and actually decided to continue and then began in London. So we've had so many testimonies of people from different parts of the world. We have from Kazakhstan who have gone back and started a ministry in music. We've had people from Russia, she's she went back and began a women's ministry. We had someone from Brazil who came just for a one year service at Lee Abbey London, joined St. Luke's church. And after he went back to San Paulo and said he wants to train as a pastor. So such testimonies encourages us, for sure. Let me warn you, if you're a missionary, one of the things you wouldn't see is tangible results. Yeah, and that's what they don't tell you when they send you out to be a missionary. But but the long term, the long-term impact that you get to experience is just it's heartwarming, it's encouraging. And to be honest, as much as we currently don't have the church plant that we had hoped to have by now, four years in, I can say so many other churches have been planted through the people that came in and sat with us and they went back to their country. We have testimonies from China. A lady came, she didn't know much about Christ

and she went back as one of the people who wants everyone in their family to know about Christ and and when I think of such things, it reminds you why you actually do what you do as much as you can't see immediate tangible results. Yeah.

Janet

You guys are impacting the world, literally. I mean, people in Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Brazil. I mean, it's incredible. The impact that when we bring multiple cultures together it reaches all the way to their home countries and home cities.

Brenda

Definitely and even coming back to London, we've had people moving from the area that we are in, we are around Chelsea area. But people have moved back to North London or South London and then they've gone to start other ministries, people have gone to train as ministers, people have started discipleship groups and again, it's not just every part of the world but even every part of the city gets impacted in that way. So it is and honestly sometimes I sit back and I realise we need to start looking at church planting in a totally different way, not the traditional way because the traditional way was you come

to a community probably you have a building ready for people to come in and and church becomes the building first before the people around but in this way, the way we seen, the impact is that you actually build a community around people. And that community gets to build another community of disciples wherever they go. So that in itself is church planting because you get to go back to the heart of church, which is a community of people who believe in the same faith in Jesus Christ and want to grow together in the things of God.

Janet

Amen.

Brenda

Yeah, I think I think my challenge here I get so passionate I talk about like, people should stop looking at church planting as a building, but to start looking at it as communities coming together and it doesn't matter where you meet, you can meet in a house, you can meet in an open space. Bless you, if you have a building, hallelujah but if not, that should not be a barrier.

Janet

And I mean, COVID-19 and the lockdowns have showed us that church can happen digitally also.

Brenda

Exactly anywhere!

Janet

Anywhere, and we're seeing that also in the persecuted churches, in Iran, and around the globe. They meet on WhatsApp because it's a secure platform. When they're unable to get together physically.

Brenda

Yeah, yeah. And we hear testimonies of these underground churches get to grow way faster than physical building churches. And we get to ask ourselves, what are we doing wrong? I think because they are building communities of people. Yet on this other side, we are so bent on building buildings and maintaining buildings that no one really wants to come into. And sometimes some of these buildings are intimidating, let's be honest. Building like, do I really want to go in and you start questioning yourself: Am I holy enough to go in? But yet it's never about the building but about the community

of people that you get to disciple who say, you disciple disciples who make disciples.

Janet

Amen. Exactly. So tell me what is your strategy like? How do you guys actually do that?

Brenda

So we've done basically we've done this basically through relationships and let me just say from my experience the English are not the easiest people to make friends with.

But once you are friends with someone, you are sure that this is a long-term friend because it's taken so much consistency and that aspect of relationship. So, it's intentionality actually, being very intentional. Being an African we are very communal culture. It's in our head is what yours is mine and what's mine is yours. And it's ours because it's our community. So I think that that was an advantage for us because our strategy is through relationships, you make friendships, and through that to people, you get to share your faith with someone and someone also gets to be curious about you and honestly, I have learnt as much as I have taught people, I have also learned a lot. I came with so many misconceptions. To do

with faith, to do with culture, and to do with so many other things. And four years down the line, I can honestly say, God has taken me from so far. And I've come to appreciate my culture and other people's culture as well. I've come to appreciate my way of doing church the way I was brought up in from where I was coming from, and I've come to appreciate the way church is being done here. And through that I've known when to challenge and when to actually just appreciate and say, "Wow, I didn't know things can be done this way". And relearn and unlearn.

Janet

Yeah, that's, that's actually one of my favourite things about about travelling, um, is because you get to understand your own culture by encountering other cultures, by realising "Hang on a minute, I've always done it this way." But you don't know that there's a different way of doing it until you encounter another culture that does it differently then you go, "Huh! I did not think that way" you know, and it broadens our horizons. That's what I love about travelling and meeting different cultures and different people.

Brenda

Oh, yes. Yes. And and as much as it is, it has its own challenges and other things. So one of the biggest challenges working, because we're working an English team and American church, a Kenyan church.

Janet

Sounds like the beginning of a bad joke! (laughs)

Brenda

An English church, and American church and a Kenyan church went to a bar...! (laughs)

Janet

And this happened... (laughs)

Brenda

Yeah. So one of our biggest challenges is communication. Coming from a Kenyan background, it's our fastest way of communicating is if it's really urgent, you call, if it semi-urgent, you text, and if it's you're not expecting a response immediately, you just email. We're not an emailing culture. Coming here, it's the other way around, it's email, and then text and then calling like the last resort. And most of the time I would receive emails and someone would be

offended because I don't reply as soon as they want me to. And for me in my head, I'm like, if it's really urgent, you could have called, but just talking through all those, you were able to see actually, the small things actually also matter things like communication, we may overlook them but it's the small bits of building a relationship that come to build a big thing. So we were able to work through the communication that everyone put forward their way of communicating, like if urgent, for me, please call me if it's really urgent and you want a response back. But emailing, I'm also learning to email as soon as possible. So it's coming to a compromise and realising you have to also immerse yourself in this other person's world. And they have to be willing to immerse yourself in your world as well.

Janet

Yeah, it's a two way street of being willing to give and take, to being willing to like say "Okay, in this culture..." and realising also that these are cultural differences and not, you know, I mean, that could possibly be viewed as being lazy, you know, "Oh, she never answered the email" but it's not it's just a different cultural way of doing things. And it's stopping and asking ourselves those questions and

saying, "Okay, this is happening, and it's a consistent thing. Is it a personal issue? Is it a cultural issue?" And then just being open to having the conversations? Yeah, I think the biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

Brenda

Yes, actually, yes, everyone has the conversation in their head.

Janet

Yes. But it needs to be verbally processed!

Brenda

Exactly, you have to spell it out, spell it out in a respectful manner, in an appreciating manner and in a very humble way that you're willing to learn as well as receive criticisms. Yeah, and on the other side, funny stories of difference in culture, a big one for me was food. And our first meal going to, someone invited us to their house, and we are not again a sandwich culture or a cheese culture, cheese and crackers. So we go in and I asked my Kenyan colleagues and friends I'm like, "Wait, is this the food or the food is coming?" I get a sandwich for dinner then like, wait, this is an appetiser. This is not food. Cheese and

crackers. We are not a cheese country and I've come to learn how to eat cheese in this country.

Janet

Well being French I love cheese and I can make a whole meal of a really good baguette with a really good Camembert. I just love it.

Brenda

Oh for us bread is only for breakfast and nothing else.

Janet

Wow Okay.

Janet

So okay, so you're here and you're planting churches. What are some of the issues that come up in planting a multicultural or multi-ethnic church?

Brenda

Especially with a church that has more than, actually more than 20 nationalities represented on a Sunday, one of our biggest challenges is ensuring that each one of those cultures feels acknowledged and represented in a way. So I'm really glad that our leadership did reflect that in a way,

not in its entirety, but you could see like our leadership and our congregation, they was a merging point. Having said that, during our services, are English lea so that means and not everyone's first language is English. So one of the biggest challenges is trying to incorporate someone who is, for example, Iranian and they don't know much English, but you still want them to hear the message or someone who's coming from Kenya and probably Swahili is more understandable than English. So language it was one of the biggest challenges and still is at this point. So someone who's speaking up front and because I've also done speaking engagements, you have to be mindful of those people who English is not their first language and they will not really grasp as fast as someone who speaks English every day. So you have to...

Janet

Complicated concepts even...

Brenda

Exactly you have to use illustrations that they would understand easily, you have to use English words that are simple enough to understand, and avoid ambiguous English as much as you really want to put your concept or your message across. So languages...

Janet

Even Cultural references...

Brenda

Exactly even cultural references, that's very true cause an illustration that may be okay to you and some other cultures will find it offensive. So you, you have to really do your research. It's not just a matter of calling your church a multicultural church, or a multinational church, but in the deepest things, how are you doing to incorporate everyone to feel acknowledged and celebrated really. So I'd say language has been one of our biggest barriers. And again, being in the host culture English, you'd find like, over 50% of the things will be done the English way as much as its welcomes all other cultures. Because it's the host culture. So that's how they know how to do things. That's how they have done things most of the times. So there's also the space to learn, but we always go to the automatic state, especially when things are challenging, you will go back to what you're used to doing. So at 50-60% of the things that we do are... they reflect the English culture more than all the other cultures. But one of the ways we have tried to counter that is we, we made sure that annually we did like multicultural events so that

people will bring food from their cultures, you dress from your culture, and we'll just come together and eat together. So I get to eat food from another culture, I get to appreciate more. And from there I get to have a conversation, ask questions, ask recipes and in that it opens and door to even meet outside that event outside, the Sunday services. They were like, "yeah, we should have coffee during the week." And it shows interest. It shows that you're actually really interested in this person.

Janet

One of the things that we've learned also is inviting people over to your home.

Brenda

Yes.

Janet

That is a huge thing, especially for people in the majority world. Where I mean, just I mean, being married to an Iranian realising how much they're so much into each other's lives, they're constantly at each other's homes. And, like in Iceland, growing up in Iceland, that wasn't necessarily the case. Um, like we would go over to their house here and there, but it was more of an official thing.

It wasn't this constant, kind of coming and going. And just one of the things that we've realised just moving here to London is the importance of having people over to your home, because in a sense, it makes you vulnerable, having a person over and it in a way, it opens up the possibility of a conversation that a coffee shop conversation wouldn't. It's more intimate.

Brenda

Yeah, actually, that's one of the things I found very, not really weird, but I was taken aback because people are not readily open to inviting you to their homes. While in Kenya, especially with your group of friends, you did just tell someone please just popped by my house anytime. And if I'm not there, I will leave the key for you and you just go in and cook, I was used to that!

Janet

I love it!

Brenda

Yeah, when I used to invite people over to my house, they would find it a bit weird and then prefer a coffee shop than a home. But eventually, more and more people, they came to accept the invitation and some of them invited

me to their homes. And honestly, that's when you become as you say, vulnerable and open, someone gets to see you beyond the pulpit or beyond the Sunday service or beyond just the face value and they appreciate you more because they see "oh my goodness, we actually have similarities" or "Oh, I like the difference that you have, I can learn from that". Yeah, just that invitation, inviting people into your space and them allowing you to be in their space... it's an uncomfortable thing...!

So anyway, Brenda, I think that's probably all the time we have for today. Thank you so so much for being willing to open yourself up this way and sharing your experiences. Do you have any final thoughts that you want to share with everybody? Before we finish here today?

Brenda

I think my parting shot is to the rest of Europe, me included because now I live here, is as a host continent or as a host culture, I think one of the things that we can do to the people coming into our spaces is to be men of peace, and to actually be open to allowing such partnerships to happen because actually Jesus calls us to do this. And I'm fascinated Jesus did it so well with his 12 disciples even outside his 12 disciples. They were from

different backgrounds, different careers, you can imagine putting a tax collector and Simon the Zealot was against the Roman Empire... And, you know, the ways Jesus called them and he called them under one culture in Christ and I think that's what God is calling us into, between them, our racial diversity, be it with our cultural diversity, be it our faith diversity, whether evangelical or Anglican or Pentecostal. I think we are all called under the umbrella of Christ and we need to go back to the heart of that and it's time to really put unnecessary differences aside and come together and work together as I church, as the body of Christ, to bring people to Christ and, yeah, to the great commission is he didn't call specifically, he just told his disciples go to the rest of the world, and the rest of the world is all of us. And honestly, if they hadn't done that, you and me would never have had the message of Christ. So it's, it's upon ourselves to pay it forward. Continue what Christ left for us to do.

Janet

Yeah, so unity and diversity, I think I think that's the the key takeaway from this, is universal unity and diversity. We are diverse, we come from different cultures, different ways of doing things with different understandings, different basic

instincts and it's just being open to communicate with one another, to being open to learning from one another and to include one another in in our home culture. Brenda, thank you so much. And yeah, thank you everybody for listening. We hope that you enjoyed this month's mobilisation thread podcast. And we will be talking to you guys soon.

John Stott

It comes more natural to us to share the gospel of people from a distance than to involve ourselves deeply in their lives, to think ourselves into their problems and into their culture and to feel wisdom in there.