

Mission in Europe: Seminar Outline

1. Trends in European society

The issues of identity, insecurity and diversity

1.1 Changing community

- Integration – the EU; political change and the ‘common European home’
- Mobility and migration – and the challenge of reaching mobile communities
- Racial tensions – and the emergence of the new Right
- Nationalism and regionalism – evangelism that matches the context
- Identity and belonging – new bridges for evangelism
- Partnership for Christians – opportunities for mission across the boundaries
- Community profile – the large urban centres; and the reaction against urbanisation – different strategies for a small evangelical community
- Changing age profile

1.2 Religious change

- Secularisation – the debate about desecularisation and the rise of spirituality. The church in Europe may be in decline, but ‘believing without belonging’.
- Religious pluralism – Islam, Buddhism, New Age spiritualities,
- Occult
- Mission in an environment of spiritual interest and exploration, and religious confusion

2. Trends in the church

- Nominalism - blurring of identity, loss of cutting edge. How to reach the unfaithful faithful’
- Problem of fragmentation – growing number of denominations and smaller churches; but positive signs of cooperative models in mission
- Problem of irrelevance – impact in the youth culture

3. Trends in Central Europe

- Economic and social instability
- Changing religious laws and attitudes
- Missiological tensions
- Evangelical partnership – its limits and its opportunities

4. Trends in youth culture

- Lack of orientation
- The question of tolerance, freedom and choice
- Information overload
- Isolation and friendship

5. Meeting the challenge

- Renewed confidence in the gospel
- Integrity in Christian mission
- Networks
- Exploiting evangelistic bridges – orientation, friendship, family, community, hope

6. Partnership with European Christians

- Listen and understand
- Cultural orientation
- Sensitivity
- A servant spirit

7. How to help

- Information - coordination
- Prayer – new networks
- Twinning opportunities
- Work – business, study
- Short term – youth programmes
- Giving – stronger partnerships
- International guests – international students, migrant workers

8. Learning lessons from other continents

- The danger of being Euro-centric in mission
- The lessons from the church of the poor in Latin America
- The lessons of ethnic conflict in Africa
- The lessons of pluralism in Asia

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