

Discussion Guide

EUROPE 2021

A Missiological Report



Jim Memory

This discussion guide, and the report upon which it is based, may be freely distributed. We would only ask that Jim Memory's name as author and the ECM logo remain in any form that the report and discussion guide are distributed.

The questions in this guide were devised by Jo Appleton, Dave Benson, Simon Marshall and Jim Memory.



European Christian Mission

Jim Memory/ECMI 2021

Introduction

This discussion guide accompanies the Europe 2021 Missiological Report which was written by Jim Memory. It seeks to help you engage effectively with the report and the issues that it raises. We would encourage you to use this guide to consider what challenges and opportunities these issues pose for you as you seek to share Christ's love in Europe.

For each of the sections in the report, we have devised a set of questions. You may choose to reflect on them individually, but we would really encourage you to think of how you might use them as a basis for group discussion in your churches or mission teams. Feel free to work through the questions in any order, and to leave out sections which you do not think are relevant to your circumstances.

The questions for each topic come in these three forms.

LOOK



The "Look" questions encourage you to look around at your context and see how this specific issue impacts your life, your church, your ministry, and the community around you.

REFLECT



Spending time on the "Reflect" questions will help you to think more deeply about the implications of this topic for you and to consider some of the theological and biblical issues that are raised.

ACT



Thirdly, we want to encourage you to "Act", to consider what you might do differently after thinking about these things. What actions can you take as an individual, church, or in your ministry, to respond to this issue and to ensure that the Good News of Jesus is presented as clearly and relevantly as possible?

RESOURCES



There is a resource page to help you take these issues further and explore the topics in more depth. There are more details on page 15.

Political Context



LOOK

What are the political challenges in your particular context, nationally, regionally and locally?

What impact are these having now on the ideas of individual Christians and on churches as a whole?



REFLECT

What implications does the redeeming work of the Cross of Christ have for bringing reconciliation and restoration into the political challenges of your situation?



ACT

How does Christian hope transform political hopes?

What are you hoping for?

How can your church community show grace, truth and love to every sector of society?

Economic Context



LOOK

What challenges and opportunities do economic changes in both your home country, and your country of work and residence, offer for sharing a gospel that is both “good” and “news”?



REFLECT

What areas of your ministry can be simplified, or made more sustainable?

If simplicity and sustainability were core values - freeing resources to be generous to those in poverty and wider Kingdom causes - what would look different in how you operate and gather together on Sundays?



ACT

How can your ministries be more about people than programmes?

If your income or financial support drops, what will you do to address this?

Are there opportunities for work that might generate resources and fuel integral or holistic mission?



LOOK

What has been the impact of migration on your locality?
Is an ageing population affecting your locality and, if so, how?



REFLECT

How is our increasingly sexualised culture in general, and transgender issues in particular, influencing people in your situation?



ACT

How might you break down ethnic and intergenerational divides in your church or ministry?

How might you model a healthy theology of the body and sexuality as you sensitively walk alongside people who are struggling with their gender identity?

Environmental Context



LOOK

How are environmental issues in general, and climate change in particular, perceived in your ministry context?

Are they on the mission agenda of your church?



REFLECT

Where environmental and other issues are causing divisions in the church, how should you deal with them?



ACT

What simple changes can you make to show your concern for the created world as individuals, ministries, or church?

What might it look like if you faithfully integrated Creation Care into your teaching, gospel proclamation and local mission work?

Technological Context



LOOK

What impact are technological changes, and even “technological sins” having on your life, ministry and community?



REFLECT

What would a Digital Theology or a Theology of Technology look like in your context?

How can you help those around you to see how their everyday use of technology both forms and deforms them as bearers of God’s image?

How can you deal with the mental health issues that arise from the pressures of social media on young people?



ACT

What did you learn from the pandemic about how you might use technology for good?

How can you apply these lessons now and in the future?

Secularisation and Desecularisation



LOOK

How do you see secularism and religious indifference impacting the lives of those around us?

Have you, personally, found sustaining your faith in this secular age a challenge?



REFLECT

How are your gatherings helping people to discover God's sacred presence in everyday life, not just on a Sunday?

What can you do to bring the reality of the Good News more effectively in secularised Europe?



ACT

How are you seeking to form whole-life disciples to bring hope to today's Europeans?

The Growth of Islam



LOOK

What do you know about the Muslims who live in your locality?

Do you know where they are from, and which branch of Islam they are part of?

Have you ever spoken to the Imam or asked questions of your Muslim neighbours?

What might be the benefits of hearing their stories?



REFLECT

How might you develop “a compassionate heart, an informed mind, an involved hand, and a witnessing tongue”, for the growing numbers of Muslims in Europe today?



ACT

What partnerships might you form, and training might be needed, to help local Christians better live with and talk to their Muslim neighbours?

Diaspora Churches



LOOK

What diaspora churches are present in your town or city?

What are the relationships like between diaspora and non-diaspora churches?

What collaborative initiatives are there, if any?



REFLECT

What benefits to your local ministries and communities might there be in bringing together the strengths of diaspora and non-diaspora churches?

Has the presence of Majority World Christians and diaspora churches challenged Europeans to face up to their Euro-centrism, cultural superiority, or even racism?



ACT

How can diaspora churches be helped to bridge the cultural gaps to more effectively share the Good News with Europeans today?

How might you pursue a deeper friendship with someone from another culture to experience the gifts of their community and begin to see the world through their eyes?

Church Planting Movements



LOOK

Which church planting movements are active in your nation or locality?

What lessons can you learn from them?



REFLECT

How can you maintain your passion to see the church grow without compromising biblical orthodoxy?

How can you balance the desire to see new churches planted with showing respect for other already existing churches?



ACT

In what ways can you be more innovative as servants of God bringing discipleship closer to home, as well as opening spaces for engagement with Scripture, for prayer, whole-life worship and effective witness?

Next Generation



LOOK

What are the barriers in your ministries to giving more leadership responsibility to young people?



REFLECT

How might your church better encourage emerging leaders to contribute and try things that reflect a more entrepreneurial and creative approach to the re-evangelisation of Europe?



ACT

How can you encourage and equip the younger generation to do great things with God?

What intergenerational mentoring relationships are you involved in that aim to foster faith and increase effectiveness in making a difference for the kingdom?

Mission Redefined



LOOK

Where is the sacred–secular divide still seen and reinforced by your language and practices as a church community?
How might you break this divide down?



REFLECT

What are the implications of understanding mission as “participation in the Mission of God”?
How does this redefine mission for you individually and as a group?



ACT

What more can you do in your situation to bring together gospel proclamation, social action, care for creation, and being a prophetic voice for justice as a whole-life disciple?

Mission Relocated



LOOK

What is God doing in your particular 'place', and the land on which you stand?

Walk the neighbourhood, and truly listen to what's going on and how the Lord sees this location.

Ask for his empowerment to be a wise peacemaker in this place, blessing everyone you encounter.



REFLECT

Mission is both local and global. God has brought diaspora churches to Europe as part of his plan.

How can you build closer relationships so that, together, you demonstrate the hope of the gospel in your locality?



ACT

How do you recognise and celebrate the mission work of *all* God's people when you gather together on Sunday?

How might you better train, encourage and commission others for this?

Mission Redistributed



LOOK

Whose are the voices among God's people in your locality that rarely get heard?



REFLECT

How might you better amplify and put into practice the wisdom of Majority World Christians, younger generations, and women in your midst?



ACT

How might you gather with other disciples to pray and commit your everyday actions, work and calling to the Lord, to be even more fruitful in the place God has put you?

Mission Reoriented



LOOK

Beyond your own efforts, where do you see signs among our non-Christian neighbours and colleagues that God is doing a new thing?

Pray blessing on these people of peace, and ask the Lord for how you might support these early signs of Kingdom life.



REFLECT

Crises have a way of revealing who we are and what we really believe. Are you willing to let God continue to shape you according to His purpose so that the gospel of Jesus Christ might transform this continent again?

Change us Lord!



ACT

Ask the Lord to search your motivations for mission.

Take the time to lament over, and repent of, the ways we have controlled and limited God's Spirit with our human strategies for growth and success.

Renew us Lord!

Final Questions

Is there a particular 'seed' the Lord would have you sow in your local soil as a sign of the Kingdom?

What is one strategic action that you will do in response to this report and these questions?



Resources

We are developing a Resources webpage to help you take these issues further and explore the topics in more depth, which you will find [here](#).

If you know of websites, books or anything else which might be helpful as a resource, please contact us by [email](#) and we will consider adding them.



European Christian Mission