

On reflection ...

I am often asked to speak about mission in Europe today, yet as the last edition of Vista, highlighted, one person's viewpoint alone however well informed, can never give a true picture of what is happening; particularly in a continent as diverse as Europe. What is needed are thoughtful and perceptive insights into the realities of mission practice across Europe - from those engaged in mission. In other words, Europe needs "reflective practitioners".

This term was coined by Donald Schön as recently as 1983. He defined reflective practice as "the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning" (Schön). Other educationalists have observed that, consciously or not, learning often takes place through a series of stages. The Kolb Learning Cycle, for example, isolates these as concrete experience, reflective

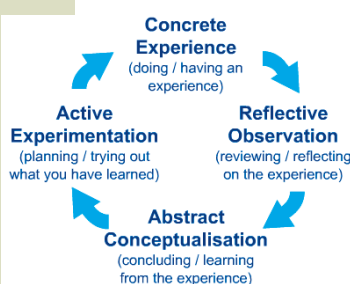
observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

The key insight was that we don't automatically learn from our experiences. Reflection on experience is fundamental in order to obtain generalisations which might then be applied to new situations. And this is no less true for Christian mission.

Mission in Europe doesn't need gurus; it needs reflective practitioners who have been equipped with the tools to think deeply about their own immediate context and mission practice. That has certainly been the ethos of the MA in European Mission at Redcliffe College. And Vista is one forum for highlighting examples of good reflective practice.

The concept of *missio Dei* reminds us that "the missionary initiative comes from God alone" (Bosch). It is God's mission, not ours. And yet, not only in active participation in the experience of mission but also in the acts of reflection, conceptualization and experimentation, "the marvel is that God invites us to join in" (Wright)

Jim Memory



EDITORIAL

An academic exercise?

Academic study can have a reputation of being removed from the 'real world' and at times this is deserved. However, as I look back at my MA studies at Redcliffe, I learnt the most through the reading and research required to complete the assignments. I could explore issues I had questions about and come to my own conclusions, and even better, reflect on areas of my own experience and ministry in the light of the latest missional thinking. At times it felt like the pieces of a jigsaw were falling into place; at others, I discovered new courses of action which I could apply to my context.

Of course, this is what all great learning should be - an iterative process where the text and context inform and illuminate one another.

The articles in this issue of Vista are all written by practitioners who are combining their work with a period of academic study.

James Cochrane, who has lived and worked in Portugal for a number of years, researches the relevance of the missiological conversation for Portuguese church.

Redcliffe MA student, Rosemary Caudwell brings an understanding of the workings of the European Parliament to her reflection on the churches' engagement with the EU.

David Roche, also a Redcliffe student as well as a policeman in London, writes about how London City Mission is approaching the issue of homelessness amongst migrants, balancing practical care with sharing the Gospel with this growing population.

And Australian pastor James Sutherland compares three very different ministries he encountered on a study tour of Europe this summer with Darrell Jackson & Mike Frost.

Each piece is an edited version of a longer piece of writing, but they give a flavour of how academia and practice compliment each other. I hope you enjoy them.

Joanne Appleton

THE RELEVANCE OF THE MISSIONAL CONVERSATION IN PORTUGAL

JAMES COCHRANE

In the last decade the term 'missional' has become a prominent focus among American, Australian and British authors. The missional conversation is often misunderstood or even dismissed as a new recipe for making struggling churches successful. But it is much more than a new way to do church. It invites a deep reflection on who God is, what Scripture is, and, in light of these two foundations, what the nature of the church ought to be.

Having read a sample of these writings, I suspected that the presuppositions and priorities of the missional conversation have value for mission engagement of the Portuguese evangelical community in Portugal. The aim of my dissertation was to review, critique and summarise the essence of the missional conversation, and test the value of the missional conversation for mission engagement in the Portuguese context by interacting with those occupying strategic roles within mission engagement in Portugal.

The Portuguese context

Murray (2005, p10), argues that the Western European church needs to discover strategies for mission engagement which are better suited to the Church's less privileged position on the margins of society. Accepting this premise would suggest that the Portuguese evangelical church's existence on the margins of Portuguese society places it at an advantage over evangelical churches in other Western European contexts. In practice, however, this is not the case as Portugal has continued to adopt models from other European and non-European contexts which seek to present the church as more attractive. Better programs, better preaching, or interesting church-based events are well-founded and important, but reflect a Christendom mindset which assumes that Western European society is still keen to hear what the church has to say, and that going to church is still a normal social activity.

In addition, the mission engagement of the Portuguese evangelical church continues to rely on non-Portuguese missionaries. Given the small size of the Portuguese evangelical community, this is an acceptable necessity provided that the missionaries coming into Portugal from outside of Europe are made aware of the idiosyncrasies of Western European religious expression (Hay, 2005 p4, Davie, 2006, p147), particularly the implications of mission engagement in a post-Christendom context.



There is little or no congruity between the Portuguese evangelical church culture and that of the Post-Christendom Portuguese society.

Erwich (2002, p30) suggests that the solution for mission engagement in Europe is to be found in recapturing biblical concepts that define the relation between church and culture. The missional conversation provides a means to achieve this because, as we have noted, the missional conversation is not about a quick fix, a new program or a new model to be adopted by the Western churches so that they can once more enjoy a dominant position of influence in Western culture.

The missional conversation invites the church of Jesus Christ to return to Scripture, to see afresh the unique story of God's mission to redeem all creation, and to reconsider the role of the church in relation to the story of this missional God. The first part of the dissertation examined the missional conversation in relation to the nature of Scripture, the nature of God and the nature of the church. But none of the missional writers referred to in this examination have specific experience of mission engagement in Portugal.

Consequently, in order to test the relevance of the missional conversation to the Portuguese context, and assess the degree to which these priorities may or may not be considered a valuable resource to shape and direct the mission engagement of the Portuguese evangelical Church, it is necessary to draw on the experience of those who minister in Portugal

The research

From an initial contact list of 30 Christians working in church contexts across Portugal, 11 were able to complete each part of the research process. They included pastors, theological educators and church planters. Each completed a brief questionnaire to gauge their existing knowledge. Due to the very limited availability of missional writers translated into Portuguese, the participants were given a 5000 word Portuguese summary of the examination of the missional conversation and were asked to reflect on the content of the summary in relation to:

- Validity – is the argument for the missional priorities theologically and biblically valid?
- Relevance – how relevant are the missional priorities for the specific context of Portugal?
- Implementation – if it is accepted that most or some of the priorities of the missional conversation have relevance for Portugal, how might these priorities be implemented?

Each participant was then interviewed in relation to the suggested areas of reflection noted above. The opportunity to interact with others who minister in Portugal was an interesting process and revealed the following:

a. The Portuguese display a vicarious religious attitude to the institutional church characterised by passive participation.

b. The Portuguese evangelical church is perceived as insignificant in Portuguese society. Christendom mission strategies that presume the respect and interest of society towards them are, therefore, unsuitable for the Portuguese evangelical communities.

c. Although there is evidence of missional understanding among those interviewed, the lack of missional understanding in the life of the church is attributed to individualism among leaders who are focused on maintaining current church practice, and is compounded by the cultural context of passive participation.

d. The Bible is an underused resource. Implementing a balanced biblical diet of reading, preaching and teaching, in combination with inductive Bible study aimed at active participation, has the potential to enable the Portuguese evangelical church to gain a missional outlook.

e. A limited understanding of the nature of God among Portuguese Christians issues in a similar limited self-understanding of what it means to be a Christian. For many, to be a Christian means to benefit from the work of Christ and be prepared for heaven.

f. The laity is an underused resource. This is due to the cultural religious context of passive participation, a limited understanding of what it means to be a Christian, dictatorial leadership style and lack of spiritual maturity.

g. The priorities of the missional conversation are considered relevant to the Portuguese context.

h. Implementation requires a top-down and bottom-up approach that intentionally promotes missional reading, preaching and teaching.

Recognising the need for change

Van Gelder (2007, pp 126, 127) notes two ways in which the relationship between church and context operates.

Firstly, there is a closed system approach, in which the church is assumed to act as a closed internal system that is separate from, and uninfluenced by contact with the context. Secondly, and in contrast to the first approach, the church can adopt an open system approach which recognises the dynamic relationship between church and context.

In a situation in which there is a high degree of congruity between church culture and the culture of the context, the choice between adopting a closed system or an open system approach is not insignificant. For instance, in the Christendom era, the values, hopes and attitudes of the context were predominantly Christian providing a high degree of congruity between the church culture and the culture of the context.

***“An open system approach recognises that the church exists to participate in God’s mission and that God, by his Spirit, is active in the context in which the church exists*”**

As a result, churches were able to function as closed systems with little loss of impact on the surrounding context. However, the contemporary Portuguese Post-Christendom context is, as has been noted, vastly different. It is an environment in which there is little or no congruity between the church culture and the culture of the context. Consequently, the choice between adopting a closed system approach or an open system approach is crucial and will have a significant effect on the Portuguese church’s ability to impact the surrounding context.

Choosing to adopt a closed system approach results in two reactions: Firstly, a church can become inward focused seeking to protect itself from what is going on outside (Roxburgh and Boren , 126), perhaps even looking for a pastor “who can bring back the days of glory and success” (Van Gelder, 2007, p126) . Secondly, a church attempts to develop and improve the way in which it functions, seeking to be more attractive to the surrounding context. In the immediate term this can lead to growth as disenfranchised members of other churches are attracted (Roxburgh and Boren 127), but ultimately fails to recognise the degree of incongruity between the culture of the church and the culture of the context.

An open system approach recognises that the church exists to participate in God’s mission and that God, by his Spirit, is active in the context in which the church exists. Consequently, the primary way of dealing with changing contexts is not through the development of new internal strategies to improve what the church does. Rather, it is by facing up to and embracing the changing context, confident that God intends to use the changing context to “move a congregation in new directions of meaningful ministry under the leading of the Spirit. (Roxburgh and Boren, 2009, p48)

Robinson (2012, n.p) notes that churches engaging in mission ‘are meeting an

increasingly receptive audience’ but recognises ‘we are not yet at the tipping point within the church whereby the missional imperative cannot be resisted’.

Clearly, the Portuguese evangelical community is not at this tipping point but, given the positive reaction of colleagues ministering in Portugal, it continues to be my conviction that the promotion of the presuppositions and priorities of the missional conversation could move the Portuguese evangelical community towards this tipping point.



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THE CHURCHES' ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EU INSTITUTIONS

ROSEMARY CAUDWELL

The origins of European integration were heavily influenced by devout Catholics. In 1950 Pope Pius XII welcomed the Schuman Declaration with enthusiasm. The Catholic Church clearly viewed the Project as a significant sign of reconciliation of European nations united by Christian values (COMECE, 2012).

In the early days of European integration Christians were heavily represented in the decision-making bodies of the European Communities. As European society changed, however, Christian influence in national governments, and correspondingly the European Council, declined and Christians in the Commission and the European Parliament (EP) became a small minority.

It was only when it became obvious that the key players in the European institutions were increasingly influenced by secular norms that churches and Christian organisations began to establish themselves in Brussels in order to engage with them, less as participants actively involved in the decision-making process, but increasingly as churches and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attempting to influence them from the margins.

There are two main types of Christian representation in Brussels – the mainstream European churches which form the focus for this article, and the non-governmental organisations, who range from the pan-European European *Evangelical Alliance* to more narrowly focused organisations such as *A Rocha*, who lobby on creation care.

Church engagement

The vast majority of mainstream European churches are now represented in Brussels and, since 2005, those representatives have been engaged in formal dialogue with the EU Institutions at a senior level. This dialogue was given a legal basis in the Lisbon Treaty, 2009, which provided in Article 17(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that: "Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations." The Commission states that it accepts as partners in dialogue under Article 17 all organisations that are recognised by Member States as churches,

religious communities or communities of conviction. The key Christian interlocutors are representatives of the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox churches.

COMECE

This was established in 1980 with the purpose of influencing European policy making, through dialogue seminars, attending formal meetings and presentation of papers on particular topics, the latter being "forceful reminders of the Christian values of a European civilisation that is open to the world, taking care of the common good and the dignity of each individual as a whole human being."

Christians seeking to influence the EU now fulfil a very different role from that played by the founding Christian democrats

In the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the expansion of competence following the Maastricht Treaty and the creation of the European Union, the COMECE increased the number of its staff and in its own words "began to understand how large its mandate was." (COMECE, 2012) In the last two years topics they have explored included freedom of religion; the social market economy, with a particular emphasis on the protection of the most vulnerable; and social inclusion of the Roma people.

The CEC

The CEC is made up of 125 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic churches together with 40 associated organisations from all countries on the European continent. It came into being after the Second World War and in response to the fragmentation and division of Europe during the Cold War (CEC, 2013). Today it has offices in Brussels and Strasbourg and its Church and Society Commission (CSC) has a remit to examine European social, economic, ethical and environmental issues.

In its Charter, the *Charta Oecumenica* (2001) the European churches committed themselves to support the integration of the European continent in the following terms: "On the basis of our Christian faith, we work towards a humane, socially conscious Europe, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity prevail."

An example of these organisations working together is a recent meeting organised by

the Irish Council of Churches, on behalf of COMECE and the CEC, under the auspices of Article 17. The representatives of a cross-section of Irish church leaders together with representatives of COMECE and the CEC, met the Irish Prime Minister and discussed the social impact of the economic crisis particularly on the vulnerable in society, including the increased numbers of working poor. One of their requests was for a weekly day of rest to be included in the revision of the Working Time Directive as "a clear and visible sign for the reconciliation of personal, family and professional life."

The CEC member churches include the Church of England and the EKD, the Protestant church in Germany, which set up a Brussels office in 1990 and whose staff focus on work connected with the mission of the church, including asylum and migration, foreign, security and development policies, and religious freedom (EKD, no date).

Further analysis is needed to assess the added value of a separate representation to the EU. It would be interesting to consider whether they could assist Christians, to have a better understanding of, and engagement with, the EU. For example, There seems to be a considerable disconnect between the recognition of the importance of engagement at the leadership level in the Anglican Church, and the UK membership.

CROCEU

The Committee of the Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the EU (CROCEU), has had an office in Brussels since 2010. The Russian Orthodox Church, which set up a representation in Brussels in 2002, is a key member of CROCEU, and its significant involvement in dialogue with the EU Institutions is clearly accepted, notwithstanding the fact that Russia is not a member of the EU. The other members are the Romanian, Greek and Cypriot Orthodox churches. The Cypriot and the Greek Orthodox churches (website information only available in Greek) also appear to have representations in Brussels. They are also members of the CEC but the Russian Orthodox Church is not, apparently, as a result of disagreement over the status of the Estonian church. (Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2012)

The Orthodox Churches have expressed their deep concern about the social impact of the economic crisis in Europe from the perspective of the parishes in which they

work, particularly Greece and Cyprus, as well as the position of Christians in the Middle East and concern over the survival of the Christian populations in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.

Discussion

There are three main points to make about the churches' engagement with the EU. Firstly, it is impressive to consider the diversity of churches represented in Brussels and the level of unity they have achieved in expressing Christian values to the EU.

Secondly, the concerns they have raised cover a wide range of issues, from religious freedom to the impact of the economic crisis and the general lack of values in the EU. Their information is gained from experience of the current impact of EU policies at the grassroots level, which is essential; but inevitably it will lack expertise and forward thinking in specialist areas, unless they are able to import it. This is particularly significant with respect to economic and environmental issues.

The influence of the church is at one remove from those officials and experts within the Commission who are directly responsible for policy.

Thirdly, it is difficult to assess how successful the dialogue with the churches has been in influencing EU policy. The Commission set up a new department, the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA), to provide a bridge between policy officials and members of civil society, including the churches. BEPA reports directly to the President of the Commission and, according to its website, is intended to inform policy making at an early level, with input and reports resulting from its dialogue with civil society. This structure has the strength that the views of the churches can be put directly to the most powerful part of the Commission, the President and his Cabinet. It has the weakness that the influence of the church is at one remove from those officials and experts within the Commission who are directly responsible for the development of policy. Christian views are therefore filtered through BEPA officials who may not be sympathetic to their opinions and who are also engaging with humanist and other groups in civil society.

This highlights the importance of Christians continuing to seek employment in, or election to, EU bodies. There is no published analysis as yet as to the impact of dialogue with BEPA on specific policies of the Commission, or whether the existence of this intermediary makes it more or less difficult for churches

and Christian organisations to lobby Commission policy makers directly on particular issues of interest. Indeed, further analysis, based on primary research is needed to assess the impact of the relations between the churches and all EU Institutions on EU policy-making.

Conclusion

Christians seeking to influence the EU now fulfill a very different role from that played by the founding Christian democrats, as they seek to influence from outside the decision-making process, as one of a number of interlocutors in civil society. The extent to which they are successful depends on the level of knowledge and expertise they are able to bring, as well as the level of acceptance of their input by secular Institutions. It remains important for Christians to seek employment in, and election to, those Institutions. The churches discussed above alongside the NGOs working in Brussels cover a wide range of issues with an impressive degree of cooperation. However, further engagement is needed by Christians able to provide vision and shape the public debate, in particular, on issues of economic and societal transformation, and Creation care.

Rosemary Caudwell is studying for the MA in European Mission at Redcliffe. She worked as a lawyer specialising in EU law, including three years in the European Commission in Brussels in the 1990s.

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The European Parliament in Strasbourg

London City Mission (LCM) exists 'to share with the people of London, patiently, sensitively and individually, the transforming love of God in Jesus Christ, and to enable them to join his Church' (London City Mission 2013).

Staff and volunteers fulfil this in five broad ministries; firstly in local community-based churches, cafés and schools, secondly through chaplaincies at transport hubs and to emergency services, thirdly through specialised ministry to ethnic migrant communities, fourthly to prisons and homeless people, fifthly to pastoral care to the elderly in care homes. This article however, focuses on just one of these aspects – the interaction of LCM with homelessness – and in particular that amongst the migrant community.

LCM in context

London City Mission was established in 1835 by Scottish missionary David Nasmith. Himself a migrant to London, his city mission to the poor brought 'them to an acquaintance with salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and of doing them good by every means in your power' (London City Mission, 2013).

According to Kirk (1999, p57) 'there can be no authentic evangelism apart from a living testimony to the transforming power of the Gospel in action'. Whilst publically expressing a Christian ethos in their work, tension exists where LCM presently operates in a society drastically differing from when it was first established in the nineteenth Century. The widely

acknowledged European rejection of the Christian narrative today risks muting Kirk's 'Gospel in action' and limiting the transformation of individuals and community.

Due in part to the global recession and eurozone financial crisis the work of London City Mission has increasingly found itself ministering to the growing phenomena of migrant Londoners, with two-fifth of Londoners now from an ethnic minority. (Vallance, 2008, p1) In flux, transition and change, migrant Londoners are likely to experience a certain degree of disorientation and loneliness as they navigate new language, understanding UK government agencies, law, education, benefits and politics.

This is precisely evidenced by Snyder (2007, p13), where London's refugees and asylum seekers 'face a number of specific barriers not only concerning discrimination and language, but also difficulties in obtaining recognition for non-UK qualifications', compounded by difficulties for Migrants stemming from Government decision making and policy. While British rough sleepers can generally find hostel accommodation and financial aid, Eastern Europeans are rarely entitled to such benefits, 'like the hidden armies of unsuccessful asylum-seekers who also have no recourse to public funding, many A10 homeless are now some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in Britain' (Taylor, 2009, p1).

While rough sleeping among UK nationals in London is falling, it is rising among migrants, in 2011 3975 rough sleepers were identified, 48% from the UK, 28% from Central and Eastern Europe, 11% from Other Europe, 6% African, 6% Other (Edwards, 2012, p2).

With 52% of rough sleepers in London being migrants from outside the UK, the challenges to organisations like LCM are complex including past socio-historical issues arising in home countries which may have contributed to their homelessness. Many Eastern Europeans come from a generation that went through communism, 'they are scarred and don't trust authority. They drink and find a group that behaves like them. It becomes a lifestyle, and not an easy one to get out off' (Ramesh, 2010, p1).

It is recognised this element of mission requires a degree of training. However, a 'professionalization' of mission risks the unwitting exclusion of volunteers in local Church, for example 'community-based fund raising (inefficient but highly participative) is replaced by skilled applications for grant funding' (Booker, 2005, p102). However, it can equally be argued as professionals in mission, LCM staff are better equipped to assist migrants with serious pressing support needs, employment and benefits issues, poor physical and mental health, sex abuse, sex working, trafficking and torture as they work in partnership with other agencies.

A commitment to *Koinonia*

John Nicholls (2007, p2) Chief Executive Officer, has taken steps address the balance in the makeup of his 150 member team, thirty per cent of whom are from non-British backgrounds and fluent in over 20 languages. This confirms their commitment to reflecting the enriched benefits a diverse team in working among migrant peoples and is a mature and developed distinct form of missional '*Koinonia*'.

As the first-century church demonstrated a new way of relating to each other, a transformational paradigm of relationships developed on a larger scale between the Jew and Gentile, male and female. LCM has correspondingly focussed on a missional strategy understanding the necessity that '*Koinonia* stands in a dialectical relationship to the need for all to have life in fullness. The gospel is about the possibility of having *Koinonia* within a context of inequality, as a togetherness of those who are diverse, locally and globally' (Funkschmidt, 2002, p571). However, the questions remains as to how LCM work out missional *Koinonia* to migrants living on the streets, 'the city is a complex multifaceted reality, capable of extremes and of forming, as much as deforming, the human' (Irvin, 2009, p177).

The potential for LCM to contribute to such 'forming' of the human as an individual



Homelessness among the migrant community is on the rise in London

is evident in the following words of an unnamed Spanish man at Webber Street, LCM's homeless day centre in Waterloo. Every morning the team offer guests cooked breakfasts, hot drinks, showers and clothing, 'I'm sleeping on the streets, alcoholic, I think many people don't need only the food, only the clothes, only the shower or something like this, we need also the food for our hearts, for our souls' (Love London 2013). In spite of any religious bias 'Christian Today' endorses the Webber Street project as providing rough sleepers with 'refuge from life on the streets and a place where they can experience God's love through the patient care of dedicated staff' (Vacheron, 2013, p1).

**We need also the food for our hearts,
for our souls**

Hospitality is a major component to the work of Webber Street where shelter, food and clothing transcend language and culture, 'hospitality is not a means to an end; it is a way of life infused by the gospel' (Pohl, 2003, p11), the value added 'shalom' peace of God 'addressing the needs of the whole person, for it is the whole person that is created in God's image' (Rogers, 2003, p29).

A typical day for staff at Webber Street is not restricted to the confines of the LCM building, but walking the streets, 'and open spaces to find people. I will go to a park or a hostel just to see how people are who have been in crisis recently' (Changing London, 2011, p7). This enhances the credibility of LCM whose staff make the transition over to guests' sub-culture to seek them out where other organisations may simply wait for migrants to go to them for assistance. This is a positive example of LCM's mission statement, sharing at an 'individual' level and 'restoring some of the dignity that life on the streets has taken from them' (Salsbury, 2013, p1). As Tower Bridge spans the river Thames connecting London so LCM trust in the *missio Dei*, working beyond their own human capability they seek to form a crossing of opportunity for broken people to find redemption in Christ, a new creation as simply evidenced in Webber Street prayer points, 'for genuine conversions to Christ amongst guests' (Webber Street Quarterly Update, 2013, p1).

Looking beyond

In January 2013, LCM closed its Webber Street homeless day centre for refurbishment, in doing so it invested in staff members sending them to work in other European City mission projects in Berlin, Romania and Poland. In the article

'lessons learned' (Webber Street Quarterly Update, 2013, p2) staff member Petra Zimmermann says 'In Romania I realised again very clearly how important it is for people to work on their past and talk about painful experiences', whilst Luke Carson said 'In Berlin I was inspired by the commitment to get people off the streets at all costs. I think we should be willing to take more risks and use our resources better to help rough sleepers'. Exposure to other European migrant mission illustrates the commitment of LCM to narrowing the cultural distance between staff and guests. Such an incarnational approach in understanding migrants alerts LCM that 'to bring hope and security to a place, someone needs to take on the role of host' (Pohl, 2003, p13). In this way London City Mission has demonstrated the sharing 'patiently' element of their vision statement with long term investment in staff as they reflect how what is happening in Europe directly affects their work in London and so avoid a restricted ethnocentric stance.

Conclusion

London City Mission understand the complexities of working amongst migrants and are not over simplistic in their approach with overemphasis on human strategy or ingenuity, a 'defective missiology' (Murray, 2008, p9) lacking essential reliance on the presence of God. LCM has evidenced it is able to stay true to its established traditional roots whilst also adapting and changing its expression of mission in culture today. They have shown Kirk's 'Gospel in action' has not been muted in their determination to 'hold social action and evangelism together. When that happens something more of the Gospel is seen' (Booker, 2005, p107). In doing so LCM work to bring the reality of Jesus Kingdom into the now, 'he lived as if his Kingdom was already present; and in doing so he made it present' (Dorr, 1984, p100).



David Roche is a mission partner with CMS, with his wife Amy they were previously based in France where they were church planters. David and Amy are relocating to Lebanon to work with a local charity bringing aid to Syrian refugees fleeing the crisis of civil war.

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The three missional practices explored in this paper bear all the hallmarks of not only a robust and thorough-going missiology but missiological methodologies that embrace the challenges and changes in the contemporary Western context. From environmental ecological work in post industrial Glasgow, to the restorative and just work amongst the sex workers of Amsterdam, to the simple yet truly tasty methods of Matthew's Table in Berlin, each missional practice is engaged in mission in the true sense of the word seeking to both proclaim and demonstrate the full and redeeming love of God through Jesus Christ. They are deeply committed people who all seek to love God and love others in their communities as they participate in the unfolding mission of God in the world. Their endeavours are highly localised, community focussed, relationally concentrated with a high reliance on God rather than their techniques and methodologies.

Clay Community Church, Glasgow

Paul Ede works in his local community of Possilpark, a post-industrial, urbanised community that is for the most part, neglected by the wider Glaswegian community. It is a community made up of a lower socio-economic demographic with "100% of the population living within 500 metres of derelict plots of land. This compares to a Glasgow-wide average of 60.3%, and a Scotland-wide average of 29.8%." (Ede 2013, 7)

Paul is quick to point out the negative psychological, spiritual and even physical effect of derelict land and insufficient green space. This is so significant in Glasgow that it has been cited in academic circles as contributing to "The Glasgow Effect" (Reid 2011, 701-776)

In response to this, Paul's church has been seeking to revitalize and rehabilitate brownfield areas of Possilpark in partnership with other community organisations through endeavours such as guerrilla gardening, seed bombing, community gardening, night-time flower planting and developing wild flower meadows.

The act of rehabilitating the land is a clear, and often neglected way, of demonstrating the universal reign and rule of God through Jesus Christ. God does not just reign over humanity but reigns over creation as well. The Bible is unequivocal about the fact that God cares very deeply for his creation and



The Possilpark community, home of Clay Community Church

the land and it therefore follows that the followers of Jesus would care for the land also. Frost (2006, 247-8) rightly affirms that: "It is possible for us who have tasted freedom in Christ to share it with the earth by caring responsibly for our planet." Of course, caring for and rehabilitating brownfield sites not only serves the land itself but has an impact on those inhabiting the land and the community at large. The radical nature of this approach is not to be underestimated. In a climate or society where so often the land is scarred in service to a broken humanity, eco-mission seeks to encourage humanity to serve and heal the land, which in turn brings healing to humanity as well.

YWAM Lighthouse Centre, Amsterdam

There are approximately 20-25,000 women working in prostitution in the Netherlands with some 400 windows where the women are on display to the general public and "clients" in Lighthouse's district alone. Many of these women are victims of human trafficking and appallingly, 90% of the women in the windows have suffered abuse at some point before they come into the sex trade. For the most part they have an unhealthy diet of Red Bull and cigarettes, work 8 hour shifts in the windows, and will often remain trapped in the industry for most of their lives.

The response of the Lighthouse Centre is at once both gentle and courageous. Elisabeth Hamso readily emphasises the deep need and foundation of intercessory prayer for their ministry, affirming the need for prayer before they go into the district. They have people praying while they are in the district

and they pray after they come back. Their mission to the women includes going out to the district and providing nutritious soups for them to eat while they are on their shift as well as providing tea and coffee with biscuits. They use this method as a way of developing relationships with the woman that they hope will lead to further conversations and interactions. They are always very respectful of the women no matter the circumstance because all their boundaries have been broken and invaded and perhaps the most restorative thing they can do is simply respect their boundaries.

Elisabeth quite clearly demonstrated the biblical mandate to care for the prostitute from the ministry of Jesus himself, the one who cared for, interacted with, and dignified the prostitute. Elisabeth profoundly stated that "I believe every encounter we have with the women brings restoration, even by looking them in the eye and treating them as a human being and not a piece of meat." Guided by these principles, the team at Lighthouse wisely have a rule that men from the team must never go to the windows to minister to the women although they are more than welcome to minister in other ways.

Elisabeth also shared with us how they seek to disciple the women and integrate them into the wider Christian community by simply stating that "I would like the discipleship to be structured but the women don't work that way, as they take steps, we just walk alongside them."

To say that the mission that the Lighthouse Centre is undertaking is breathtaking would be a gross understatement. They have a clear understanding of the context in which they are engaged in incarnational mission and have carefully thought through the way in which they are seeking to both announce and demonstrate the reign and rule of God through Jesus Christ.

Elisabeth and her team admirably integrate both proclamation and demonstration of the gospel into a seamless missionary endeavour, and remain passionately committed to seeing the power of God release the thousands of men and woman who are enslaved and trapped by the sex industry.

Matthew's Table, Berlin

At the heart of the Matthew's Table ministry is a dining table! John and Gayle Butrin's table is a place where conversations occur and relationships with unbelievers form. It is around the table and over a full three-course meal, lovingly cooked by them, that they do their work. The Butrins see the table as a level playing ground for all who gather around it, no matter who the people are that are there. This attitude certainly evokes images of the kinds of feasts and banquets that Jesus attended in the gospels and the kinds of people he would eat with. The Butrins never advertise what they do but simply "allow the Lord to bring people into our home through word of mouth" further emphasising the people-focussed nature of their ministry.

... the simple act of incarnationally inviting people into their home to share a meal is a powerful, counter-cultural, gospel soaked message in and of itself

The Butrins are keen to share about some of the distinctives of Berliners and the people that they encounter and are seeking to reach. They describe them as people who are searching but don't know what they are searching for. As people who are highly secularised or antagonistic towards institutional church.

Understanding the Berliner culture is helpful in understanding the radical nature of what the Butrins do, as it is very rare in Berlin for people to visit other people's homes. If you were to meet friends in Berlin you would normally do so in a café or restaurant. Therefore, the simple act of incarnationally inviting people into their home to share a meal is a powerful, counter-cultural, gospel soaked message in and of itself.

Discussion

It seems quite clear that each one of the three missional approaches explored place a high emphasis on both proclamation and demonstration of the gospel in equal measure. The people of Berlin, Amsterdam and Glasgow have little or no concept of the God of the scriptures and the God who reigns over creation. It is the synthesis of proclamation and demonstration that begins

to alert them to this reigning, creator God.

Additionally, the seamless nature of this synthesis could be brought about by the inherent collaborative approach that the three missional practices adopt in their wider community. They all seemed to go a step further than just working for or serving their communities and choose instead to work alongside their communities. It could be argued that this approach incidentally prevents the ministries from adopting a 'demonstrate in order to evangelise' methodology because of the true relational partnership that exists between the believer and non-believer. Furthermore, the approach seems to eradicate the potential for a haughty 'we are better than you' attitude and instead adopts a more Christ-like approach. Perhaps, more churches in the Australian context could learn something from this attitude? Additionally, one of the exciting things about the work of the three approaches is the connection they have to some of the concerns or activities of the community at large. The chief concerns that all three ventures display are very much a part of the contemporary western milieu, namely, environmentalism, the "foodie" culture and sex trafficking. Not only does this add further weight to the impact of what they are doing amongst the wider community it can also add to the argument that they are seeing what God is doing in the world and partnering with Him in His work. Wright (2007, 235) helpfully adds to this discussion when he states "this presents a wonderful opportunity for Christians with an integrated worldview, and with a theology of both creation and new creation, to find the way forwards, perhaps to lead the way forwards".

For the Clay Community Church the invitation to taste and see comes in the form of a fun-filled restoration of the land and God's interest in redeeming not only humanity but creation as well. For the Lighthouse Centre this demonstration is expressed in the simple delivery of good and nutritious food and the respect and dignity given to prostitutes by looking them in the eye and not over their bodies. For Matthew's Table the invitation to taste and see is a literal one that provides a radical hospitality in a city that is devoid of it. Furthermore, all three missional approaches are deeply embedded and committed to their local communities. Not once did they mention a desire to 'reach the city' but instead expressed a desire to simply relate to their community around them in meaningful ways.

However, despite the admirable efforts and missiological approaches of the three examples, there are some areas of their approach that raise some legitimate questions about their overall methodologies. For example one question to be asked with regard to Paul Ede and his church's work in Possilpark is: to what extent are they engaging with their community beyond the narrow focus of eco-mission? The state of derelict land is only one factor that contributes to the aforementioned 'Glasgow Effect'. In light of Jesus' announcement in Luke 4:18-19 (which is connected to Isaiah 61 and which Paul himself quotes as a Christological impetus for what they do) it is simply not enough to only care about the land. The whole gospel affects the whole person not just one aspect of the person's context.



*A view of two brothels in a small street in Amsterdam's Red-light district, also known as the "Wallen"
Attribution: Massimo Catarinella*

MISSIONAL PRACTICES IN PERSPECTIVE CONT...

Another question that could be asked around the work of Matthew's Table is to what extent does their model of mission allow for the discipleship of new believers? Or put another way: What will the Butrins do with the people who come to follow Jesus through their ministry? It is quite clear that the ministry of Matthew's Table has a highly relational focus that requires an intense amount of activity and time, so when (not if) the Butrins see people come to Jesus how might they then introduce and integrate them into the wider Christian community/church? Whilst this is less of a missiological question and more of a discipleship issue, it still must be addressed for the long-term viability of what Matthew's Table is trying to do. On the other hand, the true genius of what the Butrins do is how simple and easily replicable it is to almost any context as there is always a need for humans to eat and always the opportunity to show hospitality. The model of Matthew's Table could potentially be one of the first exciting steps that an attractional, traditional church could take into a thoroughgoing incarnational and missiological approach.

In conclusion, there is much to be admired about the work of three missional approaches that have been explored. Aside from the rigorous and solid theological underpinnings that are the foundation of each of the endeavours they are also to be applauded for their hard work, grit and determination to significantly and radically love those around them in their communities in new and fresh ways.

Frost & Hirsch (2011, 24) declare, "It's time to move, to cast off from safe shores, and take a journey again! The church as an expression, perhaps the most concentrated expression, of the kingdom of God on earth should be a fully God-alive, dynamic, adventurous, world-transforming agency."

It seems quite clear that Clay Community Church, Matthew's Table and The Lighthouse Centre have all cast themselves off from safe shores and are truly a part of the agency described above.

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