

MISSION AS BEARING WITNESS - IMMIGRANT WITNESS IN GERMANY

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Anabaptist Churches in Germany, partly comprised of immigrants from the Soviet Union, had by 2005 established more than 300 churches, and continue to plant even more new churches in Germany. According to the German Christian journal *idea-Spektrum*, worship services of immigrant Anabaptist churches are some of the best attended services in Germany.

In the following article I will discuss missionary approaches that have played a decisive role in the Soviet Union, what kind of setbacks the so called Resettlers have experienced in Germany and what kind of opportunities they continue to have to fulfil their mission calling.

PART 1 Witnessing as a Lifestyle – a Successful Mission Method in the Soviet Union

1. Missio Dei as a concept for mission as witness

God, and not the church, is the one who sends. *Missio Dei* was the main conviction of the Baptists in the Soviet Union. “*Missio dei* as a trinitary idea contains the christological and soteriological centre, without it theology can not exist“, believes Wagner (1993:161). Whether the church is alive, or experiences the new life which is promised to her, is evidenced by the ways in which she turns to the people around her who do not yet belong, namely in the direct interest of God (Bürkle 1981:67). For Gensichen it is clear that sharing in the *Missio Dei*:

need not always correspond to methods of a conventional, organised mission. Mission history has always known – beside the great missionaries, the pioneers of operational sending, – the “second front” of witnesses, whose mission was not exhausted in appropriate action, but... went much beyond mission and in some cases even happened or happens as an antithesis to the established mission (Gensichen 1984:483f).

This is what the church in the Soviet Union experienced. Without any extensive understanding of the theological concept of sending, God caused in these believers a need to witness to a world which was in opposition to Christianity. “Baptists distribute their mission on the shoulders of laypersons”, complained the atheist Manuylova, because “each believer has the duty to read the Bible, to memorize Bible verses and to work as a preacher or missionary” (Manuylova 1975:46). This way they lived out (implemented) the *Missio Dei*.

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This term was formed in the early 20th century under considerable influence from Karl Barth, then first expressed by George Vicedom and included into the program of the Willingen mission conference of the World Council of Churches. Accepted by the Lausanne Committee in 1974 into the mission program of the evangelicals, is it now a *terminus technicus* in mission science. Mission is not only understood as the spread of the gospel and leads not only to the conversion of pagans, but serves the direct order of God to expand his kingdom. Mission is first of all and primarily a matter of the Holy Trinity.

In the USSR witnessing became a life style and as such an indicator for God's work in a person's life, evident in attitude and action. Christian mission as life style evangelism was aroused through God's work and through persecution *Missio Dei* became reality. People of God lived out their faith and many newcomers became believers.

It appears that evangelical churches in the Soviet Union did not have time and energy for theological treatises on the subject of missions. They had to fight for their daily survival. They only had time to live their faith and so it became their life style. They had to assume that it is God who will build up his church and not they individually. They would agree with Stott¹ that not every preacher should be called an evangelist, but that every Christian has to be a witness: "If God does not call everyone to be an 'evangelist' ... But every Christian is a witness, and every Christian is called to bear witness" (Stott 1967:58).²

In the setting of my studies about missions in the Soviet Union after the Second World War, I came to the conclusion that evangelical churches in the Soviet Union did not write down their mission motives but, like Christians of the first century, they lived missionary lives which started from their experience with God.

The union of the churches and their church magazines were inspiring for mission work, but they played only a small part in the direct missionary proclamation.³ The same applies to the few theological training centres. Already the effort to introduce God as the Lord of the universe and of the mission comforted the churches that faced suffering and persecution. They knew that God will lead his work to a successful end.

That these churches were still heavily involved in missionary activities is reflected in atheistic publications in the 70s and 80s of the last century.

2. *Missionary Witness as Perceived from an Atheistic Perspective*

A conflict between communist ideology and religion was unavoidable because Marxism "is not only an overthrowing economic theory, but also a philosophical system, which is the foundation of a worldview, which is pioneering for its followers all areas of the

¹ "The ... reason for our guilty silence is that we are neither clear nor sure what we ought to speak. We say nothing because we have nothing to say" (Stott 1967: 28).

² The term "evangelist" occurs in the New Testament only three times, but the responsibility to evangelize has the whole church (Stott 1967: 55).

³ Reimer writes about the missing freedom for mission, which emerged due to the stiff structures of the All Union Council in the seventies (1996: 111).

human life - politics, art, literature, religion, ethics and so on” (Kichkovsky 1957:5). Berdyayev, for example, explains the background of this argument: communism is a replacement religion, because:

Atheism always means a transition to some kind of idolatry, to idolization. A total devastation of a soul can only lead to suicide... Just because communism is itself a religion, it persecutes all other religions and cannot be tolerant toward other religions (Berdyayev 1931:40).

Below I will attempt to describe some particular areas of the missionary witness, in order to better understand the spread of the faith in a socialist state.⁴

The communist scientist Belov notices a certain pattern in missionary activity of the Christians. They would first look for some common ground with their co-workers or neighbours in order to invite them to a worship service, but then speak openly and purposefully on the train, at work and in the market about their faith. A successful method is also assisting people with material or financial problems, or those who have lost a loved one. These activities happen with the purpose to win them for their faith (1978:83).

2.1 Social and Political Isolation

Church visitors avoided social meetings common in socialist society, and rather created in their church buildings space for mutual help. They helped each other in cases of sickness, accidents and other problems. This way they experienced a pleasant feeling, which they attributed to their religious attitude (Manuylova 1981:58f).

Another famous writer, Gal’perin, sees the isolation of Christians from the surrounding world as a genuine problem, because in that way they evaded themselves from the communist influence. “Church leaders”, writes Gal’perin, “expect a complete separation from the world. Members of the church are not allowed to watch TV, visit the cinema or attend a theatre, in order not to have their souls polluted” (1989:62). He reports about two young women who were good witnesses at their work. But their only information source was Christian literature, church sermons and Christian broadcasting programs.

2.2 Role of the Family in Lifestyle Evangelism

From an atheistic perspective the most dangerous missionary field was the family.⁵ Manuylova shows in her atheistic research how churches grow and increase. She comes up with the conclusion that the main mission happens in the family (1981:70). In 1976 some Baptist churches recorded an increase of members by 70 percent. The main share of growth was through people with a Christian background. The church conducts its mission, concludes Manuylova, primarily in the family (1981:69).

⁴ Voroschilov warns against conducting Christian funerals, because they have religious significance and are used to evangelize and to propagate the Christian faith (1974:37).

⁵ See Voroschilov (1974:29): “An extremely great importance for religious activity lies in the family”.

Ugrinovich argues in his book *Psichologia i religia*, published a few years before *Perestroika*, that in the religious education of pre-school children parents play the most important role (1986:223). The author points to scientific research of psychologists about the form of the family and their importance for religious education. They come to the conclusion that the new generation of the religiously minded population was raised and educated in families. The result of his studies can be summarized as: “in the context of the Soviet society, the religious family belongs to the most important channels to transmit religious thinking to the new generation” (Ugrinovich 1986:222).

Further research also proved the assumption that religious influence on the children was even stronger when both parents displayed the same attitude in these questions.⁶ Because of these results, atheist educators came to the conclusion that the teachers’ work was futile in their efforts to impress on school children an atheistic formation if they restricted their efforts only to children. To guarantee that children would buy into atheistic influence parents had also to be succumb to it (Ugrinovich 1986:232). According to this statement, communists perceived a major threat for society in the Christian lifestyle of families.

Jaschin, a Soviet scholar, described the transmission of the tradition of faith from older people to the youth, which were particularly susceptible (1984:74). He complains that preachers have recognized the importance of the family and use it to preserve the religious thinking as a missionary possibility. This leads, so Jaschin, to authoritarian education and strict observation of rules for daily life in families (1984:76), according to the teaching that the family is the first and most important missionary cell (1984:77).⁷

A new evaluation of the role of women and mothers led to the conclusion that they belonged to the support pillars in the formation of religious thinking and held together larger groups of believers. They were the majority in religious groups and were more religious than their husbands. Many widows compensated for their loneliness and missing social and family ties with intensified activities in the church (Ugrinovich 1986:242).

Jaschin also characterizes church activities of elderly women who were never married. To marry non-believers was forbidden for them and so they lived like nuns in the church. They belonged to the non-official group of servants and helped other members. They were involved with the preparation of the service, taught the children some needlework and this way were missionaries (Jaschin 1984:82f).

While describing the youth work of Mennonites, Ipatov observes a certain kind of

⁶ The German language, at least for the families with German background, played an important role. For Eisfeld the Regulation from the Secretary for Education of the RF of 9 April 1957 ‘On the organisation of lessons in the native language of children and the adult population of the German nationality’ meant a change for the better (Eisfeld 1987:171).

⁷ The discovery of the missionary “function” of the family leads Jaschin to call, from his socialist views, for a struggle against the family or a fight for changes in the family tradition of the many religious groups (Jaschin 1984:75).

training: “Not only that the Bible is read by old people, but it is also studied by young people in prayer meetings” (Ipatov 1978:169). Interactively, through a question and answer game they learned the texts of the Old and New Testament; this way having their faith convictions strengthened and being trained as missionaries. “It is characteristic for the questions to advise those who have renounced their faith or went astray so that they would keep commandments of the Old and New Testament” (Ipatov 1978:169).⁸ In addition, according to Ipatov, to carry out meetings in the German language was also some kind of a missionary approach, at least among the German speaking population. Many came to the church not only in order to strengthen their religious thinking, but also to cultivate their German language and to keep up with this culture. But the visitors were influenced by the Christians and found their faith (Ipatov 1978:172).

Summary of Part I

The communist government knew very well that, in spite of pressures and restrictions, many Christians fulfilled their mission commandment. It did not always need to be words. A changed lifestyle was a proclamation in itself.

The largest missionary power was perceived to lie in healthy Christian families. The family had to be influenced, to be changed and to be retrained, in order to stop the missionary message. The communist government certified that the Christians had an active missionary commitment. In the atheists’ view, mission was not understood in the first place as proclamation *expressis verbis*, but as living a changed life. Christianity effected the daily life of members in Christian churches and presented this way a danger for socialism. Stoner’s statement about the mission of the 16th- century Anabaptists can also be applied to the work of Anabaptists in the USSR:

...more impressive was the witness of hundreds of ordinary men and women who were so filled with the life of Christ that their relatives, neighbors, and friends were convinced of sin and attracted to the overflowing life which they saw in these believers (Stoner 1991:27).

With some similar sounding statements the atheist scholar Ipatov characterizes missionary efforts of the Germans in the Soviet Union. According to his statements, Mennonites from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan tried to organize effective work with children and young people (Ipatov 1978:172).

PART II Facing a New Reality, or past Experiences Cannot Be Copied

The most extensive changes in the population of Europe in recent history resulted from migration processes, refugee movements and expulsions of large groups of people

⁸ The statement that criticism of the Bible was worthless is a late realization in the fight against religious thinking in the USSR. Others suggested that there should rather be a new understanding and reinterpretation of customs, moral principles and traditions in the light of the Bible, in order to create Bible criticism in an atheistic sense (Ipatov 1978:199).

toward the end and after the Second World War and as a result of a new distribution of political powers at the conference in Yalta and Potsdam (1945). In his dissertation, John N. Klassen states that since 1950 Germany has received approximately 5 millions immigrants, of which 1,8 millions are Soviet German Resettlers (Klassen 2002:29,49). Approximately 300,000 of these immigrants have an Anabaptist⁹ background, that means they are either Mennonites, Baptists or members of Mennonite Brethren churches. In addition, there are members of Pentecostal churches and the Seventh-Day Adventist churches.

How do these immigrants continue to live their mission as witnessing through lifestyle, as the approach and attitude of the Anabaptists who came from the Soviet Union to Germany?

The first generation of immigrants¹⁰ to Germany continued to see their mission also as witnessing, which meant to live a life that would demonstrate their attitude without too many words. But in the new environment in Germany this language was misunderstood. The difference, which in the Soviet Union was a good basis for conversation, led in Germany to demarcation. For example, the explanation that consumption of alcohol was not permitted for Christians and a sin against God led only to amusement with colleagues and neighbours. To drink much in public and to get drunk was not very popular in Germany anyway.

The immigrants came to Germany with a divided church identity.

1. A Divided Church Identity

Walter Sawatsky made two interesting observations in 1981 about descendents of Anabaptists who lived in the Soviet Union. First, he mentions the loss of a Mennonite faith identity: "all that has remained is the name Mennonite, their characteristic Low German dialect and traditional cooking." And secondly, the loss of leaders: "between 1923 and 1929 approximately 20,000 emigrated to Canada and South America, an immigration that included a disproportionately large number of their most able leaders" (Sawatsky 1981:280).

A group without experienced leaders soon encounters a crisis, which proved to be true also for the Mennonites in the Soviet Union. This had the consequence that, the Mennonite remnant now had several important features. A high percentage of the families consisted of mothers with children whose fathers had disappeared while they were small. The children, due to the upheavals of the war and the subsequent ten years in the camps, had received almost no education, and an educated Mennonite became a rarity... Mennonites had refused to issue an official declaration of loyalty and therefore became an illegal denomination after the war (Sawatsky 1981:280).

⁹ I use the term Anabaptist [Täufer in German is more accurate - ed.] in this article as a summary description of denominations such as Mennonites, Baptists and Mennonite-Brethren churches; these all practice faith baptism.

¹⁰ In the following when speaking about 'immigrants' I mean Resettlers who came to Germany from the former Soviet Union.

We need to remember that, after the Russian Orthodox Church was acknowledged by Stalin in 1943, the Baptists also tried to receive an official approval to carry out worship services. They did receive this permission under the condition that the Russian movement of the Evangelical Christians and the Baptists would unite and together form one association. After the official recognition of this alliance, they received the acknowledgement from the state and were able to meet openly and perform church services.

But it was hard to live as a German in the Soviet Union after World War II. The population believed that all Germans had a fascist attitude. They did not have permission to meet in their own church buildings. Nevertheless, even Germans awakened to a new Christian life. They often found their spiritual home in churches of the already acknowledged Association of the EChB. With that, their own distinct identity was lost. Heinrich Löwen speaks about “relationships which felt into oblivion” and Johannes Reimer dares to call it “Mennobaptism”.

The divided church identity continues to be clearly observed in the controversy about the titles immigrant churches give their churches in Germany. Of the 27 churches that are part of the BTG (Union of Anabaptist Churches), 16 use different church names.¹¹

2. *Colony (Closed Community) Thinking*

One great obstacle for integration and mission is the perception the immigrants have of themselves. They believe themselves to be a minority in the state, the faithful ones who, misunderstood and persecuted, move closer together in a closed community. The order of 1929 with the prohibition of every form of religious and educational work in the Soviet Union and the following persecution caused a development in which every evangelical church became a minority.

Thiessen describes this type of thinking in a new environment as very similar to the old desire of the Anabaptists of the 17th century, to have „a peaceful togetherness, far away from the world...,(this) carries away the hearts of the Germans, which came from the Soviet Union to Germany“ (Thiessen 2005:17). The immigrants want to stay among themselves and so design some areas of life according to their own principles. This creates tensions with the surrounding society. Thiessen continues his description stating that emerging problems were always „solved“ through emigration.¹² Talking, praying and trust in God are replaced by escape! (Thiessen 2005:18).

On their escape route the immigrants reached Germany and met here churches where they did not find a spiritual home.

¹¹ Mennonite-Brethren church, Christian Mennonite-Brethren church, Evangelical-Christians, Baptists (from the Address List of the BTG, 2005).

¹² See Hein (1958:573) in Thiessen (2005: 17): The widely spread emigration of Russian Mennonites to south Russia started with the Manifesto by Tsarina Catharin3 II of 1762 and 1763, where she invited west European peoples to colonize the areas around the Black Sea. In the Manifesto she promised the settlers many liberties.

3. *A Confusing Church Scene in Germany*

The church scene in Germany in the free evangelical area is difficult to portray. The population knows well both large national churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran church. Associations such as the Association of Christian churches (ACK) and the Association of evangelical free churches (VEF) are not very familiar to the general public. Terms like Baptists, Mennonites or Pentecostals are only familiar to insiders and smack of sectarianism.

The abbreviations like FeG (Freie evangelische Gemeinde), BEFG (Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden), AMG (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden) sound unfamiliar and need an explanation. When strangers visit worship services of free churches they sometimes leave with the impression that the term “free” in this case means an individually fixed piety or spirituality style, and this is disgusting.

Just one example. Many of those who had immigrated from the Soviet Union and did not belong to a church at the end of the eighties – early nineties found their spiritual home in the New Apostolic church. Most of them did not have any religious background, except that they knew their parents had been Mennonites or Evangelical Christians. The dress code and the service order in the New Apostolic church often was considered as one of the persuasive elements to join this church. After two or three visits to the worship service and realising certain benefits experienced by the members of this church, many immigrants developed the desire to become a member of the church. Theology did not play a role. The outward appearance was formative and decisive.

Visits to FeG-churches confused many who had been church members in the Soviet Union. They learned that FeG-churches, which were constituted in 1854 in Barmen and in 1874 took the name they have today,¹³ had developed in the opposite direction to Baptist churches of those days, which emphasized the necessity of baptism. For FeG-churches water baptism played an important role only insofar as they baptised only persons who believed in God, but they also approved of infant baptism in that they accepted people into membership who had been baptized in childhood.

Visits to German Baptist churches helped many believers to join these churches. According to some statistics, there are 7.000 adults of the immigrants who joined (Klassen 2002:97). However, soon confusion emerged concerning their theology and they also had to discover that worship order and spiritual formation are quite different in the Soviet Union and in Germany. Some theological discussions estranged the believers and so most immigrant churches distanced themselves from the BEFG and founded their own churches.

In summary one can say that sometimes it was certain differences in theology, but much more often the great differences in Christian life style irritated the immigrants and they

¹³ In the year 1854 the ‘Free evangelical church of Elberfeld and Barmen’ was constituted (Geldbach 2005:225). In the year 1874 the 22 churches established in Wuppertal the ‘Association of free evangelical churches and communion societies’, which in 1928 took the present name (:227).

decided to plant new churches – more than 300 churches in the last 30 years.

PART III Immigrants Witness Their Faith

Faith witness becomes evident while immigrant believers live out their faith in every day life. It is expected from every member to let his/her Christianity become visible through a changed life style.

1. They bear witness to their faith, as they proclaim the Word of God in church services and attend worship services.
2. They bear witness to their faith, as they are prepared to bear „suffering“.
3. They bear witness to their faith, as they conduct missionary work. Social engagement in Germany and beyond its borders is a well known way of doing mission. The mission relief organisation AQUILA, founded in 1990, can be considered a good example. In the year 2005 they delivered humanitarian aid in about 50 trucks, containing 1.000 tons of goods. In addition they supported more than 20 summer camps (Archives of Woldemar Daiker, Aquila).
4. They bear witness to their faith, as they confess their faith in school, at work and with neighbours. Both the verbal proclamation and the social engagement belong for them to the field of church work, the work for the kingdom.

1. Active Cooperation with Existing Training Centres and Organisations

Bible school training was used by members of the immigrant community to receive theological training and to advance in the discipleship process. Bible schools, on the other side, benefited from both the newly won contacts and from the financial involvement of participants, for example the Bible School in Brake, the city of Lemgo. In response to my inquiry I was told that 1/3 of all Bible School students at Brake in Lemgo had a background as immigrants.¹⁴

Members of Anabaptist churches are presently studying at Missionhouse/Bible school Wiedenest, Bergneustadt, in the Bible school Beatenberg, Switzerland, in the Educational and Training centre Bienenberg, Switzerland, at the Independent Theological University Basel, Switzerland and the Free Theological Academy, Gießen, at the Evangelical Theological Faculty, Leuven, Belgium, and at the recently founded Society for Education and Research (GBFE), Bergneustadt.

It is interesting to note that leading administrative and teaching positions in some trainings centres are occupied by former immigrants. For example, Prof. Dr. Johannes Reimer is the president of GBFE, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Löwen is Rector of the Evangelical Theological Faculty, Leuven, while Dr. Peter Penner is Course Leader in Biblical Studies and Director of the Institute of Mission and Evangelism at IBTS. The Independent

¹⁴ The inquiry took place on 9 December 2005. The letter is in my private archives.

University Basel also has since 2004 a former immigrant as Rector, Dr. Jacob Thiessen.¹⁵

At the Bibel Seminar Bonn, the seminary founded by the BTG in 1993, many board members and the school's administration are immigrants of the first or second generation.¹⁶

In addition immigrants founded their own mission organisations. These are:

Voice of Freedom (Friedensstimme e.V.), founded 1976

Logos-International e.V., founded 1986

Prison Ministries (Gefährdetenhilfe Bad Eilsen e.V.), founded 1987

Mission Organisation Friedensbote e.V., founded 1992

Camping Ministry (CFI – Christliche Freizeiten International e.V.), founded 1992

Mission Aid Committee Aquila e.V., founded 1990

Faith and Works (Glaube und Werke e.V.), founded 1998

International Center of World Mission (Internationales Centrum für Weltmission e.V.), founded 1995

Heart for Disabled (Herz für Behinderte e.V.), founded 1999

In addition they founded publishing houses in the following cities:

- Paderborn

- Lage, Logos Verlag GmbH / Lichtzeichen Verlag GmbH

- Gütersloh, Christlicher Medienverlag

- Bielefeld, Missionsverlag

- Frankenthal, Hirtenverlag

- Steinhagen, Samenkorn

- in addition, every large church has its own book shop in their church building.

Often training at a Bible school expands the horizons of immigrants for mission.

Many of them are ready to work in existing organisations and contribute to sharing the gospel in Germany and Europe through newly founded mission organisations and publishing houses – through word and action.

2. *Voluntary Service*

Serving in the church is perceived to be voluntary work done by all church members and is preferred against paid employment of a few people.

According to the principle that each church structure reflects a theology and defines the faith of the members, most members decide to get involved in voluntary service in the church. All church members are encouraged, according to the following scripture passages:

Romans 12:11, to stand up for: "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord."

1 Kor. 16:15-16: "You know that the household of Stephanus were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints."

Church members prefer to receive the reward in heaven, not on earth.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord,

¹⁵ Dr. Thiessen came to Europe from Paraguay.

¹⁶ To the board belongs Nikolai Reimer (1988), Gerhard Willems (1988), Heinrich Derksen (1978), Gerhard Schmidt (1978), Wilhelm Daiker (1979), Paul Traxel (1974) and Willem Wagner. State of December 2005. The school administration consists of Heinrich Derksen and Gerhard Schmidt.

not for men, since you know that you will receive the inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Kol 3:23-24).

Through voluntary involvement all members are challenged to support all areas of church life. For this reason each member gets a chance to serve and through this enjoys a discovery and self-actualization process as personal talents and gifts are revealed. For example, out of the 27 BTG churches only five have hired pastors.¹⁷ The church in Bielefeld, where I serve, has 900 members but just one paid pastor.

3. *Planting New Churches*

Some church planting projects in Germany conducted by BTG-churches can be listed as follows:

1. Dresden, a project of the BTG with a volunteer church planter, Petr Iks;
2. Nürnberg, a project of the MBG-Bielefeld with a volunteer church planter, Jakob Ferber;
3. Hammeln, a project of the MBG-Lemgo with a volunteer church planter;
4. In Leipzig the couple Schott are starting a church. Four BTG-churches have commissioned them in mutual agreement and cooperation.

BTG associated churches also have some church planting projects in other countries:

1. Ukraine, Kutusowka
2. Dourados and Campo Grande, Brasil
3. Indonesia
4. Turkey
5. Kyrgyzstan

In addition they partner with churches in Moldova, Tschelyabinsk, Tulun, Belarus, etc.

Conclusion

It is true that immigrant churches experience biological growth. It means the children and family members visit worship services, become Christians, get baptized and work in the local church. In addition, immigrant churches are a reservoir for thousands of new conversions and baptisms, which would be difficult to conceive in another context.

I have been able to present only a brief glimpse of the situation of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Mission as witness - first and second-generation immigrants witnessing God’s message in Germany – does have its drawbacks, opportunities and certainly opens a wide scope for the church! My prediction for the future is that there will continue to be tensions between immigrants of the first and of the second generation and the line between them will become hardened. The consolidation of positions will lead to the foundation of many new churches.

In some cases this will lead to a break with the tradition. Some will rise from this

¹⁷ BTG statistics of 2005. Churches in Böbingen, Waldbröl, Lemgo, Detmold and Bielefeld have engaged an employed leader and pay him as much as the church can afford.

break and start churches with a German context. Traditional immigrant values will be not very important for them. As new churches they will be shaped by contemporary means of reaching out to people (for example, using concepts of Bill Hybels, etc.) It will not be a homogeneous group.

In addition there will be some churches which foster cultural integration and good member care. These churches will attract people with different backgrounds and bring them into the communion with God and his people. They will hopefully reach out to the hearts of the western population.

A conscious and informed engagement with this complicated subject, mission as witness, and a consensus in many matters will help German immigrants – Baptists, Mennonites, and Evangelical Christians – to be a witness for Christ. A witness where they can live the *Missio Dei* in a European context!

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