Presbyterian
CHURCH IN IRELAND

GLOBAL DISCIPLES
Go Deep Go Wide

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Location: **London, UK**
Mission: **Pastoral ministry and church planting**



During our 20th anniversary celebrations recently, we did agree and said that it is time to refocus and reposition ourselves. This is because we are ministering and interacting with a community which has or is experiencing a profound socio-cultural transition. This will demand us to come up with new strategies as we engage in ministry. It is now evident that we are reaching out to different generations of diaspora community. We have slowly moved from a first-generation immigrant church to one which includes the second and third generation membership. Together with them we also have members from other Denominations and cultures outside Presbyterian and East Africa respectively.

CHALLENGES

The second and third generation have been caught in between their parents (first generation) and their host culture where they have been brought up and had their education. They may feel disconnected and misunderstood and trying to belong to the two is not easy. According to a UK Government report by Huma Haider (2015), this results to identity crisis and also add “Second and third generation immigrant and diaspora communities may experience cultural marginalization which can render them vulnerable to radicalization” This the report suggests, is mostly where religion is separated from culture of origin.

Language becomes a challenge and a barrier in the Church or at home where the first-generation parents did not teach their mother tongue or national language to their children. This becomes evident particularly when they bring them to church and expect them to participate and fully engage in worship where in most cases the parents do it in their mother tongue. On the other hand, even where the English language is used, the accent is always an issue.

Social media- Post covid challenges are still felt several years since lockdown. Many members who had to follow worship services online during lockdown never returned to physical worship. This becomes hard to evaluate the actual level of engagement or commitment. On the other hand, we face a challenge trying to minister to the older generation who are still analogue and also trying to catch up with the younger generation who have mastered the new technology.

OPPORTUNITIES

The first generation who are more rooted to in their home language, culture and traditions are very key members. The church being an important space for immigrant families also functions as a social and cultural safety net as it fulfils its spiritual mandate.

The second and third generation if well mentored and retained are and can be a very strong bridge between the older generation and other cultures found in the host country. This is more important as we navigate the process of transiting from a migrant to a mission church.

Members from other cultures are an opportunity for us to reach out to the world without traveling to their countries of origin. They are a strong reminder of the now famous saying "The world has been brought to our door steps."

As we look ahead, though sometimes it looks challenging, we are encouraged by the words of in Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV) “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

Prayer Points:

- Thank God as we begin the new chapter that the Lord will continue holding us and grant us good health.
- That God will give us wisdom as we interact and minister to different age groups representing different cultures.
- That we will be able to mentor and retain the younger generation and prepare them to take over from us.
- For many young people representing the second and third generation of immigrants that they will be able to overcome identity crisis.