

Barriers to Multicultural Ministry and Possible Solutions

"A problem well stated is a problem half solved" (Charles F. Kettering).

Barrier	Solutions
Racism and ethnocentrism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshops 2. Exposure to people from other cultures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Getting them to give testimonies in church b. Having church members minister in an NESB¹ context
It's not a priority for us!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demographic research and analysis 2. Address this through Bible study 3. Address this through your preaching program 4. Explore the importance of multicultural ministry in and for your denomination
Fear of the unknown - will I be able to do it?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk to people who have already done it 2. Workshops and training programs, especially those which involve experiential exposure to other cultures and religions, e.g. visits to temples and mosque, talking with people, observation visits in areas dominated by particular cultures and ethnicities.
It will bring conflict into the church	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If your church doesn't have conflict it's probably dead! 2. Learn how to handle from those already doing it 3. Prepare the congregation well beforehand 4. ESL² classes are a great place for people to meet across cultures
We already have a strong ministry to English-speaking people, so we'll concentrate on that	<p>If there is already an evangelical ministry to the NESB people in your area then you MAY be right to do this. HOWEVER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If not - these people need to hear the gospel. 2. A strong English speaking ministry is the time to establish a new non-English speaking ministry. 3. You have plenty of volunteers to help you minister to the new people moving into your area. 4. You may have the ability to fund the new ministry while it gets established, you won't be able to do this when your congregation goes into decline.
Pastor: "I have too much on my plate already. I have no energy to do get something else going"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the very near future set aside a day or weekend for prayer and lay it all before the Lord and seek his direction and help. 2. Spend extended time discussing your situation with a ministry consultant and/or with a friend or friends who will give you sharp and helpful insights. 3. To avoid a recurrence of this you need to lead yourself and your church through a thorough planning process. We recommend the Mission Action Planning (MAP) kit for this.³ 4. While your backing will be crucial to any new ministry don't think and act as though it's success is all dependent on you. Give primary responsibility for multicultural ministry to a team, though do not use your busyness and tiredness as an excuse for distancing yourself from this ministry.

<p>Anglo-dominated churches in areas with high NESB concentrations often have fewer gifted members and they are already fully-committed to other ministries.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a sister-church relationship with a resource-loaded church and seek to address this issue together. 2. Develop a multicultural ministry which involves cooperation with other churches geographically close to you. 3. Look for NESB workers who would be willing to join your church and become part of your ministry team. This might include keeping an eye out for students about to graduate from theological or Bible college. Alternatively, consult with strong NESB churches and investigate the possibility of developing a cooperative venture.
<p>The pastor feels pressured to run a 'successful' ministry and feels he needs to emphasise the ministries he knows he can do well</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the very near future set aside a day or weekend for prayer and lay it all before the Lord and seek his direction and help. To whom does he want you to reach out? 2. Spend extended time discussing your situation with a ministry consultant and/or with a friend or friends who will give you sharp and helpful insights. 3. You need to lead yourself and your church through a thorough planning process and, as part of this, identify your Core Biblical Values (will "success" be one of them)? We recommend the Mission Action Planning (MAP) kit for this. 4. Don't think and act as though all ministries are dependent on your gifting and know-how - the Lord gives other Christians gifts as well! If you feel out of your depth look for others to whom you can give primary responsibility for multicultural ministry. Form a team, though do not use your lack of confidence as an excuse for distancing yourself from this ministry. 5. There is nothing wrong with learning something new and making mistakes in the process.
<p>We don't speak their language</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add someone to your ministry team who does speak their language 2. Locate and make available acceptable Christian resources (tracts, books, videos, cassettes) in their language
<p>Lack of acceptable Christian resources in the target language</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact people who are engaged in ministry to this people group. Often resources are already being used, but have not been professionally published and made widely available. Don't limit your search for such resources - use the Internet also to tap resources being used overseas. 2. Take less than adequate resources as a starting point and revamp and improve them (being mindful of copyright issues). 3. Start with an appropriate English language resource and get a native speaker to help you translate it into the other language and help you to make any necessary adjustments for cultural reasons.

¹ NESB = "Non-English Speaking Background".

² ESL = "English as a Second Language". For churches it is usually unrealistic to offer sophisticated, high-level classes for teaching English. However, English conversation classes are a realistic option, though those involved still require solid training and need to teach English in a professional manner.

³ See www.facetofaceintercultural.com.au