



NORWEGIAN  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

# One House, Two Churches?

An empirical study of the relationship between a migrant church and a Church of Norway (Den norske kirke) congregation who share a church building

Stian Holtskog

Supervisor  
Professor Harald Hegstad

This Master's Thesis is carried out as part of the education at MF Norwegian School of Theology and is therefore approved as part of this education.

MF Norwegian School of Theology, Autumn 2012

AVH504: Thesis (25 ECTS)

Profesjonsstudiet i teologi



## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost I would like to thank the members of the *Presbyterian-Methodist Church*, Oslo and the Church of Norway, Stovner Parish for allowing me to conduct this research. I was received with warm hearts and open minds from day one, and this has made the process trouble-free. I am especially grateful to my interviewees and informants, who were flexible and brave enough to sign up for this research. Thanks also to the 73 people who took the time to fill in the questionnaires.

My supervisor, Professor Harald Hegstad, deserves a big thank you for invaluable help in defining the project and for numerous important inputs along the way. I would also like to thank Professor Andreas Heuser for helpful comments and inputs throughout the process, and for inspiring teaching at Tumaini University Makumira, Tanzania, where the idea for this project came into being. Thanks also to Rune Fiskerstrand (KIA) and Lemma Desta (Norges Kristne Råd) for access to important archives and information, and Shewangizaw Teketel and Ole Aleksander Østhassel for discussions and inputs.

Stian Holtskog

December 2012

## **Key Words**

Migrant church, Oslo, Ghana, Church of Norway (Den norske kirke), Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Case Study, Social Capital, Social Integration, Spatial Analysis.

## **Abstract**

This paper focuses on the phenomenon of migrant churches and indigenous churches sharing the same church building. It does so by presenting a case study of a Church of Norway congregation and a Ghanaian migrant church, both located in the Stovner church building. The paper explores and discusses the congregations' understanding of each other, the joint events held, and the significance of using a common space for services. Using theories of space and the theory of social capital, the thesis argues how joint activities and the use of a common space can create a new understanding of unity between congregations. Further, it investigates the possible role of such a relationship in social integration in wider Norwegian society.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Key Words	i
Abstract	i
Table of Contents	ii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Theme and Background	2
1.2 Research Problem	3
1.3 Limitations and Clarifications	4
1.4 Materials and Method	6
1.4.1 Selection of Congregations	6
1.4.2 Observations and Questionnaires	7
1.4.3 Sampling and Interviews	7
1.4.4 Methods for Analysing the Material	8
1.4.5 Ethical Reflections	9
1.5 Previous Research	9
1.5.1 Selected American and European Studies	9
1.5.2 Norwegian Research	9
1.5.3 Ghanaians in Norway	11
1.6 Theoretical Perspectives	12
1.6.1 Theories on the Role of Language in Migrant Churches	12
1.6.2 Theories of Social Capital and Social Integration	13
1.6.3 Theories of Space	15
1.7 Structure of the Thesis	17
1.8 Summary	17
<b>CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 CoN Stovner and Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo	18
2.2 The Church Building in Stovner	18
2.3 CoN Stovner Parish	19
2.4 Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo	21
2.4.1 Background and Start-up of the Church	21
2.4.2 Members and Leadership	23
2.4.3 Church Profile and Target Group	25
2.4.4 The Presbyterian-Methodist <i>Koinonia</i> and International Networks	26
2.4.5 Finances and Resources	27
2.4.6 Activities	28
2.4.7 Sunday Service	28
2.5 Summary	30
<b>CHAPTER 3: WHAT ARE THE CONGREGATIONS DOING TOGETHER?</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1 International Services	32
3.2 Joint Events and Invitations	33
3.3 Common Challenges in Reaching Children and Youth	34
3.4 Summary	36
<b>CHAPTER 4: THE CONGREGATIONS' VIEW OF EACH OTHER</b>	<b>38</b>
4.1 Norwegians' Description of the Migrant Church	38
4.2 Migrants' Description of the CoN Congregation	41
4.2.1 Experiences from CoN Services	41
4.2.2 Thoughts about the International Services	42
4.2.3 Negative Aspects of Interaction with Norwegians	43
4.2.4 Finding a Pastor	44
4.3 Written Presentations	45
4.3.1 Articles about PMC in Kirkenytt Parish Magazine	45
4.3.2 International Services in Kirkenytt and on the Website	46

4.4 Summary	47
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONSEQUENCES FOR IDENTITY</b>	<b>48</b>
5.1 Language and Culture that Unite and Divide	48
5.2 Balance and Levels in Cooperation	49
5.3 The Greater “We” - A New Space of Unity	50
5.4 Cooperation as a Way to Social Integration	52
5.5 Hope for the Future	53
5.6 Summary	54
<b>CHAPTER 6: LESSONS FOR RENEWED PRACTICE</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>58</b>
7.1 Summary of Findings on the Congregations	58
7.2 Summary of Findings on the Church Relationship	59
7.3 Significance of the Study	61
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>76</b>
Appendix 1: Information Letter to Interviewees	76
Appendix 2: Interview Guides	78
Appendix 3: KIA Statistics	82
Appendix 4: Questionnaires and Answers	84



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

During my five years as a student in Oslo, I have been in contact with several immigrants of different origin and religion. Because of my studies, I have spent five months in Mali and ten months in Tanzania. Furthermore, I am a member of an international church in Oslo, which welcomes members from all continents. I found it surprising that among the great number of Christian immigrants in Oslo, there are very few who attend a Norwegian church. There could be several reasons for this, such as the different language, age group, traditions and so on. I believe, however, that worshipping together would encourage and help congregants to learn new things, develop friendships, and facilitate social integration. Hence, I found it both interesting and necessary to carry out research in multicultural interaction within churches. As my contribution to the furtherance of such interaction, I have conducted a research project that investigates the relationship between a local Church of Norway congregation and a Ghanaian immigrant congregation who share the same church building. What happens when the migrants fill the local CoN church building with a new and different liturgy and spirituality? How is this relationship seen by the Norwegians and by the Ghanaians, and what are their challenges?

### ***1.1 Theme and Background***

The number of immigrants in Norway has now exceeded 650 000 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2012a). Several studies have been conducted about immigrants in Norway, but there is limited research on Christian immigration and migrant congregations. Recent statistics suggest that approximately 60% of immigrants in Norway come from countries with a Christian majority (Verdens Gang, 2009). In Oslo, probably more non-ethnic Norwegians attend Sunday services than ethnic Norwegians on an ordinary Sunday (Fiskerstrand, 2011, p. 5). The number of migrant churches in Oslo is growing towards 100, and the number of active members in these churches is more than 6300 (Fiskerstrand, 2011, p. 5).<sup>1</sup> Several migrant churches use, and even fill, the Church of Norway (CoN) buildings for their services. In Oslo, 16 CoN congregations are housing 21 migrant churches of different denominational and ethnic

---

<sup>1</sup> In the UK, people of African/Afro-Caribbean origin account for 10% of churchgoers, 44% of them in London; including other non-whites the total is 58%. In Paris there are 250 ethnic Protestant churches, chiefly black African, and in Germany at least 1100 foreign-language Protestant churches with some 80 000 members (Jenkins, 2007, pp. 92-95; see also Jackson & Passarelli, 2008; Wijzen, 2009).

backgrounds, and 12 Norwegian free churches are housing 23 migrant churches.<sup>2</sup> These numbers tell us that almost half<sup>3</sup> of the migrant churches in Oslo are being housed by different Norwegian Christian churches and denominations. As this now is a phenomenon to be found all over Oslo, I will provide a descriptive case study on one of these relationships (Yin, 2012, p. 49ff). This is a research within the discipline of practical theology so I will use methods and theories from sociology and the science of religion in order to describe certain praxes, and from this try to make new theories that can, if necessary suggest adjustments to the existing praxes. The theme of investigation is, as mentioned, the relations between migrant churches and the Church of Norway (CoN). Migration and church is a wide field of study, and this research will focus on a Ghanaian Christian migrant church (Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo, PMC) and a Norwegian local CoN congregation in one of the suburbs of Oslo.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

This paper is a case study investigating how the Church of Norway (CoN) and the migrant churches relate to each other. What do the ethnic Norwegian church attenders think about the migrant churches and what do the migrants think about CoN? Do they want to have a close relationship, and, if so, is the relationship only a practical solution to obtaining a place to celebrate their Sunday services? Are the Norwegians complying in order to “be kind” and confirm their own self-image of being generous? Who initiated the relationship and who “wants” it to continue? The research problem is this: *What characterises the relationship between the two congregations and how does this relationship influence the identity of the congregations?* Before I attempt to give answers to the questions above, I will pose three sub-questions:

1. *What are the congregations doing together? What are the pros and cons?*
2. *How do they understand themselves in relation to the other and the joint events?*
3. *What is the importance of using a common room?*

The research consists of interviews with two leaders and two members of the local Norwegian congregation (CoN) and a former leader and a group of members and leaders from the Ghanaian migrant congregation. All interviewees were asked for their thoughts regarding cooperation and their views on the other congregation. As background to the interviews, two

---

<sup>2</sup> Information gathered by the researcher from a KIA (Kristent Interkulturelt Arbeid - “Christian Intercultural Work”) archive of all migrant churches in Oslo. See Appendix 3 for more details. The numbers may now be higher.

<sup>3</sup> Forty-four out of approximately 90 migrant churches in Oslo. These numbers vary.

different surveys were conducted. One questionnaire was distributed to 46 Norwegians at the CoN service and the other was distributed to 27 Ghanaians at the Presbyterian-Methodist service.

### **1.3 Limitations and Clarifications**

This paper investigates the relationship between the two churches from a practical theological, Norwegian, Christian perspective by using the *practice-theory-practice* model of Browning (1991).<sup>4</sup> Hence, perspectives and theories from sociology and the science of religion will be brought in only when they can benefit understanding. There are several models to describe the aspects of the worldwide Church, and the fellowship, or *koinonia*, church model is used as a basic ecclesiology for this thesis. The *koinonia* (Greek) or *communio* (Latin) model is based on the New Testament, and stresses the fellowship aspect of the Church. Hegstad (1999) observes that the *koinonia* model shows the relational dimension of the Church. He describes the Church as a fellowship in six sentences (Hegstad, 1999, p. 19; see also Hegstad, 2011): the Church is the believers' fellowship with a Triune God, it is the fellowship of the Sacraments, the fellowship of confession, the fellowship of mission, the fellowship of *diakonia* (serving and caring for others), and, finally, it is a fellowship that resists all kinds of divides within the Church. Accordingly, the basic question for every church is how it understands the dimensions of fellowship (Hegstad, 2012, p. 10). The answer to this question will affect the concrete relations and networks within and around the congregation.

This paper is a case study, looking at the relationship between one local, Lutheran Church of Norway congregation and the Ghanaian-based Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo. There are several CoN congregations housing a number of migrant churches, but because of time limitations their relationships will not be described in this thesis.<sup>5</sup> In relation to non-Norwegians, the terms “immigrants” and “migrants” are used as defined by *Statistisk Sentralbyrå* (SSB). SSB applies two different terms when describing people with a foreign background; “immigrant” and “Norwegian-born person with immigrant parents”:

An **immigrant** is a person resident in Norway who was born outside Norway whose parents were also born outside Norway. A **Norwegian-born** person with immigrant parents is a person born in Norway

---

<sup>4</sup> The argument of *practical reason* explained in Browning (1991, pp. 10-11).

<sup>5</sup> As seen above, there are at least 16 CoN congregations in Oslo, housing 21 migrant churches of different denominations and ethnicities. For more about the selection, see 1.4.1.

with both parents born outside Norway, who additionally has four grandparents who were all born outside Norway (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2012b, researcher's translation).<sup>6</sup>

In the later descriptions of people of Ghanaian origin or descent, both of these categories will be included. Many terms are used to define the type of churches studied in this paper: migrant church/congregation, immigrant church/congregation, Diaspora church/congregation, ethnic church/congregation, and so on. The Ghanaian church described in this paper is an ethnic/mono-ethnic church, as it only has Ghanaian members. Other migrant churches could be multiethnic or international. The term migrant church is the main term used to describe both ethnic/mono-ethnic and multiethnic migrant churches in this paper. There are several terms describing a church and the people in it. In this thesis, *congregation* is used to describe the people, and *parish* is used to describe the local, administrative districts of CoN. Sometimes descriptions of the members as “Norwegians” and “Ghanaians” occur. This is done only for the sake of making a distinction between the groups.<sup>7</sup>

Vad Nilsen (2009, pp. 45-46) offers definitions of four possible outcomes when immigrants arrive in a new country; *assimilation*, *marginalisation*, *segregation* and *integration*. *Assimilation* is when newcomers are welcomed, but they are expected to adapt to the behaviour of the majority. *Marginalisation* happens when immigrants do not relate to the majority and at the same time give up their own identity. Consequently, they become outsiders in society. *Segregation* happens when newcomers do not relate to the new society, but only hold on to their own culture. *Integration* is when newcomers relate to the new environment while still keeping their own identity. Although integration is a positive term as used by Vad Nilsen, Mubiru (2008) totally rejects use of the term in a church setting. He says: “I do not need to be integrated, but I need to be welcomed” (2008, p. 45). Gullaksen (2009, p. 21) similarly insists on the usage of the term *including*. Including is defined as allowing everyone to understand, be involved and participate in all levels of church activity. The term *include* may also be challenged, as there are tendencies among Norwegian churches to want to *include* immigrants but not really to *involve* them.<sup>8</sup> Owing to the different notions, the term *integration* is avoided in this paper. Valenta's (2008, p. 218) theories of *social integration* are described in the subchapter on theoretical perspectives (1.6.2).

---

<sup>6</sup> Martikainen (2009, p. 176) uses a definition where “second generation is defined as children who have at least one immigrant parent”.

<sup>7</sup> Most of the members of the Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo are Norwegian citizens and could therefore also be described as Norwegians.

<sup>8</sup> Baptist integration pastor Peter Ngaidam (Workshop about migrant churches, Oslo, 9 November 2012).

## **1.4 Materials and Method**

This is a case study, and the primary sources of information are five semi-structured interviews and one semi-structured group interview. Additionally, the researcher did participant observation on 17 church events. As a background source for the interviews questionnaires were completed by 73 church attenders. These materials are gathered for the purpose of this study only, and are presented in chapters 2 to 5. There are few written sources for this research, but those used are the parish magazines,<sup>9</sup> annual reports of the CoN congregation, and websites of both congregations. The purpose of this research is to find out more about the relationships between migrant churches and Church of Norway (CoN) congregations. Within the limits of 25 ECTS it has not been possible to research several congregations. The relationship between CoN Stovner congregation and the Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo (PMC) has therefore been chosen as the object of study. The members of CoN Stovner are mostly ethnic Norwegians, whereas all members of PMC are of Ghanaian origin. The relationship between these two congregations who share one church building will be the main area of interest. Nevertheless, for the sake of understanding the context, it will also be necessary to say something about the different congregations and their background.

### **1.4.1 Selection of Congregations**

The criteria for finding an object of research for this study were a Church of Norway (CoN) parish housing a migrant church and its actual relationship with it, which had to be more than a landlord-and-tenant arrangement. Three parishes were suggested; Haugerud parish and a Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean Lutheran Church, Nordberg parish and an Oromo-speaking Ethiopian Evangelical Church, and Stovner Parish housing the Ghanaian, Twi-speaking Presbyterian-Methodist Church. The Stovner church building, where the researcher was warmly welcomed by both congregations, turned out to be the place which fitted the criteria best. After the decision was taken to conduct the study in Stovner, other possibilities also came up (see Appendix 3). Despite this, however, Stovner remains the best choice within the context of the CoN.

---

<sup>9</sup> Parish magazine (Norwegian “menighetsblad”) known as *Kirkenytt*, published by the parish four times a year.

### **1.4.2 Observations and Questionnaires**

In the period from March to November 2012 (mainly September), the researcher did participant observation at 17 events in the two congregations. These comprised five Sunday services and a congregational meeting in CoN, five Sunday services, a congregational meeting and a Bible study evening in PMC, a joint church jubilee service, a joint concert event, and two joint international services. Field notes were taken after observation of all these events. To get an overview, and as a background for the interviews, two short surveys were conducted (see Appendix 4). Fifty questionnaires were prepared for each of the CoN and PMC services, with the aim of getting approximately 30 respondents from each congregation. The CoN questionnaire was distributed at the church coffee after the church service, and 46 answers were received. The high response rate was largely down to the introduction of the researcher by the Chair of the Church Board and the fact that the survey was conducted at a Sunday service which attracted 150 people, among them candidates for confirmation and their parents. In the PMC service, the researcher was also introduced by one of the leaders of the congregation. Owing to small size and low attendance of the congregation, it was not possible to get enough answers in just one Sunday. It was therefore decided to continue the survey on the following Sunday. This produced a total of 27 answers from PMC. As already mentioned, the purpose of the surveys was mainly to get a background for the interviews. The number of answers might give statistically reliable answers compared with the number of active members. Questions asked in the questionnaires have several weaknesses, however, and these results are not accorded strong significance in the paper.

### **1.4.3 Sampling and Interviews**

The criteria for interviewees were people who had been active members or leaders of the congregations for some time and who therefore knew something about the relationship between the congregations. In the process of finding the interviewees, the *snowball sampling* approach was used (Bryman, 2012, p. 424). The CoN pastor and the CoN church coordinator were interviewed first. During the interviews they were also requested to suggest other interviewees from both congregations. The church coordinator in particular, with more than 15 years of experience, came up with many suggestions. After this, interviews were conducted with two CoN members; a former pastor and a congregant with an East African background. An interview was also conducted with a PMC member who had been attending CoN Stovner for some years before PMC came into being. An interview with a leader after a PMC service elicited the suggestion of bringing in the whole Church Board of five members,

and additionally two students who, it was said, “could contribute with other ideas”. The researcher accepted this idea of a group interview rather than one-on-one interviews, despite the risk of biased answers. It turned out, however, that the group interview was a good idea. The students were a little reluctant to talk, but one reason for this could be that they had been members of PMC for fewer than six months. Still, it must be said that some of the answers from the group interview might be biased, and that could be a weakness of the thesis. The other interviews, however, especially the one with the PMC member, could be used for comparison to reveal possible biased answers. All interviewees were given an information letter about the project and their right to withdraw consent (see Appendix 1). During the interviews, the researcher used the semi-structured interview model, referring quite freely to a prepared interview guide (see Appendix 2) and asking follow-up questions when needed. The interviews with the pastor and the church coordinator were conducted in their offices, the group interview was conducted in church, and the remaining three interviews were held at a café, a workplace, and in the Norwegian School of Theology, respectively. The interviews lasted from 45 minutes to more than an hour and a half. All interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed. The recordings were then deleted. Some interviewees preferred to use English, whereas others spoke Norwegian. For the quotes given in Norwegian, the researcher’s translations are placed in the main text, and the original quotes can be found in the footnotes.

#### **1.4.4 Methods for Analysing the Material**

In this paper a combined *inductive* and *deductive* approach is used. This might be called an *abductive* approach (Bryman, 2012, p. 401). *Coding* was done with a focus on eliciting information about the relationship between the two congregations under study. This means that it was necessary to look at how the congregants talked about each other, and what they thought about the joint events. Through the coding it was possible to establish concepts and categories to help the researcher in the process of analysis. *Theoretical saturation* was reached when sufficient information, concepts and categories were available from both the collection and coding of data. A process of constant comparison, maintaining a close connection between data and conceptualisation, helped to develop and revise concepts and categories (Bryman, 2012, p.568). The data found in the analysis were investigated in line with theories of *social capital*, *social integration* and *theories of space*. These theories are explained further in 1.6.

### **1.4.5 Ethical Reflections**

This empirical study aims at describing the relationship between migrant churches and Norwegian congregations as a phenomenon. Therefore, the focus is not primarily on presenting every detail about the Stovner case. Accordingly, some details may have been changed in the text in order to protect the anonymity of informants and interviewees.

## **1.5 Previous Research**

Mission and migration has been a popular topic among scholars within the last 20 years. Therefore a selection of literature has been made in order to present some of the studies that are seen as interesting and relevant for this research.

### **1.5.1 Selected American and European Studies**

Several large American studies on migrant churches have been performed. It should be sufficient here to mention some of the most significant and recent ones, namely Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2002, 2010), Foley and Hoge (2007) and Stepick, Rey and Mahler (2009). Akinade (2007), Biney (2007), Tettey (2007) and Essamuah (2011) have written about Ghanaian migrant churches in the USA and Canada, and are therefore also worth mentioning. In Europe, the most recent and significant publications come from Germany and the Netherlands. Simon (2002, 2004, 2008), Nieswand (2005) and Währisch-Oblau (2000, 2010) have all studied migrant churches in Germany, whereas Jansen and Stoffels (2008) have led significant research on migrant churches in Amsterdam. The British-Nigerian scholar Adogame (2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2008, 2011), and Munck-Fairwood (2004, 2008) in Denmark have also given contributions worth noting. Practices from abroad could also fit the situation in Norway. Experiences and observations from abroad are to some extent, and when relevant, compared with the findings from the research presented in this paper.

### **1.5.2 Norwegian Research**

The study of Christian immigrants and migrant churches is still quite new in Norway. When preparing for this thesis the researcher only found some Master's theses and a couple of other articles and reports describing immigrants and their churches. Three quite recent reports should be mentioned. Ødegård (2010) studied integration and social capital in organisations in a multicultural community, and Loga (2011) looked at voluntary organisations as

multicultural meeting-places. Synnes (2012) made a comparative study of four Pentecostal churches (Ethiopian, Filipino, Spanish-speaking and pan-African, English-speaking) and one Roman Catholic (multicultural) congregation in Oslo. Synnes's study is based on an analysis of church materials, some participant observation, and 22 interviews with migrant leaders and members. The remaining Norwegian literature on the field can be divided chiefly into two groups. These are papers with migrant churches as the main object of study, and papers investigating how to include immigrants in Norwegian (multicultural) churches.

Four papers were found with migrant churches as the main object of study. Hansen (2007) studied the ethnic Scandinavian-Chinese Christian Church in Oslo. In this sociology of religion paper she looked at the organisational structure, the members and activities, and the church's relations with society. Laundal (2008) wrote about African Pentecostalism in Oslo. She described and compared two African migrant congregations in Oslo, focusing on aspects of cosmology and gender. Horn-Hanssen (2007) studied the Filipino group in St Olav Roman Catholic Church in Oslo, focusing on religious and national identity. This history of religion paper looks at patriotism, family relations, continuity and discontinuity in the migrant context. Austigard (2008) studied a Spanish-speaking group within a Norwegian Pentecostal church. Her paper also describes the Norwegian Pentecostal church, but as the research questions are focused on the Spanish-speaking group, Austigard's paper is mainly concerned with the migrant congregation.

There is a growing interest among some Norwegians establishing multicultural and open-to-newcomers congregations. Vad Nilsen (2008, 2009), Gullaksen (2009), Myklebust (2010), and Ekeland (2011) have all written papers on aspects of integrating and including immigrants in Norwegian congregations. Vad Nilsen studied three Norwegian CoN congregations, Gullaksen studied one CoN congregation, Ekeland looked at a Norwegian Free Church, and Myklebust compared two CoN congregations and a Norwegian Baptist church. An interesting study on a Norwegian Free Church that also had a migrant church using its facilities was conducted by Gulsett (2007). This qualitative study is based on participant observation and 14 interviews. The migrant church held services in a mother tongue. Additionally, there were joint services four times a year, when both groups gathered for a service and coffee. Gulsett described the joint activities as welcomed by some, but also as challenging because of differences in language, planning and spirituality.

Solli's (2011) and Alghasi, Eide and Hylland Eriksen's (2012) studies are also of some interest as both of these projects were conducted in the Groruddalen area, near Stovner. Solli's study of the *Bait-un-Nasr*, an Ahmadiyya Muslim mosque in Furuset, focuses on the impact of the mosque on the local identity. Alghasi et al. have investigated different aspects of being children and youth in the multicultural Alna area.

### 1.5.3 Ghanaians in Norway

Since Ghana<sup>10</sup> gained its independence from the British Empire in 1957, the country has suffered from several coups and a series of political instabilities (Ghanaian Embassy, 2010). As a result, many Ghanaians have left their home country in search of a better life. Daswani (2010, p. 474) explains:

Migration was seen as a way to survive the political and economic turmoil of the 1970s, exacerbated by the structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s. Two million people left Ghana between 1974 and 1981; the majority were from southern Ghana.

In January 2012, 742 Ghanaian citizens were living in Norway (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2012c). The total number of people of Ghanaian origin in Norway is 2 165. The total number of people of non-Norwegian origin is 655 170, and the total number of people of African origin is 79 714 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2012a). Even though there are quite a number of Ghanaians and people of Ghanaian origin in Norway, nothing appears to have been written about Ghanaian religion in Norway.<sup>11</sup> Papers from abroad will therefore be used as points of reference and for comparison.

---

<sup>10</sup> British Colony of the Gold Coast until 6 March, 1957.

<sup>11</sup> The identities of the African congregations in Laundal's (2008) paper are undisclosed. Accordingly, there is a possibility that these congregations have Ghanaian members.

## **1.6 Theoretical Perspectives**

As a background to the analysis, some theories that shed light on and help analyse the findings of this research are presented below.

### **1.6.1 Theories on the Role of Language in Migrant Churches**

Common to most migrant churches is that their members speak a language that is not the majority language in the country they live in. Especially in the ethnic migrant churches, the topic of language is important. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000b), using ethnographic studies in thirteen immigrant congregations in Houston, Texas, identified some tendencies concerning language. As a background, Ebaugh and Chafetz use a three-stage model devised by Mark R. Mullins in 1987 (2000b, p. 433). The first stage is characterised by a strong leadership of first-generation immigrants. In the second stage, bilingual religious leaders are brought in to “conduct services in both the native language and in English”. The third stage “occurs in which ethnic churches are transformed into multi-ethnic congregations” with English as the main (or only) language. Another model is the six-stage model devised by Goette in 1993 (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000b, p. 434). This model is similar to that of Mullins, but more detailed. It puts more focus on the second generation’s need for, at least temporarily, a parallel congregation using the language of the country they live in.

Ebaugh and Chafetz suggested that migrant churches became a comfort zone where migrants could forget about the struggles in their new homeland. The use of their native language made the members more committed to the congregation, and sometimes it also led to the religious conversion of fellow language-speakers (2000b, pp. 437-438). As the immigrant congregations developed, and the second generation grew up, many congregations started to offer English language services for the youth. In most churches, this was not successful. One reason for this could be that some of the second-generation youth and children were “embarrassed by the old-country flavour of their congregations, and even by their parents’ accent and English language errors” (2000b, p. 441). This is clearly a challenge. A number of congregations have changed their language to English. They might also have developed multiethnic visions for their congregations, hoping to attract people with other ethnic backgrounds. So far, this has not been successful, as most of these congregations are still dominated by one ethnic group and their descendants. Also within congregations consisting of different ethnic groups, there seem to be challenges of language. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000b,

p. 444) explain that there is often a tendency to self-segregation, and a “series of ethnically/linguistically based cliques exist” within congregations. This happens despite the fact that all members of these congregations have mastered English. Another challenge within this type of congregation is jealousy between the language groups. A dilemma here is whether they should teach and use the different languages, or use only one common language for all church events.

The language question raises several dilemmas for migrant churches. Should the second generation be taught the native language, should they have their own services, or should the whole congregation change the language of the service? Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000b, p. 447) state in this context that “in general, it appears that congregations that focus most strongly on recreating the ethnic ambiance of the old country are most likely to alienate their youth”. We can see that the most attractive feature to immigrant members, the language, is exactly what alienates their American-born descendants. It should be added that in some cases the second generation has rejoined their parents’ congregation after some time. In the Oslo area, at least two deliberate strategies have been chosen as solutions to the dilemma. The Ethiopian Evangelical Oromo Church has employed Norwegian theological students to teach Sunday School and lead the youth work (Oromo pastor, personal communication, September 14, 2012). The Norwegian Pentecostal Filadelfia Church is planning to hold a Norwegian service and five migrant services at the same time, in different rooms. Simultaneously they will have a joint Sunday school and Youth Programme for children and youth from all these congregations (KIA Oslo leader, personal communication, September 25, 2012).

### **1.6.2 Theories of Social Capital and Social Integration**

The theory of *social capital* was first used by Pierre Bourdieu in 1980 (Furseth, 2008, p. 150). It was further developed by Putnam (2000), and it has become a popular theory for describing immigrant groups. In short, the theory claims that one can measure *social capital* just as one can measure *financial capital*. Putnam (2000, p. 22) distinguishes between two kinds of social capital, namely *bonding* social capital and *bridging* social capital.<sup>12</sup> Bonding social capital has beneficial aspects such as keeping members of a group close together, and helping each other, although there could also be challenges; for example, if the group will not relate to outside

---

<sup>12</sup> *Linking* social capital, used to describe the interaction between people who are on different levels in the hierarchy, is not further described in this thesis (Woolcock, 2001).

groups. Bridging social capital helps the group to broaden the focus, and establish contacts with other groups and networks. Most groups will use both types of capital, however, as “many groups simultaneously bond along some social dimensions and bridge across others” (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). It has been assumed that migrant communities have a low social capital, but in recent research this assumption has been questioned as much depends, for instance, on “whether the congregations are oriented outward or inward” (Furseth, 2008, p. 157). Furseth (2008, p. 159) points to what she calls *negative* social capital, which leads to exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on group members (demands and expectations) or restrictions on personal freedom. As regards migrant congregations, focusing on the social capital could help us to find out more about how the community (or congregation) members relate to each other. Who has more social capital and who has less within the group? The people controlling the social capital within the group would also have significant power, and ability to affect the decisions made in the group. Another interesting aspect is bridging social capital and how one group relates to other groups. In this research we have several examples of this, as CoN Stovner and PMC relate to each other, PMC relates to networks in Ghana, CoN Stovner relates to the Church of Norway, and both groups relate to wider Norwegian society.

Valenta (2008) sees the social capital aspects from another angle, namely that of *social integration*. He claims that Norwegian society has focused chiefly on immigrants’ “low participation in work-life, spatial segregation and their alleged lack of interest in cultural adjustment”, thus forgetting the aspect of social integration (Valenta, 2008, p. 218). Moreover, he argues that if immigrants have frequent and intensive bridging with Norwegians, it could even reduce the quality of their social life. The reason for this is a feeling of being “second-class citizens”, constantly struggling to understand life in their new homeland. Instead, Valenta notes that some immigrants create a social network of two zones, a primary zone of compatriots and a secondary zone of indigenous locals and others:

Immigrants progressively acknowledge that it is not easy to reproduce positive identities in interactions and relations with indigenous locals. As a consequence, they develop social networks made up of two zones, primary and secondary. The first is composed, almost entirely, of relations with compatriots: the second includes relations with indigenous locals. The last one, which primarily contains acquaintances, gradually expands as immigrants meet new people, change jobs and flats, and meet new Norwegian workmates, neighbours, etc. (Valenta, 2008, p. 222).

Further Valenta argues that this strategy of bonding and bridging produces *synchronic identities* and in time leads to better social integration in society. Consequently, friends and

acquaintances of the secondary zone become *symbols of acceptance*, helping immigrants to construct an identity so they are included and respected in their new social environment (Valenta, 2008, p. 223).

### **1.6.3 Theories of Space**

*Spatial theories* help us to see how different rooms and contexts affect our expectations and our behaviour. Soja (1996) wrote an entire book, *Thirdspace*, about why we should think differently about space. These theories could be helpful for studying two congregations that use the same church room. CoN Stovner and PMC use, and sometimes have services together in, the same room although they have totally different spiritual and cultural expectations. Knott (2005, pp. 127-128) divides rooms into three categories; *physical* rooms, *social* rooms and *mental* rooms. These rooms are not separate, but work together. Physical rooms are what we can experience through our senses, the material, but also have global geographical connections with the place of origin, for example. Social rooms are rooms of communication; language, symbols and categories. Mental rooms are about notions, thoughts and feelings of the individual, having both imagined and actual form. These three aspects work together and influence each other. Whereas the social and physical rooms are open and accessible, the mental rooms are only available indirectly through the social rooms.

Knott is inspired by Lefebvre's (1974/2005, p. 33) spatial triad that also divides space into three parts; *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space*. The representation of space, also mentioned as "conceived space" or "conceptualised space", is the "space of capital, it is objective capital being factories, monuments, towers and office blocks". These are buildings that represent ideology, knowledge and power, and influence the way we think about the world (Knott, 2005, p. 36). *Representational space*, described as "spaces of representation" or "lived space", is "interpretations or symbols of cosmological representations", such as the village church, graveyard and belfry (Knott, 2005, p. 37). *Spatial practice*, or "perceived space", structures the daily life of people, and is "experienced through practical perception, through commonsense, and is taken for granted" (Knott, 2005, p. 39). Knott and Lefebvre's ways of explaining space show two different aspects of spatial theory. They also reveal that these are complex theories that are difficult to compare. Knott's theory of physical, social and mental room/space will be given the main emphasis in this study, however.

Several works (Knott, 2009; Knott & McLoughlin, 2010; Tweed, 2006; Warf & Arias, 2009; Werbner, 2002) describe theories of space. As a consequence of globalisation, world trade, migration and the digital mass media, the aspects of rooms have, in addition to the aspects of time and society, gained in importance. Knott (2005, p. 53) describes Christine Chivallon's study of African-Caribbean immigrants in Britain in 2001:

Her spatial analysis of interviews conducted with black church members in the south of England demonstrates how a mental space is evoked which liberates the speakers from the crushing discourse of racial difference and racism, and offers the possibility of transcendence and connection with others, both black and white.

Knott draws on this to emphasise how religion is a “diasporic resistance” to the racial divides and boundaries of British society. Further, she describes two major strategies for organising immigrant religion; “to reproduce familiar institutions and practices which barely engage with the new setting at all, or to create living spaces of representation from the resources of both the old and new” (Knott, 2005, p. 55). As an aspect of this, “global and local scales are interpenetrated, with the opening up of new cultural spaces and places that combine universalising and particularising trends ... diasporic space and the outpost of transnational communities” (Knott, 2005, p. 128). Moreover, Knott strongly suggests that space is actively practised, and new spaces come into being through the processes of migration and resettlement. The spatial theories may help us to looking at the two congregations in this study. The Togolese scholar Adamavi-Aho Ekué (2008, p. 26; see also Tettey, 2007) shows how physical, social and mental rooms are intertwined:

The attractiveness of the migrant churches is not restricted to the feeling of cultural ease they sponsor, but more so to their ability in creating spaces where this transitional situation can be articulated in a familiar symbolic language, drawing from a common world-view and in ritual action. In worship, in the religious praxis, migrants are sending strong signs of self-esteem, pride and belief, but also signs against the experience of injustice, suffering and alienation. The churches founded by migrants respond to this tension between vulnerability and empowerment and succeed in offering an adequate articulation.

## **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

In order to try to give some answers to the research problem *What characterises the relationship between the two congregations and how does this relationship influence the identity of the congregations?*, the background of the congregations will be described (Chapter 2), then the following three chapters will try to address the sub-questions *What do the congregations do together? What are the pros and cons?* (Chapter 3), *How do they understand themselves in relation to the other and the joint events?* (Chapter 4), and *What importance has the usage of a common room?* (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 comments on lessons for a renewed practice, and in Chapter 7 we will return to the research problem with a summary and conclusions will be drawn.

## **1.8 Summary**

In this introductory chapter, the background and research problem have been presented. This case study focuses on the relationship between a Norwegian CoN congregation and a Ghanaian PMC congregation sharing a church building. This is done by looking at what they do together, how they understand each other, and what importance use of the same church room has. The sources of information are six qualitative interviews, assisted by two short surveys, participant observation of selected events, and a few textual sources. The method for analysing the material is a combination of inductive and deductive, a so-called *abductive* approach (Bryman, 2012, p. 401).

Little research has been conducted on Christian immigrant religion in Norway. Therefore some literature from abroad is presented in addition to relevant Master's theses and reports from Norway. Background information includes theories on the role of language in migrant churches, theories of social capital and social integration, and theories of space. We will now look at the background of the congregations in this study.

## **Chapter 2: Background**

### **2.1 CoN Stovner and Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo**

The geographical area called Groruddalen is estimated to be populated by more than 150 nationalities (Kirkenytt, 2012/3, p. 5). Several of them have established their own ethnic Christian churches. Some of the migrant churches are using buildings belonging to CoN, the Church of Norway (see Appendix 3). In Stovner, the church building is used by the Norwegian-speaking CoN congregation every Sunday at 11.0 a.m., and at 2.0 p.m. the same room is used by the Ghanaian, Twi- and English-speaking Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo. Most of the Ghanaians have been in Norway for several years, many of them hold Norwegian passports, and their children and youth might even consider themselves more Norwegian than Ghanaian. Twice a year the two congregations celebrate a so-called “international service” together in Norwegian with translation to Twi. This chapter investigates the background of the church relationship in Stovner. The main sections present the church building (2.2), the indigenous CoN congregation (2.3), and the Ghanaian migrant Presbyterian-Methodist Church (2.4).

### **2.2 The Church Building in Stovner**

The church building is an *arbeidskirke*, literally translated as “working church”, a building constructed for multipurpose uses. The outdoor surface is maroon brick, and except for a separate belfry and a cross on the roof, the church building has few signs indicating that it is a traditional church.<sup>13</sup> Neither is there a cemetery nearby. The rooms and furniture are designed for multipurpose uses. The nave has no benches, but is furnished with 210 chairs that can easily be moved when needed. A sliding wall between the nave and the church hall gives the possibility of adding another 250 seats to the capacity of the nave. The church building also has a vestry and a baptistry furnished respectively for 40 and 60 people. The vestry and baptistry can be connected to the church hall and nave by sliding walls. When all the sliding walls are opened and extra seats are added, a total of around 600 people can attend a service. At present, the CoN board has decided to keep the sliding wall between the nave and the church hall permanently open to give families with children more freedom to be part of the services even when the children are playing in the church hall. The building also has a furnished entrance hall used for social gatherings. Additionally there are offices for the pastor, the church coordinator, the youth worker, and so on. Rooms in the basement of the church

---

<sup>13</sup> This was a problem for the congregation, so the cross was added in 2011.

building are used for youth work and choir activities. Following agreement with the district authorities, these rooms are now rented out to a kindergarten run by the district authorities and are available for church activities only on specific days. The altar in the nave holds a simple cross, and a bronze relief showing Christ's ascension has been placed on the wall on the right side of the altar. The pulpit and the font are simple and made out of wood. The church has a German pipe organ dating from 1979, a grand piano, and a sound system used by the pastor and others for reading texts, prayers and announcements (Norske Kirkebygg, 2009).

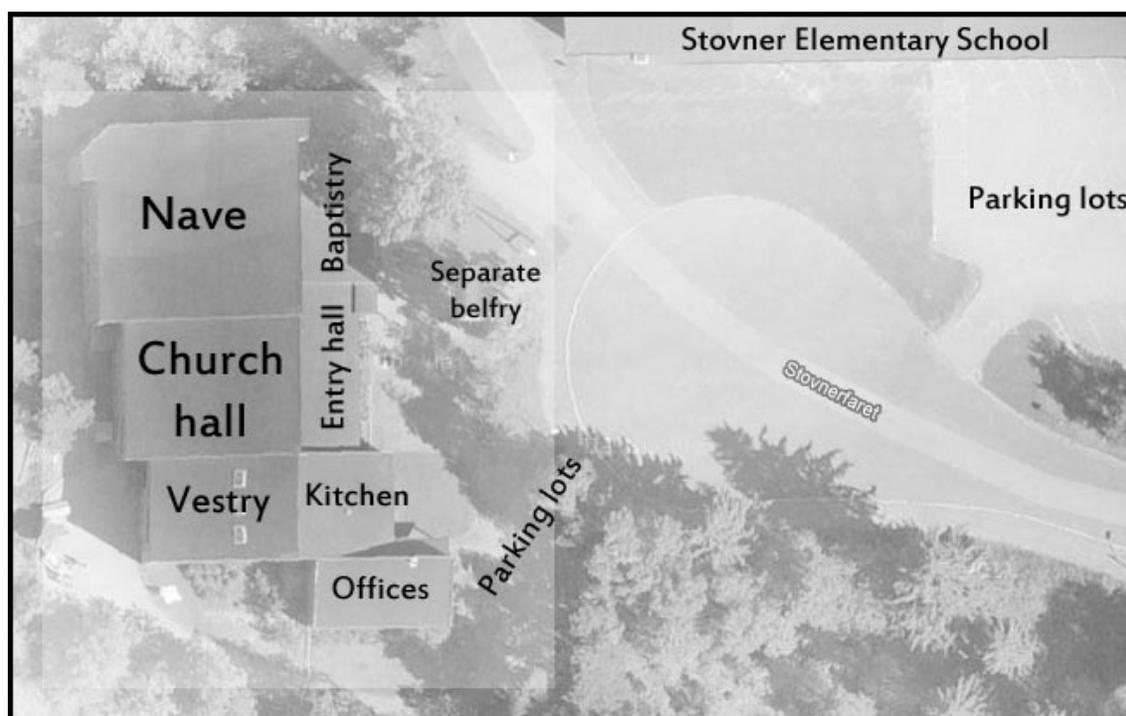


Illustration produced by researcher.

### **2.3 CoN Stovner Parish**

The congregation in Stovner originally met in a gymnasium at the Stovner Elementary School during the 1970s. It soon became clear that they needed a church building, and on 16 December 1979 the Stovner church building was consecrated by Oslo's Bishop Andreas Aarflot (CoN Stovner website, 2011). There was no shortage of volunteers to raise funds and build the church. These people, though they are now getting old, still make up the core of the congregation. Since the church building came into being, the congregation has experienced several ups and downs. The youth work was lively for several years until there was a split caused by theological tensions in the early 1990s. Another challenge to church work in the

area is the number of families who only stay for a short time. The reasons why they move away include employment, education, or that they find the number of ethnic Norwegian children too low compared with the high number of immigrant children. The CoN pastor said:

In pre-baptism conversations we are very often asked the question “How long should we continue living here?”. Because at school it is almost only our kids who are left (who are ethnic Norwegians), and it is a real problem. So we find that ethnic Norwegian families, including those with a church affiliation, move because there are too few (ethnic Norwegians). They change schools because only two kids with an ethnic Norwegian background remain (in the class). And it is clear, this also affects the church.<sup>14</sup>

This gives a hint of the challenges facing a multicultural suburban area. Currently, Stovner District has 9050 inhabitants, of whom 4115 are members of the CoN (CoN Stovner website, 2012, p. 3). This puts the percentage of CoN members in Stovner at 45%, compared with 77% nationwide.<sup>15</sup> Stovner and the other parishes in Groruddalen are being restructured, and there will be several changes to the parishes from 1 January, 2013. This thesis, however, focuses on the reality now. The CoN Stovner congregation has one full-time pastor, and one pastor working 50% in Stovner and 50% in another parish. There is also a full-time church coordinator working in Stovner and two other parishes, and a youth and family worker in 70% employment. Additionally people are employed part-time to clean and to prepare the building for services, funerals, and so on. The congregation also has a part-time musician. The church board consists, with one exception, of ethnic Norwegians aged above 50. The core of members, as already mentioned, consists of elderly people, the majority aged above 70. All active members live within or near Stovner Parish, and many actively helping out with practical church work. The congregation has numerous activities and groups; baby singing, children’s club, youth club, choir, family dinners, men’s club, Bible study groups and a number of different groups taking care of church-related events and tasks.

---

<sup>14</sup> Researcher’s translation. “Vi møter jo i veldig mange dåpssamtaler problematikken med ”Hvor lenge skal vi bo her?”. Fordi at på skolen er det nesten bare våre barn igjen her, og det er en reell problemstilling, sånn at vi ser jo at etnisk norske familier, også med kirketilknytning, flytter fordi de blir for få. De bytter skoler fordi nå var det bare to barn igjen med norsk etnisk bakgrunn. Og det er klart, det påvirker også menigheten”.

<sup>15</sup> CoN membership / total population in 2011: 3851145 / 4979955 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2012b).

## **2.4 Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo**

The Presbyterian and the Methodist Churches in Ghana owe their origins to the Scottish / Jamaican and English missionary endeavours in the early 1800s (Baur, 1998, pp. 115-119). Consequently, Ghana was among the first to have a strong local Christian leadership, and still has a strong ecumenical spirit today (Baur, 1998, pp. 267-269). There are various estimates of the number of Christians in Ghana. Several suggest that the number of Christians is more than 60% (CIA World Factbook, 2012). Among these, approximately 24% are Pentecostals and Charismatics, 18% are mainline Protestants, 15% are Catholics, and the rest belong to other Christian denominations. Among the mainline Protestant churches, the Methodist and the Presbyterian are the biggest. It should be noted that all mainline churches in Ghana have experienced Pentecostalisation, and they could therefore be described as more charismatic than many mainline churches elsewhere (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2008, 2010; Gifford, 1994; Heuser, 2009; Omenyo, 2005, p. 45).

### **2.4.1 Background and Start-up of the Church**

When some Ghanaians came up with the idea of starting a Presbyterian-Methodist church in Oslo, it was clear that this was something quite a number of people had felt the lack of and wanted to join. Ghanaians with allegiance to the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Ghana had for some years been attending different churches in Oslo. Some had been attending local Norwegian CoN congregations, or Charismatic multi-ethnic migrant churches. Others attended the Ghanaian-based, Twi- and English-speaking, Church of Pentecost situated in the venue of the Norwegian Pentecostal Filadelfia church in Oslo.<sup>16</sup> The reasons for joining PMC varied. Some joined specifically because they wanted a service in their own language and tradition. Others joined in order to be in a service with more life and joy, and to be together with people of their own age. Several informants said that the services in the Norwegian CoN congregations were “very dead” and “boring”. In contrast, the Presbyterian-Methodist church service was described as an opportunity for “something to be awakened in me personally”. Tradition and identity were also obvious reasons for establishing the church. An informant stated: “Language is number one, then the sense of belongingness. We felt Presbyterian, or we felt Methodist”. Another informant explained this further:

---

<sup>16</sup> The Church of Pentecost founded a congregation in Oslo in 1994. In Germany, the Pentecostal churches were faster than the mainline churches in terms of establishing migrant congregations (Nieswand, 2005, pp. 249-250). In the Canadian context, Tettey (2007, p. 237) points out that Ghanaian mainline Christians tend to attend the Canadian mainline churches, rather than joining the Ghanaian Charismatic/Pentecostal migrant churches. Language could be one of the reasons why this has been the case in Norway to a lesser extent.

We thought of using our local language. That was almost our main aim. Also we wanted to sing our songs. When we were young in Ghana, we were in those churches, Presbyterian and Methodist. And they were the songs we sang in schools and everywhere. So we thought it wise to organise ourselves to come together and sing those songs (this was also stated by Essamuah, 2011, p. 111).

Hence, we might say that the reasons for starting this church were threefold. (1) Having a place to gather where people could speak their own language. (2) Being part of a congregation within the Ghanaian Presbyterian and Methodist traditions and culture. (3) Fostering more lively spirituality than in the Norwegian churches. Boris Nieswand (2005) makes an interesting remark about the situation in Germany, claiming that the migrants are “perceived as socially successful, modern and wealthy in the Ghanaian context and at the same time backward, poor and marginalised” in the European context. Thus he suggests that the church “provide[s] a social space for performing positive social status” (Nieswand, 2005, pp. 255-256; see also Akinade, 2007, p. 94; Biney, 2007, p. 275; Mtata, 2011, p. 339; Tettey, 2007, p. 242).

Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo had the first church service in January 2006. For more than a year, the services were held at a venue in Kjelsås. As this place was used for parties on Saturday nights, the church members often had to clean and remove beer cans and bottles before starting their service. This made some of the church members think about asking the congregation in Stovner whether PMC could move there. Two women, formerly active members of CoN Stovner before joining PMC, suggested this to people on the Stovner church board. Consequently, PMC was welcomed right away. A rental agreement was made, and since May 2007 PMC has been meeting in Stovner church every Sunday at 2.0 p.m. The services are held in the Asante-Twi language (occasionally with English songs, Bible readings and sermons). Asante-Twi, a dialect of Akan, is a mother tongue for most people originating from the Ashanti region in central Ghana. The dialect is also learned by many Ghanaians as a second or third language, and is therefore a widely spoken language in Ghana. It seems that the use of Asante-Twi in PMC and other Ghanaian migrant congregations does not undermine the different other dialects, and the national identity is often stronger than the different ethnic ones (Mtata, 2011, p. 341).

## 2.4.2 Members and Leadership

PMC had a full-time Presbyterian pastor from Ghana until January 2011. The church members struggled to pay the pastor's salary, however. The Norwegian state had agreed to renew the pastor's work permit if PMC paid her a salary corresponding to the CoN chaplain's salary. Unfortunately PMC did not succeed in raising enough funds required for renewal of the work permit and the pastor had to return to Ghana in January 2011. After the pastor had left, PMC elected a new leadership and the church board got more responsibility for church activity. The latest board election was in April 2012. A Methodist pastor and a Presbyterian pastor, both working in Hamburg, were asked to help with the elections. The positions on the board are divided relatively equally between the genders. A chairperson, an assistant chairperson, a secretary and two members were elected. On the present church board, the chairperson, assistant and secretary are all men, while both board members are women. Both the former secretary and the pastor were women. Rather than making career or gaining social status, being a leader in PMC seems to be a task members are asked to do as a practical service for the congregation. This could be because there is no pastor. An informant said: "All of us have other things to do... We are workers". Another informant who had been a leader said:

I was asked to function as the church secretary ... It was OK, but I must say that after the pastor left it was a very demanding job. Now I have a project at work ... and it was OK to lay off the responsibility I had in church in order to focus more at work ... It was a learning experience.<sup>17</sup>

The leaders receive Holy Communion before the other members, and some leaders may sit in front seats during services. This indicates that the leadership positions have some social status.

The first service in January 2006 had only six people present,<sup>18</sup> but the church had about 60 members by the end of the same year. Growth continued, and PMC reached 100 members before family conflicts and the loss of the pastor caused a decrease in membership numbers.<sup>19</sup> Now the number of members is about 60. An informant estimates that about 30 of these are active members, whereas only 20 are described as dedicated members. According to the

---

<sup>17</sup> Researcher's translation: "Jeg ble spurt om jeg kunne fungere som menighetssekretær ... Det var veldig greit, og jeg må si at etter at presten reiste så var det veldig krevende, krevende jobb å ha. Og jeg driver med et prosjekt på jobben ... og det var litt greit å legge fra meg det ansvaret jeg har i kirka for å kunne fokusere mere på den jobben jeg gjør også på jobb ... Det var en lærerik opplevelse".

<sup>18</sup> Martikainen (2009, p. 178) notes that all migrant congregation initiatives in his study came from single individuals or small groups of interested people.

<sup>19</sup> Tettey (2007, p. 251) notes that internal conflicts in migrant churches are not uncommon and often concern financial capital, power, vision or policy.

answers from the questionnaire, 85% of the grown-up members were born in Ghana, and 70% are Norwegian citizens. This corresponds with the finding that 74% have been members of the church for more than three years. When it comes to language skills, all respondents speak or understand Twi, and most respondents speak or understand English and Norwegian. This tells us that the majority of the members are not new to Norway, and many would even describe themselves as Norwegians or Norwegian-Ghanaians. At the same time nearly all members of PMC have close relations and contact with their family and friends in Ghana.<sup>20</sup> When asked about the pressure to send money to friends and family in Ghana, an informant said:

Oh, yeah! I can say that all of us feel that pressure. All of us. Yes, that is just the way it is ... And many do it (send money). Every month, maybe even several times a month. Many do it, and I am one of them.<sup>21</sup>

This tendency is contrary to what Myhre (2012, p. 31) has said about Norwegians abroad who often experience a dual release, i.e. disconnections from social networks and from demanding expectations. The Ghanaians are, at least physically, disconnected from their social networks, although they still carry expectations from people at home. Many of the PMC members work night shifts and weekends to cope financially. The researcher observed that some members only came every second week, probably because of their work schedules. An informant said:

Our members, no, they don't attend other churches. They are so limited ... when they have time they come here.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear that most members belong to the working class. Many of them struggle to get enough money to live a normal life in Norway, and at the same time continue sending money to Ghana. Most of the members seen at the Sunday services were aged between 30 and 60, and there was an equal balance between the genders. As far as the researcher could observe, illegal immigrants (see Meulen, 2008) and exploitation among the migrants are not challenges for the church in any aspect.

---

<sup>20</sup> Common among many immigrant groups, see Ebaugh and Chafetz (2002) and Valenta (2008, p. 178).

<sup>21</sup> Researcher's translation: "Åja! Jeg kan si at alle har det presset på seg. Alle. Ja, det er bare sånn det er ... Mange gjør det (sender penger). Hver måned, gjerne kanskje også flere ganger i måneden. Men mange gjør det, og jeg er en av de".

<sup>22</sup> Hagan and Ebaugh (2003, p. 1156) note that busy work schedules and distance are the main reasons for limited involvement in religious activities among Guatemalan Mayas in Houston, Texas.

### 2.4.3 Church Profile and Target Group

The Presbyterian-Methodist Church, Oslo is an ethnic church where all members are of Ghanaian origin. This also affects how the congregants and leaders think about non-Ghanaians. An informant said, when asked about the profile and target group of the church:

Our target is to reach out to all Ghanaians born and bred in the Presbyterian-Methodist church who are in Norway. So that we come and worship together. Children, the whole family...

The first priority is, as we can see, people of Presbyterian and Methodist affiliation. PMC is a *niche* congregation, targeting a special group of people (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000c, p. 108).<sup>23</sup> The informant also describes the challenge of retaining the second generation as a big dilemma facing most migrant churches. This topic will be described further in Chapter 3. The informant continued from a wider perspective, although still focusing on Ghanaians:

It has not been easy. People come and they go, and you can't force them... but still we are working on it, to reach out to more people... So if you are born Presbyterian or Methodist or whatever church you were attending in Ghana, you can have fellowship with us here.

When asked whether people in PMC identify as missionaries called to Norway, an idea often found in Pentecostal and Charismatic migrant churches,<sup>24</sup> an informant said:

I personally don't think a Presbyterian, or a Methodist, will say this. No, because that is why we say our tradition is very different. So people who really feel Presbyterian or Methodist, they would like to worship with us, but then there are so many people in town (Ghanaians) who are not with us, who are also Presbyterian or Methodist. Some say they had already joined other churches before we came into existence. And there are some who do not feel a need, either for God, or even for, you know, they feel, they think they are OK.

This answer was very surprising, and shows clearly that PMC is a church that wants mainly to maintain tradition, language and songs.<sup>25</sup> This may be explained by what is called *imagined identity*, whereby congregants might feel more Ghanaian in Norway than they did when living in Ghana (Foley & Hoge, 2007, p. 191). An informant also said that the language used in the service in Norway was purer than the language used for the services in Ghana. Though the informant also had a wish to include secularised Ghanaians "in town", one could say that PMC is mainly an inward-focused church. The main focus is maintaining the membership, and including new people from the same ethnic/national group. This seems to fit into what Werbner (2002) calls a *Diaspora identity*. The members attach themselves to a

---

<sup>23</sup> Obadare and Adebani (2010, p. 46) describe how African migrants become more religious in the process of preparing for migration. This does not seem to be the case for Ghanaian Presbyterians.

<sup>24</sup> Währisch-Oblau (2000, p. 473) states: "Some African-led congregations include bringing revival to dead German churches in their missionary agenda... Unfortunately, while German congregations enjoy gospel music, they are not often open to the message the immigrants want to bring them". See also Adogame (2008, 2011), Asamoah-Gyadu (2011), Daswani (2010, p. 461), Hanciles (2004, p. 105), Koning (2008, p. 103), and Tettey (2007, p. 247).

<sup>25</sup> Also noted by Essamuah (2011, p. 114) concerning Ghanaian Methodists in the USA.

deterritorialised imagined community, “sharing a collective past and common destiny, and hence also a simultaneity in time” (Werbner, 2002, p. 121).<sup>26</sup> When compelled to answer, the informant admitted having a vision that PMC, through the second generation, would one day be multicultural. This seemed, however, to be some way away.

#### **2.4.4 The Presbyterian-Methodist *Koinonia* and International Networks**

The members of PMC are mainly from two big churches in Ghana, Methodist Church of Ghana and Presbyterian Church of Ghana. These two mother churches have a close relationship within Ghana. For instance they cooperate as regards student work, and so on. As the number of Ghanaian Methodists and Presbyterians is too low to provide two separate churches in Oslo, PMC is a collaborative, two-denominational, church. This kind of Ghanaian church cooperation is not very common, but there have been similar set-ups in Italy and Israel. The basis for cooperation is similar theological teachings, common songs and common service traditions. An informant described it in this way:

You see this small book. It is the, more or less, the calendar for the whole of next year. Though the name is Presbyterian Church of Ghana, it is the same for both Presbyterian and Methodist. So the topics we preach here on Sundays are the same topics they preach in Ghana, in both Methodist and Presbyterian.

Another informant stated:

The Presbyterian and Methodist church, they have the same service programme. Almost all our hymns, most of our hymns, are almost the same... If, let's say it wasn't, maybe Presbyterian and it was only Methodist, I could have joined because we do the same thing, almost the same thing. But, as in the Pentecostal it is different.

It is clear that members of PMC have a clear identity as Ghanaian Presbyterians and Methodists.<sup>27</sup> The sense of belonging is related both to ethnicity and to denomination. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000a) have described how the *reproduction* of ethnicity is important for migrant religion (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a, p. 80; Tettey, 2007, p. 234, 241). Biney (2007, p. 260) challenges this explanation, claiming that spirituality and communal life are more important than ethnicity among Ghanaian Presbyterians in New York. Asamoah-Gyadu (2008, p. 204) points to the liturgical identity among Ghanaian Presbyterians in Europe and the USA. For PMC it seems that Ghanaian identity is connected both to language and denomination. This confirms that ethnicity, communal life and liturgical identity are all

---

<sup>26</sup> Corrigan (2009, p. 164, 172) describes how Italian Catholics in the USA imagined being in two places at once (polylocative) and switched between identities related to these places.

<sup>27</sup> This is similar to what happens in the German context. See Nieswand (2005, p. 250).

important factors shaping the PMC identity.<sup>28</sup> PMC is a member of both of the mother churches in Ghana, and keeps in frequent contact with them (see Adogame & Chitando, 2005b, pp. 257-258; Tettey, 2007, p. 236, 248; Van Dijk, 1997). Some years ago, 500 dollars were sent to each of the churches, and occasionally clothes have been collected and sent. Visits from Ghanaian church leaders are also important. Ghanaian Presbyterian and Methodist pastors living in Germany helped with the board election in April 2012. Moreover, a Ghanaian Presbyterian pastor from Modena, Italy was present to appoint the PMC pastor in 2008 (Kirkenytt, 1/2009, p. 4). The church has also received visits from a Presbyterian bishop from Ghana, and other representatives living in Europe. In contrast, PMC does not have any contact with the Methodist Church of Norway.<sup>29</sup> It would appear that the home connection is stronger and more important than local denominational connections.

#### **2.4.5 Finances and Resources**

PMC is a church funded by the offerings and resources of the church members, and different strategies have been applied in order to make people give more. When they had a pastor, the members were struggling to pay a salary equal to the CoN chaplain's salary. As already mentioned, this was not possible, and the congregation experienced some hardships and decreased motivation in giving. PMC has a rental agreement with Stovner Parish. The rent is 300 Norwegian kroner (NOK) per week, some 15 000 NOK per year. The congregation receives approximately 400 NOK per member per year from the state, in total about 23 000 NOK in 2011. The leaders of the church estimate that they collect about 1 000 NOK every Sunday. PMC has an annual membership fee of 2 400 NOK per member (200 NOK per month). A "harvest period" of the year, when members work extra hard to collect money for the church, is also essential. The total annual income is estimated to be 100 000 NOK. For a congregation hoping to employ a full-time pastor, these are demoralising numbers. Though the mother churches in Ghana have similar structures to those found in churches in Norway, it is interesting to note that PMC has gone through some structural adaptation or institutionalisation, for instance, by compiling membership lists in order to receive support from the state (Martikainen, 2009, pp. 177-178).

---

<sup>28</sup> Tettey (2007, p. 241) describes an "attachment to a geographically distant yet psychological and emotional space" as an important part of what defines the migrant members' sense of Ghanaianess in Canada.

<sup>29</sup> The Methodist Church of Ghana is a branch of the Methodist Church of Great Britain, but has an episcopal structure. The Methodist Church of Norway belongs to the United Methodist Church, and this could be a reason, though the Methodist Church of Ghana has relations, for instance, with the United Methodist Church of Germany. Essamuah (2011, p. 117) explains that Ghanaian Methodists in the USA also have limited contact with the United Methodist Church there.

## 2.4.6 Activities

PMC has been a totally member-driven congregation since January 2011. This means that all church activities are facilitated by volunteers. The PMC activities are centred on the weekends and on the Stovner church building. On Fridays there is a Bible study and prayer group from seven to nine, on Saturdays there is choir practice, and sometimes youth gatherings, and on Sundays a service from two to four. The congregation does not have any organised social programmes directed towards Norwegian society. Nevertheless, there is a system of offering gifts or support for births and funerals among the members' families.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.4.7 Sunday Service

Some of the young men are often the first to arrive for the PMC Sunday services. The first person usually comes around 1.15 p.m. and then people continue arriving until 2.30 p.m. Those who arrive first are often responsible for carrying speakers, microphones, drums and song books from the basement store up to the nave. Some women put a table in front of the altar, cover it with a white tablecloth, a potted plant and an Asante-Twi Bible. The tablecloth has black letters reading "Presbyterian-Methodist Church Oslo" with a black cross above the text. To allow more space for dancing and movement throughout the service, chairs are removed from the first few rows. The service seldom starts on time. Usually it starts between 2.15 and 2.30 p.m. Despite this, people still arrive after the start of the service. The attendance is usually between 25 and 30, including children who stay in the basement or entrance hall. Most of the women wear colourful dresses or skirts. Only a few wear trousers or jeans. Virtually all men wear shirts, and some also wear a suit and tie. Some of the children wear more casual clothes, whereas others are dressed up like their parents. Most congregants bring their own Bibles. On their way into the nave, they pick up two hymn books, *Ghana Presbyteri Asafo – Asore Dwon Nhoma* and *The Methodist Hymn Book*, from a box placed by the entrance. The following description is taken from the field notes of 23 September:

The service starts with the congregation singing worship songs. A male lead singer sings and shouts loudly in the microphone, and the congregation tries to follow. This continues for about ten minutes while people sing and pray out loud, and the lead singer varies the language between English and Twi.<sup>31</sup>

When the songs cease, a female leader welcomes the congregation, and says some words in Twi. I don't

---

<sup>30</sup> As found by Meulen (2008, p. 55), but contrary to Stoppels (2008, p. 44), who found that belonging to a migrant church led to more social engagement. This is probably because of the limited time and resources of the members.

<sup>31</sup> This correlates with what Omenyo (2005, p. 56) describes: "during formal services on Sundays it is not uncommon for mainline churches to have regular 10 to 15 minutes of 'praise' where local choruses are sung amidst drumming, clapping and dancing in line with the practice in Pentecostal churches".

understand the words, as I usually only get a translation of the sermon. Then they sing a hymn from the Presbyterian hymn book. Clearly the congregation prefers singing Presbyterian hymns in Twi rather than Methodist hymns in English. After the hymn, the woman leading the meeting starts to pray. She prays out loud and introduces themes. The whole congregation responds by praying out loud, everyone at the same time, until the leader introduces a new theme. The themes are about confessing sin, thanking God for what has happened, praying to get the Holy Spirit, and praying for the week to come. Every now and then the prayers are interrupted by *a capella* songs. When the prayer session is over, the male lead singer starts singing again. This time he sings in English, accompanied by two female singers, and two male drummers playing drum kit and congas, respectively. Everyone sings “One more time, one more time! God has allowed us to come together one more time”, while dancing, smiling and greeting each other. Even people sitting on the other side of the room come over to me (I’m sitting by the entrance), greet me and smile. Even though I don’t understand any words of the language, I truly feel welcomed. After the welcome follows the reading of three texts from the Bible, Proverbs 31, James 3 and Mark 9, read by three different people. Then follows a new hymn from the Presbyterian book, before a male preacher, (name), who is also a member of the board, comes up front and introduces his sermon “Relation between service and greatness”. One of the younger ladies in the congregation, (name), translates the sermon into Norwegian for me. After the sermon follow the Apostles’ Creed (in Twi), announcements given by the secretary and the board leader, and offertory. The offertory is accompanied by music and singing, and people dance throughout the room while they give their offerings. Then follow the offertory prayer (done by even another member), another hymn, and the closing prayer and benediction by the preacher of the day. After the service, people talk, carry the instruments and speakers back to the storage in the basement, and later they go home. I’m impressed by the number of active participants in the service.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> See Klomp (2008) for a full analysis of the liturgy in the Ghanaian Wesley Methodist Church in Amsterdam. Eichholzer (2011) offers an elaboration on the use of Ghanaian gospel music in European Diaspora.

## **2.5 Summary**

In this chapter we have seen that the Stovner church was inaugurated in 1979 thanks to the work of a number of active church members who still constitute the core of the congregation. Stovner is a multicultural area where many ethnic Norwegian families reside only for a short time. Consequently, the core of the CoN congregation consists of long-term, elderly people living near the church. Though the core is getting old, the congregation still facilitates many activities, run both by the employees and by the numerous active members. The church building is a multipurpose church, and there is a kindergarten in the basement.

Presbyterian Methodist Church Oslo was started in January 2006 as a place where people from the Ghanaian Methodist and Presbyterian traditions could meet and sing their songs. The church grew fast, and they needed a proper location. A request was made to Stovner Parish, and an agreement was reached. The two congregations have been sharing the church building since May 2007. PMC had a full-time pastor until January 2011, but she had to leave the country owing to problems with her work permit. The PMC members usually hold Norwegian passports, speak Norwegian fluently and have lived in Norway for many years. Few PMC members live within the Stovner Parish, but most of them live on the north-eastern side of Oslo, which is “the right side of town” for accessing Stovner.

The PMC members have a strong identity as Ghanaian Presbyterians and Methodists, and that is also the target group of the church. Accordingly, the congregation keeps frequent contact with the mother churches in Ghana. The congregation is struggling with its finances, and members are encouraged to increase their offertory in order to be able to employ a new pastor. The PMC services usually last for about an hour and a half, follow a certain liturgy, and are characterised by a large number of active participants in the service.



## Chapter 3: What are the Congregations Doing Together?

As mentioned above, the Presbyterian-Methodist Church has a formal rental agreement with Stovner Parish. This is, however, not the only connection between the two congregations. This chapter tries to investigate the pros and cons of the relationship by describing the international services (3.1), other joint events (3.2), and the common challenges of retaining children and youth within the church setting (3.3).

### 3.1 International Services

The international services started in 2000 at the initiative of some of the members of the CoN Stovner congregation. They invited people of different nationalities to arrange services together so that they could “within the context of the church have contact with as many as possible”.<sup>33</sup> Though these services are still called *internasjonal gudstjeneste* (international services), they have developed into Norwegian-Ghanaian events, occasionally with other nationalities represented. Since the Ghanaians came to the Stovner church building in 2007, these services have been held twice a year, usually in March and October. The services are conducted in Norwegian, sometimes with songs and readings in other languages, and with the sermon and parts of the liturgy translated into Twi. When PMC had its own pastor, she preached in English and someone translated the sermon into Norwegian. As most of the PMC members speak and understand Norwegian, one could ask whether the use of different languages is mainly a symbolic marker showing diversity (Gulsett, 2007, p. 56). There are reasons to believe that language is an important identity marker for both congregations. Consequently, it is important to use both Norwegian and Twi to proclaim that the international service is a joint event. The two congregations alternate responsibility for arranging the service and the service time. As PMC at present does not have a pastor, the services are usually led by the Norwegian pastors. After the service, there is a coffee break when people bring food of different kinds. The field notes from March 2012 describe this:

It is a welcoming atmosphere. I was welcomed when entering the nave and the pastor encouraged people to greet each other, also people that we did not know from before ... The coffee break was, despite the welcoming atmosphere in the nave, somehow divided. With some exceptions, one could see “Norwegian” and “Ghanaian” tables in the church hall, and many of the Ghanaians were also sitting in the entrance hall.

At the international service in October 2012 the tendency was similar, but no one sat in the entrance hall. The spatial theories of Knott (2005) suggest that a reason for this could be that

---

<sup>33</sup> Researcher’s translation: “...å ha det innenfor kirkens ramme, men i mest mulig kontakt med flest mulig”.

the sliding wall between the nave and the church hall was open. Consequently, people could go straight from service to coffee without passing through the entrance hall. As Knott described it, space is *practised* and this could indicate that a change of the physical room also made the social room more accessible. We will return to the congregants' thoughts about international services in the next chapter (4.1 and 4.2.2).

### **3.2 Joint Events and Invitations**

In addition to the international services, the congregations in Stovner church building also arrange other events together and sometimes participate in each other's activities. Every year in October, a concert is arranged for United Nations' Day. This event is initiated by the church coordinator and a few other key individuals, and is an arena for social bridging between Christian groups in the Groruddalen area. People from CoN, PMC, Tamil Grace Church, Oromo Evangelical Church, Eritrean Lutheran Church, and individuals from Azerbaijan, Tanzania, Kenya and elsewhere played an active part in the café and concert in October 2012. Other joint events are planned but progress is rather slow at the moment, as PMC does not have a pastor and CoN Stovner is undergoing a process of restructuring. Nevertheless, PMC is often invited and encouraged to participate in services and special programmes are arranged by the CoN Stovner congregation. An example is the Church Jubilee service in June 2012, at which a number of Ghanaians sang. They were also present at the coffee and jubilee ceremony. Furthermore, it has happened several times that youth from PMC have been confirmation candidates in the CoN congregation. A former CoN pastor says this is because PMC does not offer this kind of service, and the children have become "alienated from their parents' ethnic background".<sup>34</sup> Another reason is the fact that Stovner church building has become a well-known space to PMC members and their families. PMC has been invited to Easter and Christmas services, and events, but according to the informants this has not been successful. Talking about Easter and a Good Friday *korsvandring* ("cross walk", a procession singing and praying for the District), an informant from CoN stated:

And then, year after year, we have invited them to join us, but it has not succeeded. It's like; "Next year we'll come", or "I promise you, next year we will all of us be there. I promise you".<sup>35</sup>

An informant from PMC gave a similar answer when describing this kind of event:

---

<sup>34</sup> "...disse barna [har blitt] fremmedgjort fra sine foreldres etniske bakgrunn".

<sup>35</sup> "Og da har jo vi, år etter år, invitert dem til å bli med, men det har ikke lyktes å få til. Litt sånn; neste år skal vi, da [sier de ] I promise you, next year we will all of us be there. I promise you".

Sadly not all of our members are able to join in. Only a few usually participate in these... And that's unfortunate, but that's the way it is. Many are family members with small kids, and so on.<sup>36</sup>

Another point of contact is when pastors or leaders from CoN are invited to contribute to PMC activities. It has for instance happened on several occasions that the CoN pastors have participated in the PMC service by preaching or serving Holy Communion.<sup>37</sup> The CoN church coordinator has also regularly done the PMC Bible teaching on Fridays. This suggests that the exchange of social capital so far has been primarily on a formal level. The contact between the groups is limited to key individuals, and could be described as occasional social bridging (Putnam, 2000). The lack of social bonding and bridging between the groups suggests interaction at quite a low cost. A criticism might be that the congregations have their own agendas, and the relationship is thus beneficial to achieve their goals. CoN allow PMC to rent the church building at a low price, to join in events and to have CoN guest preachers and teachers at their services from time to time. In return, CoN gets support in creating an image as a congregation that welcome immigrants. PMC on the other hand offer their participation in international services, and their reward is a low-cost venue for their services, and some support; for instance, CoN pastors conduct their Holy Communion services. From this perspective we could describe the relationship between the congregations as a *transaction*. They both give and take because they see the advantages of having a certain relationship. Their identities, however, are only influenced by the relationship to a limited degree.

### **3.3 Common Challenges in Reaching Children and Youth**

Though the congregations gather several times a year for international services and joint events, they are better described as parallel congregations with members living parallel lives (Gulsett, 2007, p. 56; Solli, 2011, p. 60; Sullivan, 2000, p. 233). Regardless of this, the congregations face a huge common challenge in terms of finding a way to make their children and youth want to remain in the congregation. CoN find that young families often stay in Stovner for short periods of time, and the core of the congregation is pensioners and elderly people. PMC have a younger core of members, but they struggle to retain their youth in the congregation. The ethnic profile of the migrant services (the parents' language, old songs and a foreign style of spirituality) results in the alienation of the second generation of immigrants

---

<sup>36</sup>“Dessverre så er ikke det alle i vår menighet som kan være med. Det er veldig få som vanligvis deltar på sånne... Og det er litt uheldig, men det bare er sånn det er. Mange er jo familiemedlemmer som har småbarn, og sånn”.

<sup>37</sup> This phenomenon has also been noted by Gulsett (2007, p. 43).

(Aden, 2009, p. 42; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a, p.133; Lanser, 2008, p. 168; Stepick et al., 2009, p. 264). Währisch-Oblau (2010, p. 191) describes the challenge in a German context:

Many of these congregations find that the second and third generation is not willing to join the Diaspora church, often simply because they do not speak their parents' language well enough. At the same time, no German church has any kind of outreach to second-generation Protestant migrants, or joins a Diaspora church in reaching out to them.

Wartena, Bertram-Troost and Miedema (2008) have seen the same tendency in migrant churches in Amsterdam, and focus on the importance of teaching youth "how to be religious in a religious pluralistic society that is mainly secular" (p. 95; see also Adams, 2006; Kühle, 2012). This challenge faces both congregations, and all informants regard it as a major problem. Unfortunately it has not been possible within the limits of this research to investigate how the children and youth in PMC adapt or feel a sense of belonging. The informants, however, mostly connect this challenge with language. The language question in PMC is a real dilemma. Some informants, as a way of keeping the children in the church, have suggested changing the service language to English or Norwegian. Others have stated that doing this will remove the reason for having a Ghanaian Presbyterian Methodist Church in Oslo. The church board hopes to find youth leaders to teach the children and youth by using both Norwegian and Twi, or English and Twi.<sup>38</sup> Thus they hope to keep the second generation in the church. This challenge is, however, also connected with factors other than language. Ganzevoort (2008, p. 234) says:

Traditional Dutch churches find their young members leaving, probably because they find no meaningful connection between the ecclesial staging of the divine and their own stories and desires. In this way, immigrant and traditional Dutch churches could benefit from learning together how to avoid the Scylla of relativism and the Charybdis of fundamentalism. The aim should not be some kind of harmonizing uniformity, but respect for diversity and honouring the transcendence of the divine in our world by accepting both presence and absence.

This major task requires close cooperation, and should be a motivating element for developing the relationship between the congregations.

---

<sup>38</sup> Tettey (2007, p. 245) shows how a youth ministry among Ghanaian migrants in Canada was motivated by the fact that their teenagers "were not growing spiritually or showing much interest in the church and its activities".

### **3.4 Summary**

The congregations arrange two international services together every year. As language is an identity marker for both congregations, the international services are bilingual. The congregations also arrange a few other events together, and they invite people from the other congregation to participate in their events. The relationship has benefits for both congregations at quite a low cost. CoN gets help in creating an image as a multicultural congregation, and PMC gets a place to stay. There are, however, challenges related to social bridging. This is apparent both in the international service coffee sessions and in other events that they arrange together. Despite the challenges of social bridging, it is evident that the use of a shared room has to some extent influenced the identities of the congregations. By using the same room, and having international services where they *practice space* together (Knott, 2005), the congregations gradually get to know each other more. Both congregations have challenges in reaching and retaining their children and youth within the church setting. By developing the relationship, they will be better able to teach their youth how to be religious in a pluralistic and secular society (Wartena et al., 2008).



## Chapter 4: The Congregations' View of Each Other

So far, in Chapters 2 and 3 we have seen who the congregations are and what they do together. This chapter investigates how the congregations understand each other and the joint events they arrange. As the congregations are both from mainline Protestant movements, they do not have the same challenges as they would have, for example, cooperating with a Pentecostal church (see Jansen, 2008, 2010). Still, there are major differences of culture and tradition. In the following sections, we will address the questions of how the congregations describe and understand each other, and how they perceive the international services and other joint events. First, results from interviews addressing the Norwegian views on the migrant church are presented (4.1), followed by the migrant view on the Norwegian congregation (4.2). Finally, the views of other sources are presented (4.3).

### 4.1 Norwegians' Description of the Migrant Church

When asked about the Ghanaian migrant church, the ethnic Norwegian informants tended to focus on joint activities and the formal rental agreement. PMC is generally described as “they”, or “the Ghanaian congregation”, but also as “some Africans who have a service in Stovner church after us”.<sup>39</sup> An informant gives his interpretation of why PMC came to Stovner: “they had been participating in these international services, and that was why they felt welcome”.<sup>40</sup> The informants admit that the Norwegian congregation is the “big brother” in the relationship, yet one of the informants insists that PMC experiences this in a positive way. The “big brother” role and attitude are occasionally visible in the way PMC is mentioned. A former pastor said that he took responsibility to “care for and house the Ghanaian congregation”.<sup>41</sup> Another informant described how PMC has been “unbelievably good”<sup>42</sup> at collecting money while also saying they were too ambitious when they employed a full-time pastor. Furthermore:

They want to use their own equipment. Otherwise they could have used all our technical equipment.

That is just how they want it themselves.<sup>43</sup>

Tensions and challenges are limited, and mostly concern double bookings or misunderstandings “because they (PMC) did not realise that we would have the place from

---

<sup>39</sup> “noen afrikanere som har gudstjeneste etter oss i Stovner kirke”.

<sup>40</sup> “...da hadde de vært med på disse internasjonale gudstjenestene, og det var derfor de følte seg velkomne”.

<sup>41</sup> “...ta vare på, og huse, den ghanesiske menigheten”.

<sup>42</sup> “utrolig flinke”.

<sup>43</sup> “de vil bruke sitt eget utstyr. Ellers kunne de jo brukt alt vårt teknisk utstyr. Det er bare de selv som vil”.

5.0 p.m.”.<sup>44</sup> This has occasionally led to frustration among the Norwegians. These difficulties are described by all informants as minor communicational challenges that have to be worked on constantly. All informants strongly emphasise that PMC are good at cleaning and tidying the localities after use. An informant explained:

I know this has been a problem elsewhere, but we have a very clear, conscious policy that whenever something comes up we will notify them right away.<sup>45</sup>

PMC is described as a well-established group. An informant expressed admiration for how the congregants have tackled the challenging situation of losing their pastor. The cooperation with the PMC pastor was described as “great” and “fruitful”, whereas the present leadership was described as “somewhat unclear”.<sup>46</sup> Concerning the PMC service, an informant said: “it is not so meaningful to go to that service because it is in Twi. You don’t understand anything”.<sup>47</sup> Despite the fact that Norwegians do not attend the PMC service, many CoN members see the more responsible people as those “who are here and prepare and put up the sound system and all those things that they do every Sunday”.<sup>48</sup> The informal interaction of people from the different groups between the services seems to be of importance for the continuity of the relationship (also noted by Gulsett, 2007, pp. 40-41). In line with Putnam (2000), we might say that this informal interaction every week seems to have a bonding effect. An informant explained:

It is not an alien element... We go together, and they feel that this is their congregation, their locality, their church.<sup>49</sup>

The informant’s own interpretation is clear in this statement, but it also indicates that in addition to the two distinctive groups there is also an understanding of a greater “we”. When talking about the joint services, the informants say that the Ghanaians have a “need to meet their own”.<sup>50</sup> This together with the language and age barriers is given as a reason for the lack of interaction in the international church coffee meetings. The informants express satisfaction with their relationship with the migrant church. It is also stated that CoN wish that PMC would participate more in the joint events often facilitated by CoN:

The Ghanaian congregation has been participating there, but it has been a little difficult ...to make them join in such events.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> “fordi de har ikke fulgt med at vi skulle ha et lokale fra klokka 17”.

<sup>45</sup> “Det vet jeg jo har vært problem andre steder, men vi har kjørt en veldig tydelig, bevisst linje på at når det er noe så sier vi ifra med en gang”.

<sup>46</sup> “flott”, “fruktbart”, “litt uklart”.

<sup>47</sup> “Det er ikke så meningsfullt å gå på den gudstjenesten for den er jo på Twi, da. Man forstår jo null”.

<sup>48</sup> “som er her og ordner til og setter opp høytaleranlegg og alt dette her som de gjør hver søndag”.

<sup>49</sup> “ikke noe sånt fremmedelement... Vi går sammen og de føler at dette er sin menighet, sitt lokale, kirke”.

<sup>50</sup> “så har de, og ikke minst ghaneserne, et behov for å treffe sine egne”.

<sup>51</sup> “Der har jo ghaneserne vært med, men det har vært litt vanskelig, ... det å få dem med på sånne felles-ting”.

Another informant said:

We have, year after year, invited them to join, but it has not succeeded.<sup>52</sup>

The informants also said they think PMC wants more interaction, but “they are dependent on gathering in their own language”<sup>53</sup> and they also struggle to fulfil their financial goals. An informant addressed the question of the PMC profile, challenging them to find out what kind of church they wanted to be. He also added that he understood this is already being debated within PMC. Another informant claimed that “the Ghanaian congregation is much more concerned with having a place to be”.<sup>54</sup>

To sum up, we might say that the Norwegians want to welcome the Ghanaians, and are eager to have them joining their different events. On the other hand, the CoN seems to have a “big brother” attitude towards PMC in some aspects. PMC is seen as a rather closed group of people doing their own thing. The Norwegian informants have some clear ideas of what the migrants want and need, and what they do not. CoN is seen as the main facilitator of activity, and they want to include as many people as possible in these activities and events.<sup>55</sup> This leads us back to the question of inclusion and involvement. From what we have seen in this chapter, CoN often aims to include rather than involve. Interestingly, an informant talks about “we” when describing the joint events. This shows a different understanding of mental space and a bridge between the two groups. As Knott (2005) has suggested, it could be fruitful to talk about space in three aspects: mental, physical and social rooms. In Stovner, the physical room could be an element of continuity in the church relationship, thus affecting the social and mental rooms. We will look more into these aspects in the next chapter (5.3).

---

<sup>52</sup> “Og da har jo vi, år etter år, invitert dem til å bli med, men det har ikke lyktes”.

<sup>53</sup> “De er avhengige av å kunne samles på sitt eget språk”.

<sup>54</sup> “Den ghanesiske menigheten er mye mer opptatt av å ha et sted å være”.

<sup>55</sup> Tettey (2007, p. 242) says of the Canadian context: “racial minority people... frequently not seen, not heard, not taken account of. Even when they are present and participating, their contribution is often politely tolerated and received with a patronizing attitude of condescension. They feel invisible”.

Simon (2004, p. 55) says of the German context that “even those German churches which do agree to such requests (rental of premises) do not see in it the opportunity for spiritual exchange and mutual learning”.

## **4.2 Migrants' Description of the CoN Congregation**

### **4.2.1 Experiences from CoN Services**

All the PMC members interviewed expressed gratitude for being able to gather in the Stovner church building. One of the PMC members, formerly active in the Stovner congregation, said she was received and felt “part of the family”, but she felt that something was missing. She described the CoN church attenders and her own experience in this way:

Either you are very old so you want just to continue following this, or you must be very, very interested and I was a passive participant. It was very boring attending church here. For a young person like me, it felt that I didn't belong in that setting in the CoN. The reception and the fellowship is great, that is very good, but how things are done when it comes to prayer, and to feel a part of what is going on, the spiritual... Singing psalms and when one praised God, it was very dead, in my opinion. So I feel that many from Ghana feel the same. There has to be more life, and more variation in age groups of people who participate in different things. It becomes boring if it's only old and elderly people there.<sup>56</sup>

The informant is here pointing at three important factors in why she did not feel at home in the Norwegian service. 1) Most of the people were old. 2) She was a passive participant and did not feel part of what was going on. 3) The form of spirituality was alien to her.<sup>57</sup> Several other informants tell stories about attending CoN services without even being greeted:

It's many immigrants who don't come back (to church) because no one greets them, no one talks to them. They (the Norwegians) just look at them.<sup>58</sup>

Another informant said:

After the service nobody talked to me, and I went home... Christianity was brought to Africa by you people, but I think our culture has made it more entertaining.

A third informant explained this further:

In Ghana, or here, our church, always we have activities, the dancing, so I was expecting that you do the same... After the (Norwegian) church no one speaks to me. So I felt like “No, I don't belong here”, so I didn't attend the church.

This quotation reminds us how we always see ourselves and our practice in relation to someone or something else. By characterising others, we also reveal our identity and self-

---

<sup>56</sup> Researcher's translation: “enten så er du en veldig godt voksen person som kanskje ønsker å bare følge med det her, eller så er du, så må du være meget, meget interessert.. og jeg var jo en passiv deltager ...det var veldig kjedelig å gå i kirken her. Og for en ung person som meg, så følte jeg ikke at jeg tilhørte det miljøet i Den norske kirken ...mottagelsen og fellesskapet er meget på topp, og det er kjempe, kjempebra, men hvordan tingene gjøres i forhold til det å be, og det og liksom føle at man er en del av selve hva som skjer, også den åndelige biten, da... Salmesang og når man priser Gud, det var veldig dødt for min del. Så, og jeg føler at mange fra Ghana også føler det samme... det må være litt mere liv, og det må være variasjon i aldersgruppen på folk som deltar i forskjellige ting. Og det blir litt kjedelig hvis det bare er godt voksne og eldre mennesker der”.

<sup>57</sup> These reasons are also cited in Biney's study of Ghanaian Presbyterians in New York (2007, p. 264), and Barnard's study of African liturgy in Amsterdam (2008).

<sup>58</sup> “Det er mange innvandrere som ikke kommer tilbake (til kirken) fordi de ikke blir hilst på, det er ingen som snakker med dem. De (CON) bare ser på dem”.

understanding. This informant draws the conclusion that she does not belong in the Norwegian service because there is no dancing or “activities”, and no one talks to her.

#### **4.2.2 Thoughts about the International Services**

Despite their mixed experiences of the Norwegian churches, the informants are eager to talk about the cooperation involved in arranging international services in Stovner:

This year it was the Norwegian part that had it, and this autumn we are going to have it again where the Ghanaian congregation is allowed to lead in their way, so that the Norwegians and the others who are there follow what we usually do. Both parts function very well. We feel that when we do it the Norwegian way, then we are part of it because we are doing it together. When we are doing it in our way... Yes, that's how we do it. I hope that you will also join in and feel what we feel.<sup>59</sup>

Here we can see a great contrast to the descriptions of the Norwegian service. The informant distinguishes clearly between “we”(PMC) and “you”(CoN), but it is also clear that a new “we” comes into being “because we are doing it together”. Here is a clear divide between the international services and how PMC members see the CoN activities. A leader said: “They have given us their programme ...it's their programme, but we are invited to participate”. On the other hand, informants are openly proud of the effect they have made on the Norwegian congregation. An informant said:

Now they (CoN) are learning more things from us. So when we finish church, the people come to you and talk to you. They see that our church services are different, so they are learning a lot from us. And they like it a lot! They see that in our church, it's like we are more related... So that is a great improvement.

The international services offer a space for social interaction. Though it is limited, it creates some social bridging between the groups. This is something other than just joining a CoN event. The migrants are directly involved in arranging the international services. Hence, it seems, as Valenta (2008, p. 215) suggests, that the international services allow members of PMC to enter into relations or networks enabling them to gain a new sense of self-respect and belonging.

---

<sup>59</sup> “I vår så var det kanskje den norske delen som vi hadde, og i høst så skal vi ha igjen hvor den ghanesiske menigheten får lov til å lede på sin måte, slik at de norske, og de andre som er med følger det vi vanligvis gjør... Begge delene fungerer veldig bra, ...føler vi at når vi gjør det på den norske måten, så er vi en del av det fordi vi er sammen om det. Og når vi gjør det på vår måte... ja, det er sånn vi gjør det. Jeg håper at dere også er med og føler det vi føler”.

### 4.2.3 Negative Aspects of Interaction with Norwegians

The informants also offer some criticisms of CoN, commenting that there are often many empty chairs during the CoN services. They also question the wisdom of short sermons:

It's not quite satisfactory because at times the priest would come and read the Bible, and then he's finished. They don't actually explain or they don't preach! Their one hour is one hour. They will do everything within that one hour.

This answer might reflect the expectation that preachers will boost the self-esteem of Christians and the idea that a sermon should be applicable to the congregants' life (see Mtata, 2011, p. 348; Stark, 2008, p. 189). This is obviously also a criticism of the structural focus in CoN. When asked about the clear divides in the church coffee session after international services, informants mainly pointed to the language barrier and observed that people liked to stay with their friends. Another aspect was also brought up:

If you go to a parental meeting, the Norwegians form a group. So you will be excluded even though you can speak the language. Actually I would say that the Norwegian people are like, they are like "our own", so if you are among them they left you out while you can speak the language, the Norwegian language with them. It has happened to me many times. So now if they call the parental meeting, I guess I will go just for the one and one with the teacher. But on the whole, like, we go there and the rest... Sometimes I don't go, because if I come and they say we have to group it's like nobody wants to talk. It's very painful that you know that you can contribute, but they don't want to involve you to contribute, whatever you have. So they let you out. So that's what I have experienced from the Norwegian side.

Another informant elaborated on this:

I think it's a general problem when it comes to Norwegians and foreigners. The Norwegians like to stick with each other, and they don't really open up to new people. They are used to their own, old friends, old... Like the people they know. Making new contacts is not very important to them, but we like to get in touch with African people.

This tendency of "grouping" or *social exclusion* (Valenta, 2008, p. 198) among Norwegians may be for several reasons. Moreover, it is interesting to note that several informants describe xenophobia or tendencies towards racism within the church setting:

I know there are people in Stovner church that do not like me. Once I was in (name of a church group), but I didn't like that group. Many don't talk (to me). When you meet someone in Stovner Centre he has forgotten who you are. He knows me when I'm in church, but when I'm outside the church he doesn't know me.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> "Jeg vet at det er folk i Stovner kirke som ikke liker meg... Og en gang så var jeg på (navn på kirkeklubb), men jeg var ikke glad i denne gruppa... Mange prater ikke (med meg). Når du treffer en mann på Stovner senter så har han glemt hvem du er..Han kjenner meg når jeg er i kirken, men når jeg er utenfor kirken kjenner han meg ikke". Similar tendencies are noted by Meulen (2008, p. 56).

Other informants emphasise that there are differences between the age groups. The pensioners are described as more open and friendly, whereas the older are described those who show more xenophobia. An informant made a distinction between inside and outside church:

In the church context I think it's OK. Because, after all, the Norwegian Christians, you know, they are bound by the Bible to be open to all. But outside: maybe the reception from somebody in here (church) may be different from the reception from the same person outside. But I think inside here we don't see much discrimination.

From what we have seen above, it is clear that most of the informants have experienced some sort of xenophobia. Only a few instances, however, have occurred directly within the church setting. Nevertheless, many members of PMC struggle with different aspects of racial discrimination: finding a job fitting their qualifications, becoming socially integrated or overcoming the feeling of being "second-class citizens" in Norwegian society (Gulsett, 2007, pp. 51-52; Nieswand, 2005, p. 254).

#### **4.2.4 Finding a Pastor**

When asked about their expectations of CoN, the informants focused on financial and other types of support "to help us to, you know, to be on our own, to stand on our feet" and to find a new pastor for PMC. In general, it is not understood by the migrants why the state can pay a salary to several CoN pastors in Stovner but not contribute towards the salary for a PMC pastor.<sup>61</sup> The PMC leaders say "we are now like a wing of this church, so why should there be three pastors for the main church while the wing is without a pastor?". Another thing that is questioned is the emphasis on the paper qualifications needed in order to become a spiritual leader of a migrant church. The informants suggest some more flexibility in this matter.<sup>62</sup>

Most of these immigrant churches, they have very good leaders, or they have, I mean, people who are taking care of them. But these are people who don't have the right certificates, you know, to be recognized by the state. So it means the work we are doing is either half-hearted or by halves, because I have to go to work. When I come I'm so tired, and I can not contribute fully to the church work, you know. But if I was to be supported by the state, then maybe I can even leave my work, and then contribute in 100% for the work of the church.

The question of how to get a pastor is clearly an urgent one for PMC. On the other hand, the congregation has managed to survive for the last eighteen months without a pastor.

---

<sup>61</sup> This claim is understandable, as the Church of Canada, for instance, has appointed a pastor from Ghana to lead the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church of Montreal (Tettey, 2007, p. 248).

<sup>62</sup> Kahl (2011) shows how theological training for migrant leaders has been successful in Germany. The need for this is also stated by the Christian Council of Norway (Desta & Bommen, 2010, p. 9): "...utøves fleksibilitet og ikke stilles urimelige krav om utdanning og økonomi for religiøse ledere som søker om arbeidstillatelse i Norge for å betjene menigheter og trossamfunn".

### **4.3 Written Presentations**

In this subchapter some findings from the parish magazine of the CoN Stovner congregation and the websites of the congregations are presented.

#### **4.3.1 Articles about PMC in Kirkenytt Parish Magazine**

As stated previously, PMC has been using the Stovner church building for services since May 2007. Throughout this period, there were three articles about PMC in the CoN parish magazine. The first was in 2007, with a picture of the leader and the title “Ghanaian congregation meets in Stovner church” (Kirkenytt, 4/2007, p. 5). The congregation is described as “people from Ghana”, and a leader is interviewed about the church name, members and services. The article also describes the Ghanaians as “our Christian friends” and states that PMC will “join” the next international service, “we hope with an even bigger choir than last time”. The second article was written in 2009, has a picture of the pastor, and is titled “Ghanaian congregation meets in Stovner church” (Kirkenytt, 1/2009, p. 4). This article describes the pastor of PMC, and is mainly about her background and work. PMC is described as “this congregation” and “they”. There is also a statement suggesting why the Ghanaians meet in their own congregation: “in general people are more comfortable when they hear the Gospel and worship in their own language”. The third article from 2010 is titled “The Migrant Congregation PMC – A distinctive cultural element” (Kirkenytt, 2/2010, p. 4). This article has three colour pictures showing services and children in church. This article is different from the former two and aims at giving an introduction to the congregation. PMC is described as “one of Stovner church’s migrant congregations”. The service is described as different from the CoN service as it has dancing, colourful clothes, and rhythmic music. Two leaders are interviewed about the economy, children and youth, and language. A fourth article, from 2012, is about a new project of cooperation between the migrant churches and local CoN congregations. PMC is mentioned:

The Stovner church has been hosting a Presbyterian-Methodist congregation with a Ghanaian background who have had regular services every Sunday at 2.0 p.m. since 2006. (Kirkenytt, 3/2012, p. 5).

### **4.3.2 International Services in Kirkenytt and on the Website**

Since 2004 the international services have not been included in the parish magazine. The only exception to this is an issue from 2007 where the pastor writes about the hope of becoming an international church, the devotion is written by a Ghanaian, and an invitation folder in many languages is included in the magazine (Kirkenytt, 1/2007, p. 2-4). In other magazines, international services are mentioned only briefly in more or less the same text:

...it is again time for the international service. This is in the process of becoming a tradition in Stovner Church. Also this time there will be participation by people from many nations. A choir from the Presbyterian-Methodist Church which rents the church for services will also participate. Note the day in your diary and feel welcome to join us! (Kirkenytt, 2/2008, 2/2009, 1/2010, 1/2011, 1/2012).

This suggests the PMC choir, and people from other nationalities, are participating in something arranged by CoN. An article from the Stovner church website (November 2010) describing an international service stated; “this time it was the Stovner congregation which was invited to participate in their (PMC’s) service” (CoN Stovner website, 2010). This fits with the system of alternating the services. It is interesting, however, that only the services arranged by Stovner congregation (springtime every year) are mentioned in the parish magazine. On the back of the parish magazine all services are mentioned, though only the basic information on date, time, and pastor is given. Except for the short report of an international service, PMC is not mentioned at all in the Stovner website. PMC has a website that is rather outdated, and the only information given about Stovner is the address and the message “The congregation moved into its present location on 6 May, 2007” (PMC website, 2007). Both congregations suffer from a lack of information about each other in their official information channels.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this chapter we have seen that the Norwegians tend to describe the relationship with PMC primarily as a formal rental agreement, and are thus taking a “big brother’s” role. The CoN leaders are satisfied with how the agreement is working, but they also aim to make the CoN congregation more multicultural. They frequently invite PMC to participate in different events, but this has turned out to be rather difficult. The international services are perceived by both sides as a good and successful initiative. PMC is very grateful for being able to use the Stovner venue. Many PMC members have had bad experiences in terms of Norwegians and Norwegian churches, but in Stovner they say that they have been received quite warmly. PMC members feel a sense of belonging in Stovner, and even characterise themselves as “a wing of this church”. The international services have been important in this process, as this is a space where the Ghanaians feel part of the activity because they are involved (“we do it together”). Some members of PMC have experienced tendencies towards social exclusion even within the church context. PMC hopes that CoN might help financially with appointing a new pastor. The written material supports the findings from the interviews. Except for the international services, the groups are separate and live parallel lives.

PMC members feel a sense of belonging to the building as their church. It is interesting to see how the understanding changes when the PMC service, international service and CoN service are described. Knott’s (2005) *physical, social and mental rooms* may help us to understand this better. The physical room is likely to be an aspect of continuation, making it easier for both congregations to engage in a joint, international service on common ground, in “their” room. Thus the order of the physical room affects the social room. The mental rooms are clearly divided into “our” and “their”. Throughout the international services, a greater “we” is evident. In the “we” that occurs in the international service setting, there seems also to be an exchange of cultural and social capital that has the potential for enriching both congregations (Gulsett, 2007, p. 72; Kahl, 2002). The aspects of space and social capital are further discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Consequences for Identity**

In the previous chapters it has been shown that PMC was the initiator in using Stovner church building for services. CoN Stovner congregation, on the other hand, right from the start was eager to include PMC in closer cooperation on joint events, mainly the international services held twice a year. In that sense, one might say that, at least from the start, PMC wanted a venue, whereas CoN wanted cooperation leading to more multicultural activity in the parish. Since the cooperation was established in 2007, there have not, according to the informants, been any serious conflicts between the congregations. The CoN leaders describe certain minor misunderstandings concerning timing. They also express some disappointment that the migrants do not participate more in the joint events. The PMC members express some disappointment that CoN has not been able to assist them more in the process of finding a new pastor. These things are, however, mentioned after an expression of gratitude for the relationship between the congregations. Though the congregations do not belong to the same denomination, they seem to regard each other as churches not far from each other theologically. This is interesting as some migrant churches, albeit mainly the Charismatic new mission churches, are often critical of the local churches even when they have rental agreements with them (Währisch-Oblau, 2010, pp. 188-189). This chapter investigates different aspects of the relationship. The build-up is as follows: language and culture (5.1), balance and levels (5.2), understanding of space (5.3), social integration (5.4), and future hopes (5.5).

### ***5.1 Language and Culture that Unite and Divide***

Challenges of language are mentioned by all informants as a major obstacle to more informal social bridging between the groups. As seen in the introductory chapter, language brings problems for nearly all migrant churches. Ethnic language is one of the main reasons for having a migrant church. At the same time language is a potential barrier as it might exclude second-generation immigrants and block a closer relationship with Norwegian churches. In the Stovner case, however, it seems that the informants from both groups are using language as an identity marker, or even as an excuse. Therefore language prevents the members of both groups from dealing with their cultural and social differences. This is evidenced by the fact that liturgical language is often formal and difficult, whereas the language of socialising is informal everyday language that most of the migrants in PMC have mastered very well. Thus language alone should not be a reason for the lack of social interaction. On the contrary,

several of the PMC informants have experienced xenophobia even within the church setting. Many were also disappointed that Norwegians, both inside and outside church, did not greet them. Stepick et al. (2009, p. 265) underline the importance of reception as a key factor for building good relations with immigrants. The empirical data are not consistent with regard to how this has been experienced in Stovner. Some informants say they have been well received. Others have had mixed experience. This suggests that the migrants feel their language is not good enough, possibly because they do not feel welcome as they are. As the majority society, the Norwegians are responsible for making the migrants feel welcome as equal members. When this does not happen, the migrants choose to stay with people from their own group where they feel secure. Putnam's (2000) theory of *bridging social capital* may help us to see this. Social bridging is interaction between, or across, groups. When groups meet without being able to interact, the lack of social bridging could make it even harder to introduce a new initiative later. Instead of making new social bridging attempts, the group members might instead invest in *bonding social capital*, i.e. spend more time with their own group members. An immigrant informant made an interesting comparison related to how CoN receives guests:

Sometimes when people from Azerbaijan come to visit, then they share: "You will live with (name), you will sleep at his place, you will be here". Then they find places where they can stay. At Sunday (service) they say: "We have guests who have come from Azerbaijan". And then when they go back they say: "We have been in Norway, and Norwegians are so kind, we were invited". That's how it should be also within the church, the congregation.<sup>63</sup>

This informant points to two important things. First, CoN, the Norwegians, have the resources, and should be responsible for new initiatives of cooperation. Second, he questions why guests from abroad are received and welcomed just as they are, whereas migrants are expected to adapt to Norwegian life, often without having any possibility of influence.

## **5.2 Balance and Levels in Cooperation**

The relationship between CoN Stovner and PMC is a formal rental agreement concerning use of the church building. It is also a cooperation agreement concerning international services and other joint events. Furthermore, the cooperation has outcomes on the personal level, for example pastors or others from CoN preaching or teaching in PMC. There are also a few personal relationships between members. It is a fact that CoN owns the church building, has

---

<sup>63</sup> "Noen ganger når vi finner folk fra Azerbaijan som kommer på besøk. Så deler de: Du skal bo hos (navn), du skal sove hos han, du skal være her, og så finner de steder som de kan bo. Og så på søndag så sier de: Vi har folk som har kommet fra Azerbaijan. Og så når de reiser tilbake så sier de: Vi har vært i Norge, og nordmenn er så snille, vi ble invitert. Slik skulle det være også inne i kirka/menigheten".

employed pastors and others, and is a majority church in the area. Hence, the relationship between the congregations has elements of a host-guest or patron-client relationship. Some of the Norwegian informants expressed this as CoN having a “big brother” function. The Norwegian informants insisted that the cooperation did not change when PMC lost their pastor. The PMC leaders, on the other hand, described this as a workload they struggled to handle. The importance of finding a new spiritual leader was frequently repeated in the interviews.<sup>64</sup> This theme was also touched upon when PMC was described as “a wing of this church”. There was a clear expectation that CoN might help them to find their feet. PMC is never described as a group within CoN. The importance of remaining two separate congregations is articulated by both groups. One of the reasons for this could be PMC’s frequent contact with the mother churches in Ghana. It seems, however, that the home connection and the Stovner connection are not mutually exclusive. There is a tendency among Norwegian churches to think of migrants and their churches as clients and people who need to be served rather than as those who could contribute (Haugen, 2010, p. 220; Lindseth, 2006, p. 365; see also Währisch-Oblau, 2010, p. 190). Währisch-Oblau (2010) challenges:

A real opening-up towards migrant Christians would mean a process of radical re-definition of their own heritages and identities... Integration means that both the integrators and the integrated have to change (p. 193).

Währisch-Oblau’s criticism fits CoN. The CoN's part in the relationship, with the exception of the international services, is often only to invite or include migrants in CoN events. Though the intentions are good, the Ghanaians very seldom show up. As already mentioned, there is a big difference between being included and being involved. From what is described above, one can also assume that the migrants are disappointed that CoN does not give them more support for their own services. Taking initiatives that would make migrants feel more confident and at home in the joint events is surely an important responsibility of the majority congregation.

### **5.3 The Greater “We” - A New Space of Unity**

The two congregations are, as observed by several informants, divided because of three main factors: language, spirituality and age. CoN tends to keep a traditional liturgy in its Norwegian-speaking service with mainly old and elderly people. The Twi-speaking, young and grown-up members of PMC focus on making the service a lively event, challenging and empowering members to handle situations in their daily life. Despite these clear differences,

---

<sup>64</sup> Døving (2012, p. 45) emphasises the importance of religious leaders in producing religious symbols in the migration context.

all informants express satisfaction with the outcomes of the international services. They articulate ownership of the international services, and the alternation of responsibility between the congregations seems to be an important reason for this. CoN members state that the international services enrich the fellowship. PMC members express appreciation that the Norwegians tend to imitate parts of their religious practice. This reveals a new sense of unity that has occurred through the international service fellowship. One factor constituting this unity could be a sense of belonging to the same church building. Stovner church building thus becomes an *axis mundi*, or world axis, and a symbol of worship that is well known to both groups. This is what Lefebvre (1974/2005) calls *representational space*. Knott (2005) has shown how physical rooms affect social and mental rooms. This is exactly what happens in Stovner church building. The joint ritual is also of great importance here, as ritual helps the members to focus on what they have in common and even create new social and religious bonds. Corrigan (2009) explains:

Ritual sacralizes landscapes of various scales and locates them with reference to a human body, a community, or an *axis mundi*... ritual removes persons from their familiar landscapes of status, class, gender, ethnicity, and so forth and prepares them for encounter with awful power (p. 165).

On the other hand it would be naïve to claim that joint services could remove all regimes of power that organise life outside the church building. It is important to be aware that power structures of society also are transmitted and framed in congregational lives (Corrigan, 2009, p. 168). An example of this is the majority and “big brother” role of the CoN, still visible in the international services. Nevertheless, it is striking how the sense of belonging in the physical room also leads to a unity in the social and mental rooms. This causes the informants describe a greater “we”. Knott’s (2005) notion that space is practised and leads to the creation of new spaces is confirmed here. The physical, social and mental rooms work together. The Stovner church building, or more precisely, the nave, is the physical room. The social room occurs when people from the two congregations meet. The mental room is influenced by the two former rooms, and also carries the expectations of attending services and joint worship. The new understanding of “we” comes about when all these rooms, or spaces, work together. This is also supported by Tweed’s (2006) definition of religion as

confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries (p. 54, 167).

The international service gives a sense of unity between the two groups, creating an arena, or “home”, where they may be able to cross boundaries of culture and language.

## **5.4 Cooperation as a Way to Social Integration**

Putnam's (2000) theory of *bridging* and *bonding* social capital is helpful for assessing the social aspect of the Stovner relationship. As seen above, social interaction, or social bridging, between the members of the two groups is a missing element in the relationship. According to the questionnaires, 39% of the Norwegians and 81% of the Ghanaians often or sometimes miss more contact with people from the other group. Even though the CoN pastors encourage people to mingle during the international services and the coffee following church, the members tend to stay with people from their own group (also noted by Dorsey, 2000, p. 256; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a; Gulsett, 2007, pp. 45-46). The ethnic Norwegian informants see this as a challenge. In order to overcome this tendency, they suggest arranging "mixed tables", or arranging a competition where mixed groups get to do different tasks where they would have to get to know each other. This offers great potential for the exchange of social and cultural capital. At present, however, the members meet and greet each other, but there are few friendships across the groups.<sup>65</sup> In line with Putnam (2000) we could say that the groups are producing bonding social capital within their ethnic groups, but only occasionally is there bridging social capital between the groups. The bridging is, with a few exceptions, on a leadership level, between the CoN pastors and church coordinator, and the PMC board members. PMC offers social capital primarily for Ghanaian immigrants by facilitating the integration process of new immigrants, and providing "a source of security and a bastion of cultural, ethnic, and religious identity" (Adogame, 2004, p. 44; see also Adamavi-Aho Ekué, 2008, p. 25; Tettey, 2007, p. 233).

Marco Valenta's (2008) theory of *social integration* can take us to a new level. According to Valenta, immigrants build a primary and a secondary zone in their social network. The primary zone consists of compatriots, whereas the secondary zone includes indigenous locals and others. Using Valenta's perspective for the Stovner case, we could argue that PMC has become part of the primary zone for the Ghanaians. Conversely, through the appreciation of the international services, it seems that CoN is an important part of the secondary zone. If this interpretation is correct, the empowerment of migrants as known through migrant churches (Essamuah, 2011, p. 112; Mulatis, 2011) seems to be even stronger when the migrant church also has interactions with an indigenous church. Foley and Hoge (2007, p. 39) state that a "sense of identity developed in and through common worship may encourage immigrant

---

<sup>65</sup> Gulsett (2007, p. 39) noted that contact outside the church setting was a major factor in bridging between members of the two ethnic groups in her study. See also Foley and Hoge (2007, p. 91).

participation in the larger polity”. Such cooperation could promote social integration. It should on the other hand be noted that an important reason for the success of the cooperation in Stovner is the fact that key individuals in PMC have been in Norway for some time, and already understand many aspects of the culture.<sup>66</sup>

### ***5.5 Hope for the Future***

When asked what the future congregations of Stovner will look like, the informants admit to dreaming about the establishment of multicultural churches. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000a, pp. 143-145) devised six models of how the new immigrant congregations might look in the future. There are four models of mono-ethnic congregations. (1) Second generation and new immigrants. (2) Only second generation. (3) Second generation and new immigrants with a different identity from those who established the church. (4) Only second generation with different identity. Further, there are two models of multiethnic congregations. (5) Second generation and new immigrants. (6) Only second generation. This is interesting, as Jenkins (2007) also suggests that the growth of migrant churches and the pressure from a growing number of Muslims may bring Western Christians together in redefined, devoted Christian activity, and renewed interest in European Christian roots (Jenkins, 2007, p. 281, 287; see also Hanciles, 2003, p. 152; Jongeneel, 2003, p. 33). The PMC members expressed a hope that their children will one day make the congregation multicultural.<sup>67</sup> The CoN informants also mentioned this as a possibility, but they criticised the CoN Oslo Diocese for stalling the process. Währisch-Oblau (2010) sees the international identities of migrant churches as models for the future, and challenges “white, indigenous churches” to learn from them (pp. 193-194; see also Stoffels, 2008, p. 25). Informants also plead for more ecumenical engagement between churches in the area, for instance in arranging bigger events. One of the PMC informants expressed a desire for the Ghanaian congregations and other Christians in Oslo to combine:

I know about at least five (congregations) only in the Ghanaian milieu and within those we don't have enough cooperation. I think that is sad, actually, because we are all Christians, but we divide

---

<sup>66</sup> Gulsett (2007, pp. 44-45) noted challenges of planning, form, and balance in multicultural services in her study.

<sup>67</sup> This is also a strategy of Ghanaian churches in Canada (Tettey, 2007, p. 246). Bingham (2011) explains how a black and a white Baptist church in the USA managed to merge after a time of preparation.

ourselves... We don't stand strongly enough together as Christians when we allow these divisions and label ourselves.<sup>68</sup>

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter has explained how the informants use language as an identity marker, and sometimes also as an excuse for a lack of social interaction between the two congregations. Insecurity owing to cultural and social boundaries is an underlying factor. The relational balance between the congregations tends to be affected by CoN's "big brother" attitude. This more or less conscious attitude leads to disappointment and frustration on both sides. CoN expects PMC members to participate more in their events. PMC is frustrated that CoN cannot contribute more financially so they can appoint a new PMC pastor or assist more in other ways. Despite the above-mentioned challenges, the international services have created a new common ground. This is appreciated by both groups, and all informants express feelings of ownership in this matter. Knott's (2005) theory of physical, social and mental rooms helps us to understand the international services. Through the use of a common room and involvement of both groups, a new space of unity occurs. The achievements from the international services lay a foundation that according to Valenta's (2008) theory might be of great importance in making migrants build wider social networks. PMC and compatriots form the primary zone, and CoN and other "weak ties" constitute the secondary zone. The balance between the primary and secondary zones is important in order for migrants to have a sense of coping with their new environment. Thus a church relationship like the one in Stovner may have major effects in terms of social integration. All informants mention a multicultural church as a possibility or dream in the future.

---

<sup>68</sup> "Jeg kjenner ihvertfall til fem stykker bare for det ghanesiske miljøet, og innen disse har vi ikke nok samarbeid, og det syns jeg er litt synd, egentlig, for vi er kristne alle sammen, men vi skiller oss... Vi står ikke sterke nok som kristne når vi legger disse skillene og disse navnene over oss".



## Chapter 6: Lessons for Renewed Practice

In the light of Browning's (1991) model for practical theology, I will attempt to summarise the findings identified in the present study that could lead to renewed practice. Browning suggests that practical theology is made in the movement from descriptive theology, via systematic and historic theology, to strategic practical theology. This paper has so far mostly been descriptive. The *koinonia* (fellowship) church model used as a basis for the work in this thesis represents the systematic theology. In this chapter I will attempt to draw some lines onto the strategic practical theology. There are approximately 44 migrant churches housed by Norwegian churches in Oslo. Though these churches belong to a diverse group of denominations and ethnicities, many of their challenges are similar to what has been encountered in Stovner. Given the findings on the relationship between CoN Stovner and PMC one can make the following six factors.

A first important factor is to be willing to learn from the experience of others. The Danes are already far ahead of Norway in this respect, and the work of Munck-Fairwood (2004, 2008) gives a good presentation of migrant churches, migrant leaders, second- and third-generation migrant members, and also examples of practical experiences from their situations. In the Danish context there is also an excellent website about all the migrant churches in Denmark (Tværkulturelt Center, 2012). Such plans are also being made for Norway.<sup>69</sup>

A second factor is to remember that the migrants and migrant churches are resources. Why are migrant churches not used as resources for the organisations sending missionaries to foreign countries? The ethnic Norwegians and the majority church, CoN, have a responsibility to care for Christian migrant sisters and brothers by helping them to form networks and to find venues for their worship. Why do we not invite migrant churches to use our church buildings? Making clear agreements and establishing practical frameworks is important. Additionally, continuous communication is needed, and "it is important that everyone knows who the immigrants are, why they come, and that they are not Muslims!" (Munck-Fairwood, 2004, p. 165; Schmidt-Hesse & Kaseva, 1996; Simon, 2008).

A third factor is that only interaction can combat xenophobia and mistrust. A number of Norwegian churches and congregations already have rental agreements with migrant

---

<sup>69</sup> [www.migrantmenigheter.no](http://www.migrantmenigheter.no) is still under construction and is as yet unavailable.

churches. Some of these relationships might be perceived negatively because the members have prejudices or do not know each other. Harfst (2008, p. 342) explains: “on both sides there is mistrust and lack of respect about whether the partners can be considered to be real Christians”. The Stovner case has revealed that a closer relationship might bring challenges, but it also presents great new achievements and opportunities. I see it as an important task for Norwegian churches to engage in closer relationships with the migrant churches. This could combat xenophobia and racism, and offer both congregations new insights. What about a summer camp together?<sup>70</sup>

A fourth factor is an awareness of being a welcoming congregation. Norwegian congregations should work on a culture of welcoming and showing interest in newcomers. This could be made a theme in the congregations, and newcomers could be asked to participate in tasks, and be given responsibility (see Gulsett, 2007, pp. 49-51).

A fifth factor is the importance of developing friendships across ethnicity. Norwegian Christians should be aware that this is a massive task. It could be inviting immigrants to Norwegian homes and to other activities outside the church context. Regularity and continuity in the relationship could make things easier (see Gulsett, 2007, p. 52, 54).

A sixth factor is the “big brother” attitude of the Norwegian churches that is hindering openness to mutual theological learning and discussion. Migrant churches should be seen as mutual ecumenical partners, and helped to find training courses for their pastors and leaders. How can this happen while migrant churches are regarded as paying guests?

Finally, Saba (2008) asks an important question of the Nordic churches: “What do we really want our churches to be?” (p. 47). He then gives three options; a multicultural church, a church with multicultural ministries, or a church that is only present in a multicultural society. This is a crucial question that should be discussed by CoN church boards around the country.

---

<sup>70</sup> Gulsett (2007, p. 47) describes how the summer camp is the main creator of fellowship in congregations.

## **Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusions**

This case study has focused on the relationship between a Norwegian CoN congregation and a Ghanaian PMC congregation sharing the same church building. The study has looked at what the congregations do together, how they understand each other, and what significance the use of a common room has for the relationship. The sources of information are six qualitative interviews, assisted by two short surveys, participant observation of selected events, and a few textual sources. The research problem of this paper was: *what characterises the relationship between the two congregations and how does this relationship influence the identity of the congregations?* In order to try to give answers to this research problem, three sub-questions were posited. The sub-questions are answered briefly in Section 7.2.

### **7.1 Summary of Findings on the Congregations**

Stovner church building was inaugurated in 1979, thanks to the work of a number of active church members who still constitute the core of the congregation. Stovner is a multicultural area where many ethnic Norwegian families reside for only a short time. Consequently, the core of the CoN congregation consists of elderly people settled in Stovner. Though the core of members is getting old, the congregation still facilitate many activities, run both by the employees and the numerous active members. The church building is a multipurpose house, and a kindergarten uses the basement.

The Presbyterian Methodist Church, Oslo was started by people from the Ghanaian Methodist and Presbyterian traditions in January 2006. The motivations for starting the church were threefold. (1) Use the Twi language. (2) Sing the traditional songs and maintain the liturgical traditions. (3) Establish a livelier congregation than found in the Norwegian congregations. The church grew fast, and needed a proper location. A request was made to Stovner Parish, and an agreement was made in May 2007. It is noteworthy that the migrants were the ones who made the initiative and contacted Stovner Parish. PMC had a full-time pastor until January 2011, but she had to leave the country owing to problems with her work permit. The PMC members mostly hold Norwegian passports, speak Norwegian fluently, and have lived in Norway for many years. Few PMC members live within the Stovner Parish, and most of them live on the north-eastern side of Oslo, which is “the right side of town” for accessing Stovner. The PMC members have a strong identity as Ghanaian Presbyterians and Methodists, and these people constitute the target group of the church. Accordingly, the congregation

keeps in frequent contact with the mother churches in Ghana. The congregation is struggling with its finances, and members are encouraged to increase their offertory in order to be able to employ a new pastor. The PMC services usually last for about an hour and a half, follow a certain liturgy, and are characterised by a large number of active participants in the service.

## **7.2 Summary of Findings on the Church Relationship**

### *What are the congregations doing together?*

The congregations arrange two international services together every year. They also arrange a few other joint events, and they each invite people from the other congregation to participate in their events. The relationship has benefits for both congregations at quite low cost. CoN gets help in creating an image as a multicultural congregation, and PMC gets a place to stay. There are, however, challenges related to social bridging in terms of both the coffee break after international service and other events that they arrange together. Despite the challenges of social bridging, it is evident that the use of a shared room has influenced the identities of both congregations. By using the same room, and having international services where they *practice space* together (Knott, 2005), the congregations gradually get to know each other more. Both congregations have challenges in reaching and retaining their children and youth within the church setting. By developing the relationship they will be better able to teach the youth how to be religious in a pluralistic and secular society (Wartena et al., 2008).

### *How do they understand each other and the events they arrange together?*

It has become evident that the informants use language as an identity marker, and sometimes also as an excuse for a lack of social interaction between the two congregations. Insecurity because of cultural and social boundaries is an underlying factor. The Norwegians tend to describe the relationship with PMC primarily as a formal rental agreement, and thus adopt a “big brother’s” attitude. The relational balance between the congregations tends to be affected by this attitude. This more or less conscious attitude leads to disappointment and frustration on both sides. The CoN leaders aim to make their congregation more multicultural and expect PMC members to participate more in their events. They frequently invite PMC to participate in different events, but this has turned out to be rather difficult. A reason for this might be that CoN invites and tries to include but does not really involve the migrants. PMC is frustrated that CoN cannot contribute financially so they can appoint a new PMC pastor. Despite the above-mentioned challenges, the international services, where both congregations are

involved, have created a new common ground and a common identity. Through the use of a common room, and involvement of both groups, a new space of unity occurs.

PMC is very grateful for being able to use Stovner venue, and the members feel a sense of belonging to the church building. Some even characterise PMC as “a wing of this church”. The joint service is a space where the Ghanaians feel part of the activity because they are involved. Despite this, some members of PMC have also experienced tendencies towards social exclusion within the church context. Other members have had experiences in terms of meeting Norwegians and in Norwegian churches elsewhere, but say that in Stovner they have been received quite well. Except for the international services, the groups are separate and live parallel lives. There are few friendships or other kinds of interaction across the congregations. Hence, we might say that the relationship consists of occasional *social bridging* (Putnam, 2000).

*What is the importance of using a common room?*

PMC members feel a sense of belonging in the building. It is interesting to see how the understanding of room changes when PMC services, international services and CoN services are discussed. Knott’s (2005) *physical, social and mental rooms* may help us to understand this better. The physical room, Stovner church building, is likely to be an element of continuation. The building makes it easier for both congregations to engage in a joint, international service on common ground, in “their” room. Thus the order of the physical room affects the social room. The mental rooms are clearly divided into “our” and “their”. Throughout the international services, a greater “we” comes about. In the “we” that occurs in the international service setting, there seems also to be an exchange of cultural and social capital that has the potential for enriching both congregations. This could happen through what Putnam (2000) calls *bridging* social capital, i.e. more interaction between the groups through friendships and more frequent joint events.

The achievements of the international services lay a foundation that according to Valenta’s (2008) theory might be of great importance in making migrants build wider social networks. PMC and compatriots form the primary zone, and CoN and other “weak ties” constitute the secondary zone. The balance between the primary and secondary zones is important in order for migrants to have a sense of coping with their new environment. Thus a church relationship like the one in Stovner may have major effects in terms of social integration. All informants

mention a multicultural church as a possibility or a dream in the future. Thus it is evident that the church relationship has also influenced the identities of the congregations. In order for a multicultural church to come into existence, more social bridging between members of the two groups will be of great importance.

### **7.3 Significance of the Study**

This study has attempted to describe and investigate the relationship between a migrant church and a Norwegian church who share a church building. This kind of relationship is not unique to CoN Stovner and PMC. Approximately half of all migrant churches in Oslo rent buildings from Norwegian churches. As far as the researcher knows, this paper is among the first to focus on this phenomenon in the Norwegian context. It is my hope and wish that this paper will open up new possibilities for the research and development of these relationships. The study is a case study of a Ghanaian Presbyterian-Methodist migrant church and an indigenous Norwegian CoN congregation. An important question is to what extent the findings from this paper can be generalised. Moreover, if generalisation is possible, what do these findings tell us about the phenomenon? What can we learn?

Clearly, migrant churches and also the Norwegian indigenous churches represent great diversity. As regards the question of generalisation, we should remember that every congregation has certain characteristics. CoN Stovner for instance has an evangelical, low-church profile compared with many other CoN congregations in the Oslo area. Additionally, the congregation has a mission focus and key individuals who are concerned with taking care of immigrants. PMC is an ethnic migrant church where denominational belonging is important. This is different from the numerous Charismatic migrant churches that often claim to be non-denominational or international. Thus, two factors make relationships easier at Stovner. (1) Key individuals in the indigenous congregation are open-minded, and (2) the migrant church belongs to the mainline Protestant tradition. Nevertheless, it is likely that experiences related to occasional social bonding and the sharing of a common space are relevant elsewhere as well. Duplicate studies are needed to validate this theory. I would like to argue that there are at least three elements that are present and useful in most migrant church-indigenous church relationships.

First, it is important to be aware that the Norwegian churches, owing to the ethnic composition of the country, are always in a “big brother” position. Though this is often the case when it comes to self-owned church buildings, financial resources, and the number of employees, the migrant churches should not be perceived unequal for this reason. When this happens, the relationship easily develops into a kind of patron-client or host-guest relationship that might hinder further cooperation. Migrant churches must be accepted as equal, with their own programmes and plans. In order to establish equal relationships, the members of the congregations must also see each other as Christian sisters and brothers. This is only possible through regular interaction and development of friendships across the groups. Thus social bridging is of crucial importance.

A second factor, closely related to the first, is the fact that migrants need the balance of primary and secondary social zones (Valenta, 2008). Forcing migrants into patterns made by the “big brother” can never be successful. Rather, the focus should be on initiating friendships across the congregational and ethnic lines, and helping the migrants to widen their social networks. Accordingly, a better understanding of each other will help the congregations avoid some of the challenges related to communication and cultural differences.

The third element concerns official structures. The Norwegian churches and all other Christians have a responsibility for helping migrants and migrant churches to adapt to Norwegian society. This means finding venues for their services, developing and maintaining healthy leadership structures, and so on.

In sum, I would argue that the Stovner case is a local example of how migrant churches can be welcomed and cooperation established. It has been shown in this thesis that the use of a common room and regular common worship (albeit only twice a year) have created a sense of unity. This new sense of unity has to some extent influenced the identities of the congregations. On the other hand, there are major challenges in Stovner when it comes to social bridging across the congregations. I will argue that the future of a vibrant Christian church in Norway is dependent on whether Christians of different ethnic backgrounds are able to come together and get to know each other.



## References

- Adams, M. (2006). 'Hybridizing Habitus and Reflexivity: Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Identity?', *Sociology*, 40/3: 511-528.
- Aden, A. (2009). *ABC i integrering: 111 gode råd om hvordan alle kan bli fullverdige borgere i det norske samfunnet*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Adamavi-Aho Ekué, A. (2008). 'Negotiating Vulnerability and Power - The Construction of Migrant Religious Identity', in B.H.R. Schär and R. Geisler (eds), *Theological Reflections on Migration*. Brussels: Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe.
- Adogame, A. (2004). 'Contesting the Ambivalences of Modernity in a Global Context: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, North America', *Studies in World Christianity*, 10/1: 25-48.
- Adogame, A., and Weisköppel, C. (2005a). *Religion in the Context of African Migration*. Bayreuth African Studies Series, No. 75. Bayreuth, Germany: Bayreuth African Studies Series.
- Adogame, A., and Chitando, E. (2005b). 'Moving among Those Moved by the Spirit: Conducting Fieldwork within the New African Religious Diaspora', *Field-work in Religion*, 3: 253-270.
- Adogame, A. (2008). 'Up, Up Jesus! Down, Down Satan! African Religiosity in the Former Soviet Bloc - The Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations', *Exchange*, 37: 310-336.
- Adogame, A. (2011). 'Traversing the United Kingdom of God: The Transnationalisation of the New African Religious Diaspora', in J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu and F. Ludwig (eds.), *African Christian Presence in the West – New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Akinade, A. E. (2007). 'Non-Western Christianity in the Western World – African Immigrant Churches in the Diaspora', in J. K. Olupona and R. Gemignani (eds.), *African Immigrant Religions in America*. New York: New York University Press.
- Alghasi, S., Eide, E., and Hylland Eriksen, T. (2012). *Den globale drabantbyen: Groruddalen og det nye Norge*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Asamoah-Gyadu, J. K. (2008). 'I Will Put My Breath in You, and You Will Come to Life: Charismatic Renewal in Ghanaian Mainline Churches and its Implications for African Diasporan Christianity', in A. Adogame, R. Gerloff, and K. Hock (eds.), *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora*. London: Continuum Religious Studies.

- Asamoah-Gyadu, J. K. (2010). 'Mediating Spiritual Power: African Christianity, Transnationalism and the Media', in A. Adogame and J. V. Spickard (eds.), *Religion Crossing Boundaries – Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.
- Asamoah-Gyadu, J. K. (2011). 'On Mission Abroad: Ghana's Church of Pentecost and its USA Missions', in J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu and F. Ludwig (eds.), *African Christian Presence in the West – New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Austigard, K. (2008). *En empirisk undersøkelse av den spansktalende gruppen i Salemkirken i Oslo*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in the Sociology of Religion. Oslo: Norwegian School of Theology.
- Barnard, M. (2008). 'African Worship in an Amsterdam Business District: Liturgy in Immigrant Churches', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Baur, J. (1998). *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa – An African Church History, Second Revised Edition*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa.
- Biney, M. (2007). 'Singing the Lord's Song in a Foreign Land – Spirituality, Community, and Identity in a Ghanaian Immigrant Congregation', in J. K. Olupona and R. Gemignani (eds.), *African Immigrant Religions in America*. New York: New York University Press.
- Bingham, L. (2011). 'When Two Churches Became One', *Review and Expositor*, 108: 545-556.
- Browning, D. S. (1991). *A Fundamental Practical Theology – Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods – 4th Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- CIA World Factbook. (2012). 'Ghana', <http://www.ciaworldfactbook.us/africa/ghana> (accessed 22 September 2012).
- CoN Stovner website. (2012). 'Årsrapport Stovner menighet 2011', Annual report of Stovner congregation, <http://www.stovnerkirke.no/lag/lagret341.pdf> (accessed 17 September 2012).
- CoN Stovner website. (2011). 'Om kirken', <http://www.stovnerkirke.no/side.php?nr=12> (accessed 14 September 2012).
- CoN Stovner website. (2010). 'Fargerik internasjonal gudstjeneste',

- <http://www.stovnerkirke.no/side.php?nr=69> (accessed 4 October 2012).
- Corrigan, J. (2009). 'Spatiality and religion', in B. Warf and S. Arias (eds.), *The Spatial Turn – Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Daswani, G. (2010). 'Transformation and Migration among Members of a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 40: 442-474.
- Desta, L., and Bommen M. M. (2010). 'Dette vil vi – et kirkelig visjonsdokument om innvandring og integrering', Christian Council of Norway - Norges Kristne Råd, <http://www.norgeskristnerad.no/doc/Flyktningenettverket/Dette%20vil%20vi.pdf> (accessed 7 September 2012).
- Dorsey, P. (2000). 'Southwest Assembly of God: Whomsoever Will', in H. R. Ebaugh and J. S. Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
- Døving, C. A., and Thorbjørnsrud, B. (2012). *Religiøse ledere – Makt og avmakt i norske trossamfunn*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Ebaugh, H. R., and Chafetz, J. S. (2000a). *Religion and the New Immigrants*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
- Ebaugh, H. R., and Chafetz, J. S. (2000b). 'Dilemmas of Language in Immigrant Congregations: The Tie That Binds or The Tower of Babel?', *Review of Religious Research*, 41: 432-452.
- Ebaugh, H. R., O'Brien, J., and Chafetz, J. S. (2000c). 'The Social Ecology of Residential Patterns and Membership in Immigrant Churches', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39/1: 107-116.
- Ebaugh, H. R., and Chafetz, J. S. (2002). *Religion across Borders – Transnational Immigrant Networks*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
- Ebaugh, H. R. (2010). 'Transnationality and Religion in Immigrant Congregations: The Global Impact', *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, 23/2: 105-119.
- Eichholzer, E. (2011). 'Ever Generous Lord, How Can I Praise You? – The Ghanaian Gospel Boom in Hamburg', in J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu and F. Ludwig (eds.), *African Christian Presence in the West – New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Ekeland, T. (2011). *En salig blanding – En casestudie av flerkulturell menighetsutvikling*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in Religious Studies. Oslo: Norwegian School of Theology.
- Essamuah, C. B. (2011). 'Dynamism and Challenges among Ghanaian Methodists in the

- Washington DC (USA) Metroplex', in J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu and F. Ludwig (eds.), *African Christian Presence in the West – New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*.  
Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Everett, E. L., and Furseth, I. (2012). *Masteroppgaven: Hvordan begynne – og fullføre, 2. utgave*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Fiskerstrand, R. (2011). 'DAWN-Undersøkelsen 2010', DAWN Norge,  
<http://dawnnorge.no/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/DAWN-unders%C3%B8kelse-2010-Vokser-kirken-i-Norge.pdf> (accessed 19 April 2012).
- Foley, M. W., and Hoge, D. R. (2007). *Religion and the New Immigrants – How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Furseth, I. (2008). 'Social Capital and Immigrant Religion',  
*Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, 21/2: 147-164.
- Ganzevoort, R. R. (2008). 'A Theological Challenge for the Churches in Europe',  
in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Ghanaian Embassy. (2010). 'A Brief History of Ghana', Ghanaian Embassy Brussels,  
<https://www.ghanaembassy.be/about-ghana/brief-history-of-ghana.html>  
(accessed 18 September 2012).
- Gifford, P. (1994). 'Ghana's Charismatic Churches',  
*Journal of Religion in Africa*, 24/3: 241-265.
- Gullaksen, J. G. (2009). *Synlig, men ikke sett? På hvilken måte kan innvandrere inkluderes i en menighet i Den norske kirke?* Unpublished Master's Thesis in Theology.  
Oslo: Norwegian School of Theology.
- Gulsett, H. (2007). *Dere er alle en i Jesus Kristus - En studie av en flerkulturell menighet*.  
Unpublished Master's Thesis in Social Science. Tromsø: University of Tromsø.
- Hagan, J., and Ebaugh, H. R. (2003). 'Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants' Use of Religion in the Migration Process', *International Migration Review*, 37/4: 1145-1162.
- Hanciles, J. J. (2003). 'Migration and Mission: Some Implications for the Twenty-first-Century Church', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 4: 146-153.
- Hanciles, J. J. (2004). 'Beyond Christendom – African Migration and Transformations in Global Christianity', *Studies in World Christianity*, 1: 93-113.
- Hansen, E. (2007). *En empirisk undersøkelse av Scandinavia Chinese Christian Church i Oslo*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in the Sociology of Religion.

- Oslo: Norwegian School of Theology.
- Harfst, U. (2008). 'The Program for Cooperation between German and Foreign Language Churches and African Churches in the Rhein-Ruhr-Region: Developments from 1999', in A. Adogame, R. Gerloff and K. Hock (eds.), *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora*. London: Continuum Religious Studies.
- Haugen, H. M. (2010). 'Den norske kirke og de flerkulturelle utfordringer', *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke*, 3: 208-220.
- Hegstad, H. (1999). *Kirke i forandring – Fellesskap, tilhørighet og mangfold i Den norske kirke*. Oslo: Luther forlag.
- Hegstad, H. (2011). 'Folk Church as Communitio - Developments in Social Reality and Theological Interpretation', in Ecumenism in the Nordic Region, *Nordic Folk Church Ecclesiologies*. Stockholm: Ecumenism in the Nordic Region.
- Hegstad, H. (2012). 'Folkekirken som fellesskap: Trenger vi en ny folkekirke?', *Ung Teologi*, 1: 8-19.
- Heuser, A. (2006). 'Damascus Christian Church – die Lokalisierung einer ghanaischen Unabhängigen Kirche in den Landschaften von Migration und Diaspora', *Zeitschrift für Mission*, 3: 189-217.
- Heuser, A. (2009). 'Transnational Construction and Local Imagination of Crusade Christianity', *Nova Religio*, 1: 68-91.
- Horn-Hanssen, F. (2007). "Jeg føler meg bare sånn filippinsk og katolikk" - *Nasjonal og religiøs identitet blant filippinere i St. Olav domkirkes menighet i Oslo*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in History of Religion. Oslo: University of Oslo.
- Jackson, D., and Passarelli, A. (2008). *Mapping Migration – Mapping Churches' Responses, Europe Study*. Brussels: Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe & Nova Research Centre.
- Jansen, M., and Stoffels, H. (2008). *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Jansen, M. (2008). 'Deliver Us from Evil: Deliverance Prayers in Three African Christian Communities in Amsterdam', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Jansen, M. (2010). 'Hermeneutics as a Key Issue Between Migrant and Non-Migrant Churches', *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*, 20/2: 133-147.
- Jenkins, P. (2007). *God's Continent – Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Jongeneel, J. A. B. (2003). 'The Mission of Migrant Churches in Europe', *Missiology: An International Review*, 31/1: 29-33.
- Kahl, W. (2002). 'A Theological Perspective: The Common Missionary Vocation of Mainline and Migrant Churches', *International Review of Mission* 91, 362: 328-341.
- Kahl, W. (2011). 'African Theological Training in Germany (ATTIG): A Study Programme of the Academy of Mission for, and with African Migrant Church Leaders in Northern Germany', in J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu and F. Ludwig (eds.), *African Christian Presence in the West – New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*.
- Kirkenytt. (2004-2012). Parish magazines distributed to all inhabitants in the Stovner area. Publications from 2004-2012 are available online: <http://www.stovnerkirke.no/side.php?nr=16> (accessed 17 September 2012).
- Klomp, M. (2008). 'Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord! The Sound of Liturgy in the Wesley Methodist Church', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Knott, K. (2005). *The Location of Religion – A Spatial Analysis*. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.
- Knott, K. (2009). 'From Locality to Location and Back Again: A Spatial Journey in the Study of Religion', *Religion*, 39/2: 154-160.
- Knott, K., and McLoughlin, S. (2010). *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*. London: Zed Books.
- Koning, D. (2008). 'Bringing the Gospel back to Europe: Immigrant Churches as New Missionaries', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Kühle, L. (2012). 'In the Faith of Our Fathers? Religious Minority Socialization in Pluralistic Societies', *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, 25/2: 113-130.
- Laundal, K. (2008). *Afrikansk pentekostalisme i Oslo - En religionsantropologisk casestudie av kosmologi og kjønn*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in Religion and Social Science. Oslo: University of Oslo.
- Lanser, A. (2008). 'Rap and Roots: Youth and Music in Immigrant Churches', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Lefebvre, H. (1974/2005). *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

- Lindseth, G. (2006). 'En folkekirke som er åpen i møte med innvandrere?', *Kirke og Kultur*, 3: 361-367.
- Loga, J. (2011). *Inkludering i nærmiljø - En studie av frivillige organisasjoner som flerkulturelle møteplasser*. Oslo: Senter for forskning på sivilsamfunn og frivillig sektor. <http://bomiljonett.no/bn/Publikasjoner/Frivillighet/Inkludering-i-naermiljoe> (Accessed 28 September 2012).
- Ludwig, F., and Asamoah-Gyadu, J. K. (2011). *African Christian Presence in the West - New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Martikainen, T. (2009). 'Religious Diversity Beyond the Cosmopolis: Immigration and the Religious Field in the City of Turku, Finland', *Religion*, 39/2: 176-181.
- Meulen, M. v. d. (2008). 'Being Illegal is like Fishing without a Permit: African Churches, Illegal Immigration, and the Public Sphere', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Mtata, K. (2011). 'How Long Shall We Sing the Lord's Song in a Foreign Land? – African Diaspora Christianity as Space and Place of Imagination', in J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu and F. Ludwig (eds.), *African Christian Presence in the West – New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Mubiru, B. (2008). 'Why the Word Integration Makes Me Tired', in Ecumenism in the Nordic Region, *Together or apart? Report from the Nordic Consultation on Migration and Changing Ecclesial Landscapes*. Stockholm: Nordic Ecumenical Working Group on Migration in cooperation with Ecumenism in the Nordic Region.
- Mulatis, P. (2011). 'Contributions of African Christian Churches to the Integration of Immigrants in Alberta, Canada', in J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu and F. Ludwig (eds.), *African Christian Presence in the West – New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Munck-Fairwood, B. (2004). *Andre stemmer: Migranterkirker i Danmark – set indenfra*. Frederiksberg: Religionspædagogisk Forlag.
- Munck-Fairwood, B. (2008). 'Welcome here? Responses to Migration from Churches in Denmark', in Ecumenism in the Nordic Region, *Together or apart? Report from the Nordic Consultation on Migration and Changing Ecclesial Landscapes*. Stockholm:

- Nordic Ecumenical Working Group on Migration in cooperation with Ecumenism in the Nordic Region.
- Myhre, A. (2012). 'Sjømannskirken som folkekirkemodell: Noen refleksjoner', *Ung Teologi*, 1: 30-41.
- Myklebust, S. (2010). *Welcome to this Holy Mess! – Kva faktorar er viktige for fleirkulturell integrering i kyrkjelydar i Det Norske Baptistsamfunn og Den norske kyrkje?*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in Diakonia. Oslo: Diakonhjemmet Høgskole.
- Nieswand, B. (2005). 'Charismatic Christianity in the Context of Migration: Social Status, the Experience of Migration and the Construction of Selves among Ghanaian Migrants in Berlin', in A. Adogame and C. Weisköppel, *Religion in the Context of African Migration*. Bayreuth African Studies Series, No. 75. Bayreuth, Germany: Bayreuth African Studies Series.
- Norske Kirkebygg. (2009). 'Stovner kirke', [http://norske-kirkebygg.origo.no/-/bulletin/show/377592\\_stovner-kirke](http://norske-kirkebygg.origo.no/-/bulletin/show/377592_stovner-kirke) (accessed 14 September 2012).
- Obadare, E., and Adebani, W. (2010). 'The Visa God: Would-Be Migrants and the Instrumentalization of Religion', in A. Adogame and J. V. Spickard (eds.), *Religion Crossing Boundaries – Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.
- Omenyo, C. N. (2005). 'From the Fringes to the Centre: Pentecostalization of the Mainline Churches in Ghana', *Exchange*, 34: 41-60.
- Pettersen, T. (2011). *Skriv – Fra idè til fagoppgave*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- PMC website. (2007). 'Welcome', <http://www.pmc Oslo.org/Welcome.html> (accessed 4 October 2012).
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone - The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Saba, M. (2008). 'Migrants and Local Churches in Finland', in Ecumenism in the Nordic Region, *Together or apart? Report from the Nordic Consultation on Migration and Changing Ecclesial Landscapes*. Stockholm: Nordic Ecumenical Working Group on Migration in cooperation with Ecumenism in the Nordic Region.
- Schmidt-Hesse, U., and Kaseva, M. (1996). 'No More Guests and Aliens?! Immigrant Congregations and the Protestant Church of Hesse-Nassau', *International Review of Mission*, 85/337: 205-208.

- Simon, B. (2002). 'African Christians in the German-Speaking Diaspora of Europe', *Exchange*, 31/1: 23-35.
- Simon, B. (2004). 'So in Christ we Who are Many Form One Body: The Ecumenical Spirit of African Christians Living in a German Context from the Beginnings Up to the Twenty-First Century', *Studies in World Christianity*, 1: 49-71.
- Simon, B. (2008). 'An Ecumenical Challenge at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: Koinonia vs. Convivence', in A. Adogame, R. Gerloff and K. Hock (eds.), *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora*. London: Continuum Religious Studies.
- Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace – Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Solli, B. (2011). *Bait-un-Nasr: En kvalitativ studie av Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'ats gudshus' påvirkning på lokal identitet på Furuset*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in Religious Studies. Oslo: University of Oslo.
- Sollid, B. L. (2011). *Over veien – En romlig analyse av relasjoner mellom Walton Breck Christ Church og Anfield Stadium*. Unpublished Master's Thesis in Science of Religion. Tromsø: University of Tromsø.
- Stark, C. (2008). 'The Energizing Pulpit: African European Preaching on the Continent', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Statistisk Sentralbyrå, SSB. (2012a). 'Personer med innvandringsbakgrunn, etter innvandringskategori, landbakgrunn og kjønn', <http://www.ssb.no/emner/02/01/10/innvbef/tab-2012-04-26-04.html> (accessed 18 September 2012).
- Statistisk Sentralbyrå, SSB. (2012b). 'Flest innvandrere fra de nye EU-landene', <http://www.ssb.no/innvbef/> (accessed 18 September 2012).
- Statistisk Sentralbyrå, SSB. (2012c). 'Utanlandske statsborgarar, etter statsborgarskap, kjønn og alder', <http://www.ssb.no/emner/02/01/10/folkemengde/tab-2012-03-14-32.html> (accessed 18 September 2012).
- Stepick, A., Rey, T., and Mahler, S. J. (2009). *Churches and Charity in the Immigrant City: Religion, Immigration, and Civic Engagement in Miami*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Stoffels, H. (2008). 'A Coat of Many Colours: New Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.

- Stoppels, S. (2008). 'Count their Blessings: Social Return on Investment of Immigrant Churches in The Hague', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Sullivan, K. (2000). 'St. Catherine's Catholic Church: One Church, Parallel Congregations', in H. R. Ebaugh and J. S. Chafetz (eds.), *Religion and the New Immigrants*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
- Synnes, R. M. (2012). *Kristne Migrantmenigheter i Oslo – KIFO Rapport 2012:1*. Oslo: KIFO Stiftelsen Kirkeforskning.
- Tettey, W. J. (2007). 'Transnationalism, Religion, and the African Diaspora in Canada – An Examination of Ghanaians and Ghanaian Churches', in J. K. Olupona and R. Gemignani (eds.), *African Immigrant Religions in America*. New York: New York University Press.
- Tværkulturelt Center. (2012). 'Migrantmenigheter.dk', <http://www.migrantmenigheter.dk/> (accessed 7 September 2012).
- Tweed, T. A. (2006). *Crossing and Dwelling – A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Vad Nilsen, I. (2008). 'Integration and Disintegrating Factors in the Relation Between Migrants and the Church of Norway', in *Ecumenism in the Nordic Region, Together or apart? Report from the Nordic Consultation on Migration and Changing Ecclesial Landscapes*. Stockholm: Nordic Ecumenical Working Group on Migration in cooperation with Ecumenism in the Nordic Region.
- Vad Nilsen, I. (2009). 'Er integrering av innvandrere mulig? Menighetsarbeid i spenningen mellom segregering og assimilering', *Tidsskrift for Praktisk Teologi*, 1: 45-56.
- Valenta, M. (2008). *Finding Friends After Resettlement: A Study of the Social Integration of Immigrants and Refugees, their Personal Networks and Self-Work in Everyday Life*. Doctoral Dissertation in Sociology and Political Science. Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU. <http://ntnu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:123228/FULLTEXT01> (accessed 28 September 2012).
- Van Dijk, R. A. (1997). 'From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 27/2: 135-159.
- Währisch-Oblau, C. (2000). 'From Reverse Mission to Common Mission... We Hope: Immigrant Protestant Churches and the Programme for Cooperation between German and Immigrant Congregations of the United Evangelical Mission', *International Review of Mission*, 89/354: 467-483.

- Währisch-Oblau, C. (2010), 'Mission and Church Unity: Migrant Churches in Germany as a Challenge to the Landeskirchen', in C. Währisch-Oblau and F. Mwombeki (eds.), *Mission Continues – Global Impulses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Oxford: Regnum Books International.
- Warf, B., and Arias, S. (2009). *The Spatial Turn – Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Wartena, S., Bertram-Troost, G., and Miedema, S. (2008). 'Christian Immigrant Youth from the Maranatha Community Transformation Centre: In between Family, Church and School. A Case Study in Amsterdam Zuidoost', in M. Jansen and H. Stoffels (eds.), *A Moving God: Immigrant Churches in the Netherlands*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Werbner, P. (2002). 'The Place Which is Diaspora: Citizenship, Religion and Gender in the Making of Chaordic Transnationalism', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28/1: 119-133.
- Verdens Gang - VG. (2009). 'Seks av ti innvandrere fra kristne land', <http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=596376> (accessed 18 September 2012).
- Wijsen, F. (2009). 'Global Christianity: A European Perspective', *Exchange*, 38: 147-160.
- Woolcock, M. (2001). 'The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes', *Isuma: Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 2/1: 1-17.
- Yin, R. K. (2012). *Applications of Case Study Research – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Ødegård, G. (2010). *Foreningsliv i et flerkulturelt lokalsamfunn – En studie om integrasjon og sosial kapital*. Oslo: Senter for forskning på sivilsamfunn og frivillig sektor. [http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/KUD/Samfunn\\_og\\_frivillighet/Rapporter/Foreningsliv\\_i\\_et\\_flerkulturelt\\_lokalsamfunn\\_VR\\_2010\\_6\\_v2.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/KUD/Samfunn_og_frivillighet/Rapporter/Foreningsliv_i_et_flerkulturelt_lokalsamfunn_VR_2010_6_v2.pdf) (accessed 28 September 2012).



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Information Letter to Interviewees

Norwegian

### Informasjon om forskningsprosjekt

Jeg heter (researcher's name), og er teologistudent ved det Teologiske Menighetsfakultet. Dette semesteret skriver jeg avhandling om samarbeidet mellom migrantkirker og Den norske kirke. Prosjektet vil vare fram til desember 2012. Jeg ønsker å observere i menighetene og snakke med utvalgte personer i menighetene om deres bakgrunn, tro og relasjon til sin menighet.

Jeg vil også gjerne vite hva slags rolle menigheten(e) spiller i ditt liv.

Avhandlingen min er basert på kvalitative intervjuer, og derfor ønsker jeg å intervju deg og bruke det du forteller meg som informasjon i oppgaven min. Intervjuene kommer til å vare i 1 til 2 timer, og vil bli tatt opp på bånd, slik at jeg kan transkribere intervjuet etterpå. Opptaket vil deretter bli slettet.

Det er viktig for meg å presisere at forskeren har taushetsplikt, og intervjupersoner vil bli anonymisert så langt det er mulig. Prester og ledere i menighetene vil få mulighet til sitatsjekk.

Deltagelse i prosjektet er frivillig. Samtykke kan trekkes tilbake også etter prosjektets start uten videre begrunnelse, og all informasjon du har kommet med vil slettes umiddelbart.

Har du noen spørsmål til meg, kan du nå meg på telefon (researcher's phone number), eller mail (researcher's email) . Om ønskelig kan også spørsmål rettes til min veileder Harald Hegstad på mail [harald.hegstad@mf.no](mailto:harald.hegstad@mf.no)

Mvh

(researcher's name)

## **Information About Research Project**

My name is (researcher's name), a theological student at MF Norwegian School of Theology. This semester I'm writing a paper about the cooperation between immigrant churches and the Church of Norway (Den norske kirke). The project will continue until December 2012. I want to observe in the congregations and talk to a selection of people in the congregations about their background, faith and relation to the congregations. I also want to know what role the congregation(s) plays in your life.

My paper is based on qualitative interviews, and therefore I want to interview you, and use what you tell me as information used in my thesis. The interviews will last for 1 to 2 hours, and will be recorded, so that I can transcribe it. The recording will then be deleted.

It is important for me to state here that as a researcher it is my duty to make sure that all personal information stays with me. I will do my best to make the interviewees anonymous for the future readers of the paper. Pastors and leaders will have the option to read quotes before the submission of the thesis.

Participation in this project is voluntarily, and you may withdraw your consent also after the start of this project without any further explanation. If you choose to do this, all information will be deleted immediately.

If you have questions to me, you may reach me on phone (researcher's phone number), or email (researcher's email). If needed you may also contact my adviser, Professor Harald Hegstad by email [harald.hegstad@mf.no](mailto:harald.hegstad@mf.no).

Best regards,

(researcher's name)

## **Appendix 2: Interview Guides**

### **Interview Guide to PMC Members**

#### **1. Introductory questions**

- Origin, age and gender, civil status, children?
- time in Norway + living in Stovner / Groruddalen? owning or renting?
- citizenship or asylum seeker
- Work, profession, education
- Language skills (Twi, English, Norwegian?)
- Reason for migration. Future plans?

#### **2. Relation to the Ghanaian church**

- Church background from Ghana
- Relation to the Presbyterian / Methodist churches in Ghana
- Religion among the Twi
- Contact with home country
- Why do you want to participate in a church?
- For how long have you been active / member?
- How did you get to know about this church?
- Why did you choose this church? Do you bring your family?
- How often do you participate, and in what activities?
- Leadership / board?
- 
- What did you expect from the church?
- Do you know people, have friends there?
- What make you feel that you belong?
- Do you feel that you belong? Define membership?
- What needs are fulfilled and what are not?
- How are new people received?
- 
- Do you have certain tasks or duties within the congregation, and how did you get those? Or: Do you want a duty? What?
- How do you get info about the church activities and events?
- What are, in your opinion, the most important tasks of the congregation?
- What does this fellowship mean to you?
- What is, in your opinion, the goal and visions of the church?
- Do you feel you have a possibility of affecting the church decisions?
- 
- How are new members recruited?
- Does the congregation give practical help to new immigrants?
- Have you received such help?
- 
- Do you participate in other churches / Christian groups? Explain
- Could you have been member in a church without a Twi-speaking fellowship?
- Did you try? How was it?

#### **3. Own faith**

- What does the faith mean to you? Did this change after arriving in Norway?
- Were you religiously active in your country of origin? Confession?

- Do you keep contact with any Christian group(s) in your country of origin?

#### **4. Relation to the Stovner Church**

- Please describe your relation to the Norwegian Stovner church
- How do you perceive the international services?
- Do you have friends in that congregation?
- How many? Who are they? What kind of contact?
- Do you meet with these people outside the church setting?
- 
- How are the services here compared to what you are used to at home?
- Do similarities and differences matter?
- Do you feel as a part of Church of Norway? Why /why not?
- Do you get information about the church activities and events? How?
- 
- Have you ever experiences discrimination or racism in the church?
- Do you feel your cultural background is valued by the Norwegian congregation?
- Do you wish you could have brought more of your culture? How?
- 
- How are your children and spouse's relation to the Norwegian church?
- Do you have any thoughts about how to keep the children within a Christian setting? Will this be your children or grandchildren's church or is it a temporary thing?
- How do you perceive the Norwegian society? Vs Mission?

#### **5. Life outside the church**

- How is it to live in Norway?
- Do you have activities outside church? How did you find these?
- If working: How to you like your job? Who are your colleagues?
- Describe your relation to your colleagues at work
- How do you like your neighbourhood? Do you participate in activities there? Which?
- What were your biggest challenges when arriving in Norway?
- What are your biggest challenges now?
- Do you have friends outside church and work? If yes, who are they?
- Who are your closest friends?
- Do you have acquaintances (bekjente) outside church and work?
- If yes, who are they?
- 
- Did you move and/or change work during your time in Norway?
- Do you ever think about going back home to your country of origin?
- Citizenship: Do you want the Norwegian one?
- Do you vote in the elections? Why/why not?
- 
- What do you think your church means for the society?
- Do you participate in other organizations or groups? Which ones?

#### **6. Do you have anything else that you find important to tell me?**

## **Interview guide, interview with Norwegian leaders**

### **Personlig bakgrunn**

Kjønn, alder, barn, utdanning, yrke. Verv/stilling

Når starta du i jobben? Og i menigheten?

Hva slags kirkesammenheng tidligere? Bosted: Hvor langt er det til kirka?

### **Stovner kirkes historie**

- samarbeid annet enn PMC?

### **Deltagelse og involvering**

- Styrer / verv / aktiviteter
- folk med ikke-norsk bakgrunn?
- Hva blir gjort for å involvere nye folk i frivillig arbeid?
- Når blir nye folk spurt, kva blir de spurt om?

### **Folkekirke vs kjernemenighet**

- sosialt fellesskap eller kun søndag?
- nye aktivt invitert med? Hvordan blir nye tatt imot?

### **Tilrettelegging**

- Skyss, praktiske tiltak for at folk med ulike kulturelle og språklige bakgrunner skal finne seg til rette, Tolking, Informasjonstiltak på ulike språk?

### **Samarbeidet med PMC**

- Initiert av hvem? Når? Nøkkelpersonar?
- Strategisk satsingsområde eller visjon?
- Leie / låne?
- Felles planlegging? Hva?
- Teologiske utfordringer?
- Hvordan blir PMC omtalt? Hvorfor fraværende på nettside/menighetsblad, osv?

### **Internasjonale gudstj.**

- Hvem gjør hva? Hvem ”vil”? Samarbeid eller ”deltagelse hos den andre”?
- Oppslutning / mottakelse i kjernemenigheten?

### **Kommunikasjon med PMC**

- Hva har det å si for kommunikasjonen at en har ulik språklig og kulturell bakgrunn?  
- konkrete eksempler på utfordringer / misforståelser? tiltak?

### **Informasjonsformidling og bruk av omgrep**

- Hvordan presenterer menigheten seg sjølv (brosjyrar, nettside)?  
- Er det noe i dette som signaliserer at menigheten er åpen for fleirkulturelt fellesskap?  
- Har dere aktivt jobba med å profilere dette?

### **Avrundingspørsmål om avgjerande faktorar**

- flerkulturell menighet?  
- gudstenesten, det sosiale fellesskapet, andre arrangementer?  
- hva med barna?

### **Annet jeg bør vite?**

## **Interview guide, interview with Ghanaian leaders**

### **Personal background**

Gender, age, children, education, work, Position in the church  
When did you start doing this?  
When did you start attending the church?  
What Christian confession before?  
Where do you live? Far from church?

### **Presbyterian-Methodist Church's history**

- Started by who? When? Where?
- relations / cooperations in Norway? (other than Stovner)
- relations to Ghana?

### **Participation and involvement**

- board / positions in the church / leadership structure
- activities / social services?
- people with other background than Ghanaian (Twi-speaking?)
- Active invitation?
- Missionary endeavours?
- How do you get more people engaged to help out in church work?
- When do you ask? And about what?

### **Membership / Core**

- Membership? What does membership mean? What if you don't have it?
- Social fellowship or only Sundays?

### **Cooperation with Stovner**

- Initiated by who? When? Key persons? Why cooperation?
- Practical (location) or social or ...?
- Renting or borrowing? Theological challenges?
- How is Stovner talked about? Do you feel welcome?

### **International services**

- Who does what? Who "wants" it? Cooperation or participation?
- How is the international service perceived by church members?

### **Communication with Stovner**

- Who communicates? Leaders?
- concrete challenges / misunderstandings? Something done?

### **Economy of the Church**

- economy affecting the church? how?

### **Informasjonsformidling og bruk av omgrep**

- Why very little publicity? No website? No brochure?
- Do you want other Nationalities to come or is Twi-speaking people the people wanted?

### **Last questions**

- What does the future of PMC look like?
- What about the kids?
- Will PMC be the church of your children and grandchildren?

## **Appendix 3: KIA Statistics**

**Visit at KIA office Tuesday 25 September 2012**

Numbers from the KIA statistics of migrant churches in Oslo:

**CoN – Den norske kirke:**

**16 buildings are rented out to 21 migrant churches and groups:**

(among these 4 are renting menighetshus, 2 are renting funeral chapels)

**Markus**

- Eglise de la Reconciliation en Jesu Christ (Congolese / French)

**Døvekirken**

- Apostolic International Church

**Majorstua**

- The Coptic Church (services in the crypt)

**Vår Frelses Gravkapell**

- Russian Orthodox Church, Parish of Holy Olga

**Nordberg**

- Evangelical Lutheran Oromo Church
- Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Church

**Grønland**

- Christ Embassy (using menighetshus)

**Gamlebyen**

- Oslo International Church
- Ethiopian Orthodox (using the Funeral Chapel)

**Kampen**

- Eritrean Orthodox

**Gamle Aker**

- Living Word Bible Fellowship (African / Pilipino) – using menighetshus
- Scandinavian Chinese Christian Church

**Lambertseter**

- Norway International Fellowship

**Haugerud**

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea
- House of Life International Deliverance Ministries (Nigerian)

**Ellingsrud**

- The Vietnamese Congregation “Living Water” / “Levende Vann”

**Furuset**

- Tamil Grace

**Bredtvedt**

- International Victory Fellowship

**Romsås**

- Talsmannen Baptist Church (Tamil)

**Holmlia**

- Asia Fellowship

## **Free Churches:**

### **12 buildings are rented out to 23 migrant churches and groups**

#### **Filadelfia**

- The Church of Pentecost (English / Akan, start 1994)
- Shalom Church (Eritrean)
- Romani Church
- Filipino Church
- Shekinah (using English)

#### **Salemkirken**

- Jesus Power Ministry International
- Spanish Group
- International Christian Fellowship
- Tamil Church

#### **Maranata Temple**

- Iglesia Palabra de Poder
- Oslo International Charismatic Church

#### **Frelsesarmeen – Salvation Army**

- Church of the Nazarene
- Multicultural Center Church (using Norwegian language)

#### **Mortensrud frikirke**

- All Nations Full Gospel Church
- Jesus is Lord / Worldwide ministries

#### **Majorstua Misjonsmenighet**

- Hope Christian Fellowship

#### **Misjonssalen**

- Evangelical Lutheran Iranian Church

#### **Storsalen**

- Ethiopian Evangelical Church (using *Høgskolen i Staffeldtsgate* )

#### **Betel Bedehus Stovner**

- Tamil Grace Stovner

#### **Saron Ammerud**

- Tamil Christian Assembly

#### **Troens Bevis**

- Iglesia Restauracion De Dios

#### **Evangeliesalen / Berøa**

- Vietnamese Evangelical Church
- Berøa Evangelical Church

Other info:

#### **Margaretakyrkan (Swedish Church)**

- Finnish evangelical-lutheran church

#### **Holtækilen fhs**

- Oslo Karen Baptist Church
- Norway Chin Mission

**Other churches have their own buildings or gather in private homes, and so on. A big number of the migrant churches not mentioned here are also Roman Catholic.**

## Appendix 4: Questionnaires and Answers

### Questionnaire and answers from CoN Stovner (totalt 46 svar)

#### 1. Kjønn:

Mann: 24      Kvinne: 22

#### 2. Alder:

Under 16:      5  
16 – 35:      3  
36 – 50:      8  
51 – 70:      10  
Over 70:      20

#### 3. Fødeland:

Norge: 43      Annet: 2 (Sverige, Thailand)      Blank: 1

#### 4. Bosted:

Stovner: 43      Groruddalen: 1      Haugenstua: 2

#### 5. Angi ca hvor ofte du går på gudstjeneste i Stovner kirke:

Hver søndag: 13      Ofte: 18      Av og til: 2      Sjelden: 9      Kun på besøk i dag: 2      Blank: 2

#### 6. Språkkunnskaper: a. Snakker du engelsk?

Ja, flytende: 10      Ja, godt: 16      Ja, noe: 15      Nei, snakker ikke: 5

#### b. Snakker du andre språk?

Nei: 24      Ja: 16 (Tysk, fransk, spansk, thai)      Blank: 6

#### 7. Visste du at en ghanesisk menighet holder gudstjeneste i Stovner kirke hver søndag?

Ja: 36      Nei: 9      Blank: 1

#### 8. Har du noen gang vært på gudstjeneste i denne ghanesiske menigheten?

Ja, mange ganger      0  
Ja, av og til      5 (antagelig stor feilmargin her  
Ja, én gang      6 flere hadde kryssa disse + «nei, bare...»)  
Nei, bare på internasjonale  
gudstjenester med Stovner menighet      18  
Nei, aldri      17

#### 9. Vil du si du har venner i den ghanesiske menigheten i Stovner kirke?

Ja, mange: 1      Ja, mer enn én: 5      Ja, én: 0      Nei: 39      Blank: 1

#### 10. Hvordan vil du beskrive forholdet

##### mellom Stovner menighet og den ghanesiske menigheten?

(5)      Formell relasjon (kun avtale om lån av kirkerom)  
(17)      Vennsapsrelasjon (hjelper hverandre og deltar i hverandres arrangementer)  
(7)      Nært samarbeid (felles arrangementer og medlemmene i de to menighetene kjenner hverandre godt)  
(3)      Vi er én menighet  
(2)      Annen beskrivelse (formell+samarb, kjenner ingen, hilser før gudstjenesten)  
(12)      Blank

#### 11. Skulle du ønske det var mer/mindre kontakt mellom de to menighetene i Stovner kirke?

Mer kontakt: 18      Mindre kontakt: 0      Bra slik det er nå: 20      Blank: 8

## Questionnaire and answers from members of Presbyterian Methodist Church Oslo

Total answers: 27.

**1. Gender:** Male: (18) Female: (8) Blank: (1)

### **2. Age:**

Under 16: (2)

16 – 25: (4)

26 – 35: (5)

36 – 50: (8)

Above 50: (8)

Blank: (0)

### **3. Country of birth:**

Norway: (2) Ghana: (23) Other: (0) Blank: (2)

### **4. Status in Norway:**

Norwegian citizen: (19) Permanent Residence:(3) Temporary Residence/Visitor:(4) Blank:(1)

### **5. Do you speak English?**

Fluently: (14) Well: (9) Some: (3) I don't speak: (1) Blank: (0)

### **6. Do you speak Twi?**

Fluently: (22) Well: (4) Some: (1) I don't speak: (0) Blank: (0)

### **7. Do you speak Norwegian?**

Fluently: (10) Well: (9) Some: (6) I don't speak: (2) Blank: (0)

### **8. Where do you live?**

Stovner / Groruddalen: (10)

Furuset: (2)

Sinsen: (2)

Kringsjå: (2)

Rælingen: (3)

Lørenskog: (2)

Enebakk: (2)

Other: (LØNSTAD, NOT SPECIFIED, TOWN, HØYBRÅTEN) (4)

Blank: (0)

### **9. For how long have you been a member of Presbyterian Methodist Church Oslo?**

Only visiting: (1)

Less than one year: (2)

1-2 years: (3)

3-5 years: (8)

More than 5 years: (12)

Blank: (1)

**10. What denomination did you (/your family) belong to in Ghana (/Africa)?**

Methodist: (8)  
Presbyterian: (14)  
Pentecostal: (1)  
Roman Catholic: (1)  
Other: (INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH) (1)  
Blank: (2)

**11. Have you ever been at a Norwegian service in Stovner church?**

Many times: (13)  
From time to time: (4)  
Once (1)  
Only at International services:(6)  
Never (3)  
Blank (0)

**12. Have you ever participated in activities arranged by the Norwegian congregation in Stovner church (family dinner, youth club, baby song, concerts, ...)?**

Regularly (2)  
Many times: (7)  
From time to time (5)  
Once (4)  
Never: (9)  
Blank (0)

**13. Would you say you have friends in the Norwegian congregation in Stovner church?**

Yes, many (4)  
Yes, more than one: (6)  
Yes, one (4)  
No (13)  
Blank (0)

**14. Do you wish you had more contact with ethnic Norwegians in Stovner and elsewhere?**

Yes, often (8)  
Yes, sometimes (14)  
No (3)  
Other: (0)  
Blank: (2)

**15. How would you describe the relation between Presbyterian Methodist Church and the Norwegian congregation in Stovner church?**

Formal relation: (1)  
Friendly relation: (19)  
Close cooperation: (2)  
One church: (2)  
Other: (1) ("the same faith")  
Blank (2)