Mapping Intercultural Mission: Manchester

A collaborative research report

SIM Serving In Mission UK

eido research

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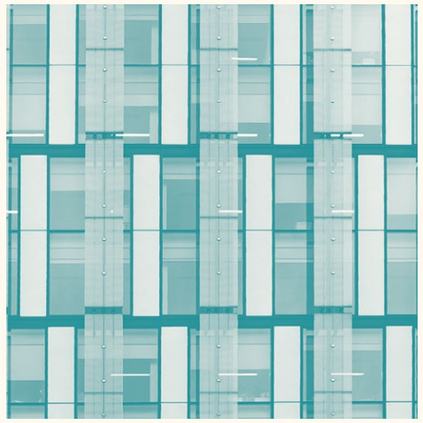
Executive Summary

It is estimated that by 2050, 30 per cent of the UK population will be from an ethnic minority background, up from 11 per cent in 2010 (Coleman 2010). As the UK grows in diversity, there is a need to better understand how the UK Church is – and is not – effective in crossing cultural, racial, and ethnic barriers. This need has grown even more pronounced since the intensification of the Black Lives Matter movement in May and June 2020. While this report does not concentrate on racial justice specifically, it does stress several related questions. To what extent is the Church serious about building multicultural (and multiethnic and multiracial) communities? How committed is it to reaching minorities? How are mission agencies serving alongside and responding to the evolving needs and opportunities that churches see? And how can the UK Church be better equipped to pursue mission across racial, cultural, and ethnic divides in the future?

In order to answer these questions, SIM-UK, AWM-Pioneers, OMF, AIM Europe, and London City Mission, asked Eido Research to map churches' and mission agencies' attitudes towards intercultural mission, as well as the actions they were taking towards pursuing it in Manchester. This research seeks to help churches cross barriers more effectively and better connect with global mission resources to reach out in communities where the need is greatest.



Attitudes towards intercultural mission

Overall 53 per cent of organisations said intercultural mission was a high or moderate priority. LIkewise, 30 per cent of organisations said they were willing and able to direct resources towards intercultural mission.

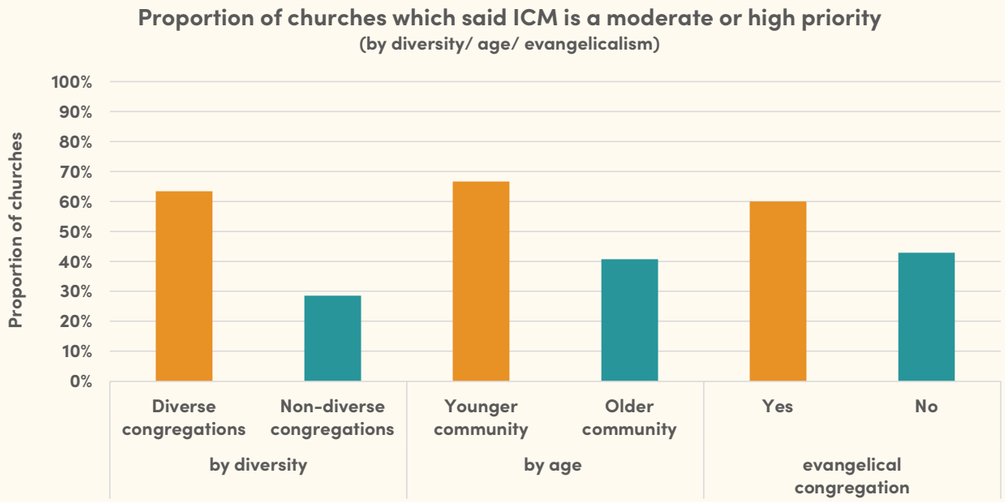
These attitudes varied significantly by parliamentary constituency:

- Churches in constituencies with higher ethnic diversity were significantly more likely to say intercultural mission was a priority. For example, in Manchester Central (the constituency with the second-highest ethnic diversity in Manchester), 81 per cent of organisations claimed that intercultural mission was a priority. In contrast, in less diverse constituencies such as Withington and Wythenshawe and Sale East, 0 and 33 per cent of participants respectively said it was a priority

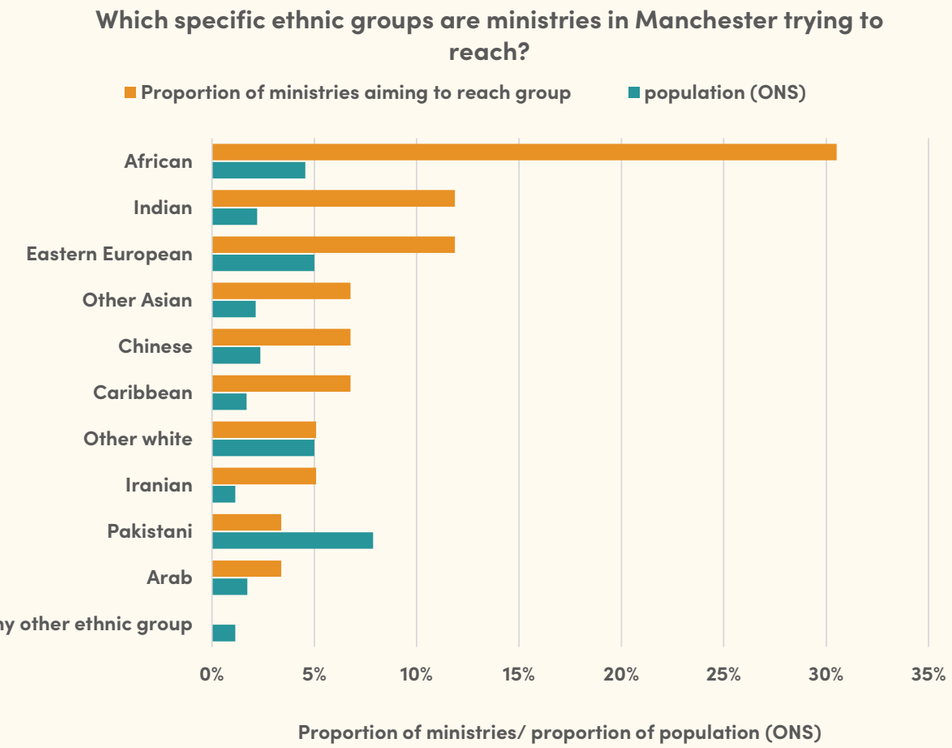
- By and large, more diverse constituencies were also willing to spend more resources on intercultural mission, with 33 per cent of churches in Manchester Gorton and 47 per cent of churches in Manchester Central saying they would spend considerable resources for this purpose

Attitudes also varied by demographics and denomination:

- Diverse organisations, younger organisations, and more evangelical organisations were more likely to view intercultural mission as a priority and more willing to dedicate resources to seeing it happen



Specific groups and areas of focus



Organisations listed a wide variety of ethnic and religious groups that they were trying to reach. The research compared this focus with ONS population data.

- Unsurprisingly, most organisations concentrated on the religious groups that made up the greatest share of Manchester's population (Islam and Judaism), with 17 per cent of churches and mission agencies attempting to reach Muslims and 3 percent trying to reach Jews.

- However, the largest ethnic minority group in Manchester (people of Pakistani descent) had been largely ignored by Christian organisations, and a much smaller ethnic group (people of African descent) had attracted much of churches' and mission agencies' attention. Only 3 per cent of organisations were attempting to reach Pakistani groups (8 per cent of the population), but 31 per cent were trying to reach African groups (5 per cent of the population).

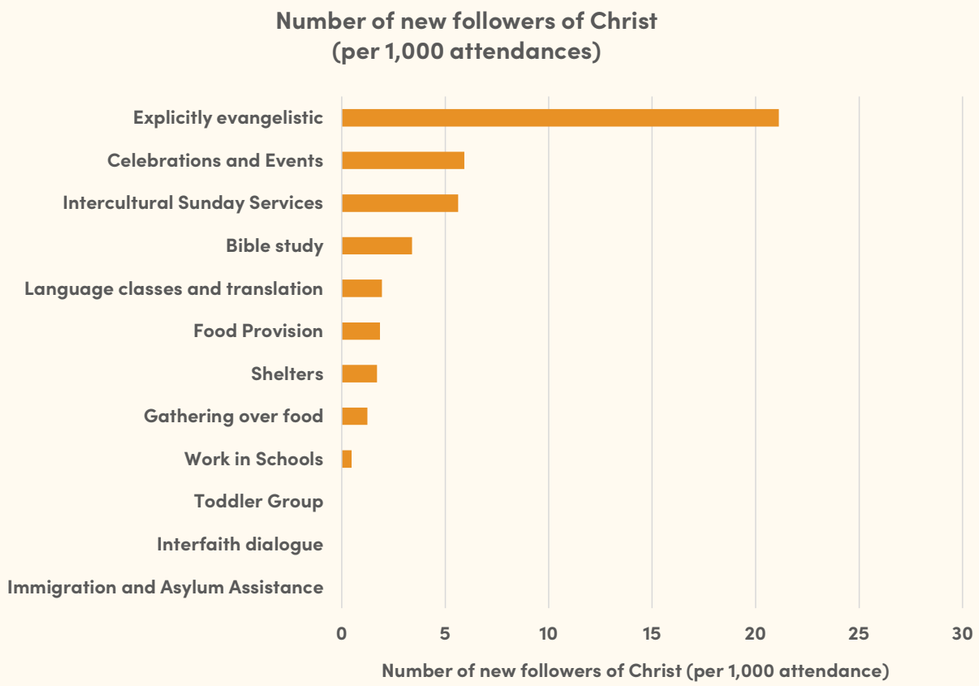
Activities and impact

A wide variety of intercultural mission activities were occurring in Manchester.

- The most popular intercultural activities for Christian organisations in Manchester were celebrations and events (such as street parties and alternative Halloween events) and programmes involving "gathering over food" (such as cafes or intercultural meals). Fifteen per cent of churches and mission agencies engaged in each of these activities

- The programmes that were most likely to facilitate participants starting to follow Christ, however, were explicitly evangelistic activities, such as Alpha courses, friendship evangelism, and evangelism training. On average, church leaders estimated that 21 people became Christians per every 1,000 attendances at these events

- The activities that participants subjectively rated as the "most impactful", however, were "intercultural Sunday services" (church services explicitly designed to include people from ethnic minorities) and food provision (such as soup kitchens and food banks). However, as the graph below suggests, some non-Christians still came to follow Christ through these activities, and these programmes may still be important in demonstrating the love of Christ, even if they do not directly facilitate conversions as frequently as evangelistic activities



Keys to impact and success

Participants noted five keys for success in intercultural mission:

Inclusiveness:
welcoming and actively pursuing relationship with people of other ethnicities and cultures

Being present and consistent:
remaining available to their communities on a day-to-day basis and being persistent in sharing Christ

Being invested and trained:
having leadership teams and congregations that were committed to and trained for mission

Concentrating on evangelism:
actively committing to sharing Christ

Remembering God's agency in mission:
recalling that mission was ultimately God's work and did not depend on human efforts

Some of these themes starkly divided organisations which had scored highly on our metric of success in mission from those which had not: for example, organisations which scored highly were far more likely to mention being present and consistent, and no organisations who scored poorly discussed evangelism or God's agency in mission.

Barriers to mission

Participants also believed that five barriers prevented their organisations from engaging in intercultural mission:

Lack of resources:
an absence of funding, time, and (especially) personnel

Lack of opportunities for mission:
a perception that (as a result of factors including limited ethnic diversity and a lack of interest in Christianity) there were few opportunities for mission in their area

Lack of confidence and understanding:
anxiety about engaging with other faiths and cultures, and an absence of knowledge about how to do so

Apathy:
leaders and congregations that were not committed to intercultural mission

Active resistance:
prejudice, racism, inflexible church structures, or religious conflict that prevented churches from reaching their communities

Interestingly, organisations which scored the highest on our metric of intercultural mission were most likely to mention a lack of resources, while organisations which scored the lowest were especially likely to believe that there was a lack of opportunity for intercultural outreach in their area (although, as we suggest below, this belief may not correspond to reality).

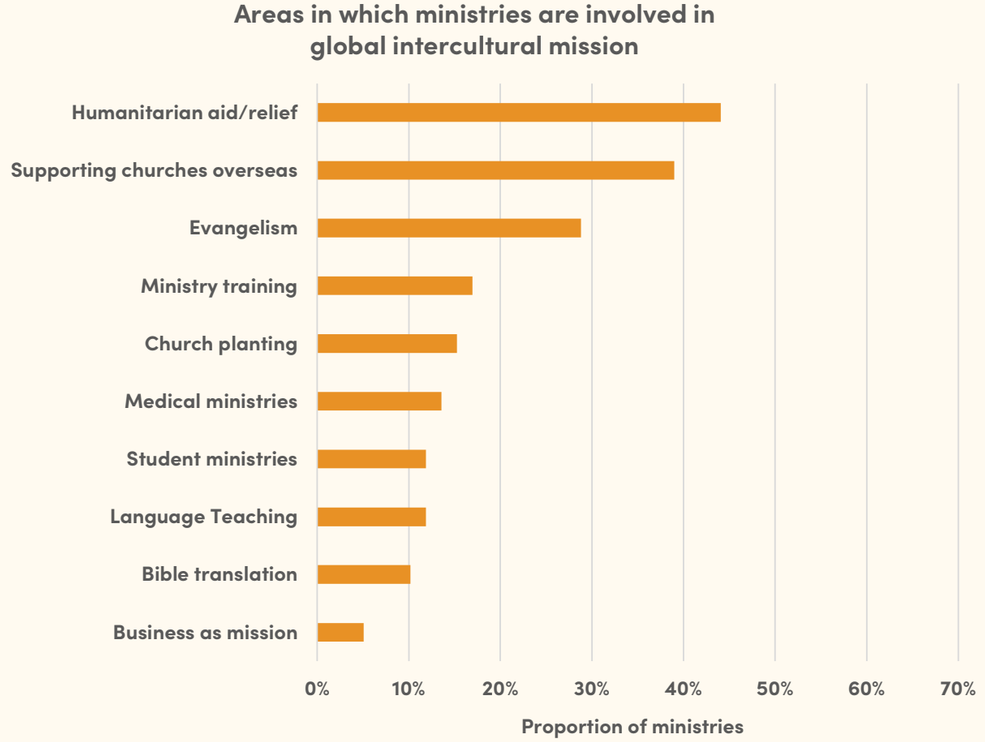
What can agencies do to help?

While many churches and mission agencies were sceptical of receiving support from external agencies, those who were not mentioned that they would appreciate the following forms of assistance:

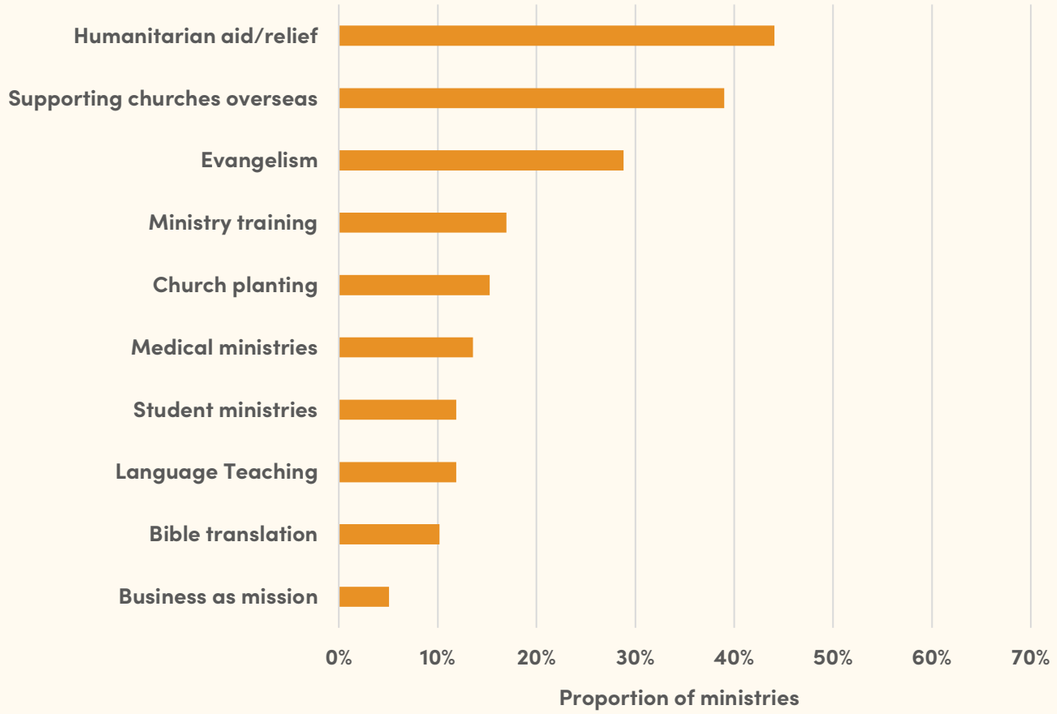
- **Personnel**
- **Knowledge and expertise**
- **Training and inspiration**
- **Funding**

Participants also commented that, in previous partnerships with other organisations, they had especially appreciated being able to benefit from these organisations' expertise in mission and ability to expand their reach.

Global mission

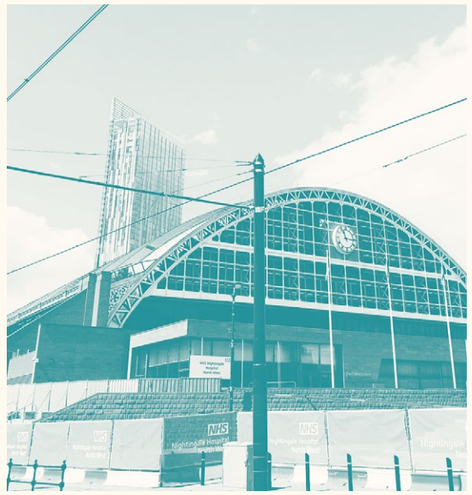


Areas in which ministries are involved in global intercultural mission



- Through giving and relationships with missionaries, churches and mission agencies were involved in many areas of intercultural mission, though humanitarian aid and relief, supporting churches overseas, and evangelism were the most popular (44, 39, and 29 per cent of churches were involved in these areas respectively)

- Nonetheless, the areas in which organisations would most appreciate support from mission agencies were not these areas, but rather student ministry and ministry training – with 19 per cent saying they would welcome support in each of these areas



Introduction and literature review

Introduction

It is estimated that by 2050, 30 per cent of the UK population will be from an ethnic minority background, up from 11 per cent in 2010 (Coleman 2010). As the UK grows in cultural and social diversity, there is a need to better understand how the UK Church is – and is not – effective in crossing cultural barriers. In what ways are churches engaging with people from different backgrounds and incorporating the richness of cultural diversity? How are mission agencies serving alongside and responding to the evolving needs and opportunities that churches see? And how can the UK Church be better equipped to reach out amongst diverse communities in the future?

In order to answer these questions, SIM-UK, AWM-Pioneers, OMF, AIM Europe, and London City Mission, asked Eido Research to map churches' and mission agencies' attitudes towards intercultural mission, as well as the actions they were taking towards pursuing it in Manchester. This research seeks to help churches and mission agencies cross barriers more effectively and better connect with global mission resources to reach out in communities where the need is greatest.

Literature review

Home to 503,127 people, Manchester is exceptionally diverse: while the 2011 Census found that White British people composed 80 per cent of the population of England and Wales, in Manchester they made up just 59 per cent (ONS 2011c). Amongst the most common ethnic minorities are Pakistanis (composing nine per cent of the population), people of various African ethnicities (five per cent), and non-British or -Irish White ethnicities (five per cent) (ONS 2011c).

Manchester is also markedly less Christian than the UK as a whole, with 49 per cent of its population describing itself in these terms – as compared to 59 per cent for England and Wales (ONS 2011b). One in four people in Manchester (25 per cent) claim to have no faith, and the largest non-Christian religious groups are Muslims (16 per cent of the population) and Hindus (one per cent).

Intercultural mission in Manchester

Given Manchester's diversity, it is essential to understand how churches and mission agencies are reaching minorities in the area – especially in light of recent research forecasting that the UK will continue to grow more diverse through 2061 (Lomax et al. 2019). As Kwiyani (2020) has observed, 'cultural diversity within the landscape of British Christianity is the new normal and is here to stay'.

In this context, the good news is that the UK Church is committed to mission: as a recent Barna report indicates, 85 per cent of active UK Christians feel a responsibility to evangelise, and two-thirds have spoken about their faith with a non-Christian in the past month (Barna 2016). Another two-thirds believe that global and local mission should be equally prioritised, with younger Christians slightly more likely to emphasise the importance of local mission (Barna 2018). Encouragingly, many of these Christians see an equal role for the Church in social justice and evangelism, while smaller proportions believe that the Church should focus on one or the other of these dimensions of mission (Barna 2018).

Nonetheless, the Church's efforts at intercultural mission are often unsuccessful: as the same report cited above underlines, in conversations about Jesus, two-fifths of non-Christians felt glad they did not share the faith of their Christian friends, and six in ten did not not want to know more about Jesus Christ (Barna 2016). Moreover, churches and mission agencies often struggled to translate their faith across cultural contexts: as Kwiyani (2020) notes, 'British churches will send missionaries to Africa while neglecting their African neighbours on their streets in Britain'. In this report, we find that one in five ministries spontaneously mentioned a lack of confidence in engaging in intercultural mission, and that others may have failed to see opportunities for mission in their area.

In this context, there is a need to better equip Christians for mission, and to help them understand what has worked in the past. It is our hope that this report helps to accomplish both of these ends.

Methodology

Research design

To capture the attitudes and actions of churches and mission agencies throughout Manchester, we selected a cross-sectional research design. Data was collected in three stages.

The first stage involved telephone interviews with a selection of key leaders in the city (we refer to these respondents as "gatekeeper interviewees" later in the report). As every large city has its own unique history surrounding ethnic and religious diversity, the purpose of these interviews was to map the context of intercultural mission in Manchester. Secondly, however, as the term "gatekeepers" suggests, another main goal was to build rapport with these leaders who could in turn facilitate the second and third stages of the research.

In the second stage of the study, we conducted telephone interviews with a representative sample of churches and mission agencies in Manchester. These telephone interviews were the focus of this study, and provided the primary answers to the research questions described above.

Finally, following the overview provided by stage two, follow-up interviews were conducted with churches and mission agencies that were seeing significant impact in intercultural mission. The purpose of these "hotspot" interviews was to further understand these organisations' success, and to delve deeper into stories of impact in the city.

Research population and sampling

Each of the stages outlined in the research design required its own sampling strategy. In all three, we defined our research population as churches and mission agencies located within Manchester City Council boundaries. From this area, a sample of 221 churches and mission agencies was taken from a series of online databases including www.findachurch.co.uk and www.achurchnearyou.com. Subsequently, a more detailed Google search for churches and mission agencies checked for missing organisations in the database. To ensure that this sample was representative of all church and mission agencies in Manchester, the sample list was tested for church size, denomination, and ethnicity, and found to be comparable to regional norms.

Questionnaire design

Once the research design had been finalised, the next step was to build the questionnaire that would be used in the telephone interviews.

To that end, a series of discussion groups were held with key stakeholders and funders to explore which questions they wanted answered throughout the research. Following these discussions, we produced, circulated, and revised several drafts of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were then piloted with several of the gatekeepers, and finalised based upon their edits and recommendations.

Response rate and representativeness

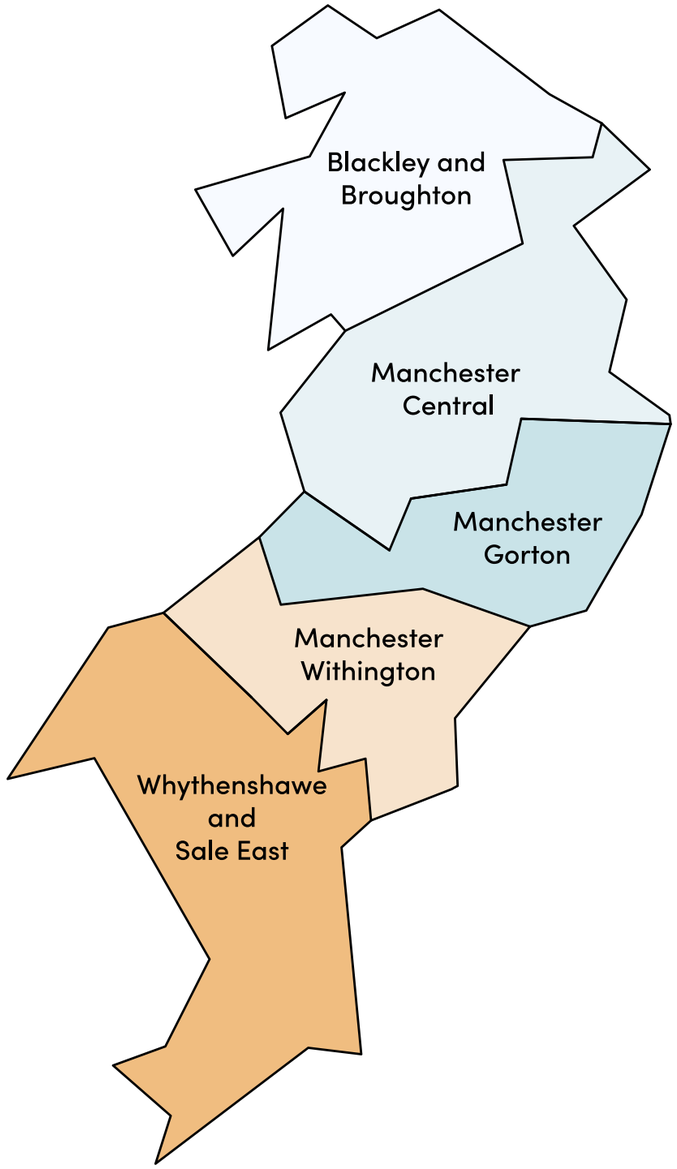
During the first few weeks of February 2020, over 700 calls were made to sampled churches and mission agencies in Manchester. On average, each organisation was called three times, with some organisations replying immediately, and others replying after five calls. In total, 58 organisations responded, resulting in a response rate of 26 per cent.

Following this, three in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with organisations that were deemed to be "hotspots" in the city.

To understand whether these respondents were representative of the research population, a series of statistical tests was conducted. These tests found that respondent proportions closely matched the denomination, ethnicity, and church size of the research population. They also revealed that there was no significant difference between how participants who completed the telephone interview immediately and participants who completed the telephone interview after several phone calls responded to interview questions. Encouragingly, participants also voiced a wide range of opinions – from criticism of all intercultural mission efforts to enthusiastic advocacy of mission – suggesting that our sampling method had not merely selected for organisations already interested in mission.

Nonetheless, this study had some limitations, including a lower response rate from mission agencies, as well as a slight level of non-response bias in those who explicitly refused to complete the telephone interview. While the research results discussed below thus cannot be considered perfectly representative of all organisations in Manchester, they do helpfully represent many churches' and mission agencies' attitudes towards intercultural mission, as well as what these organisations were doing to reach their communities in the city.

Proportion of non-White population by parliamentary constituency in Manchester



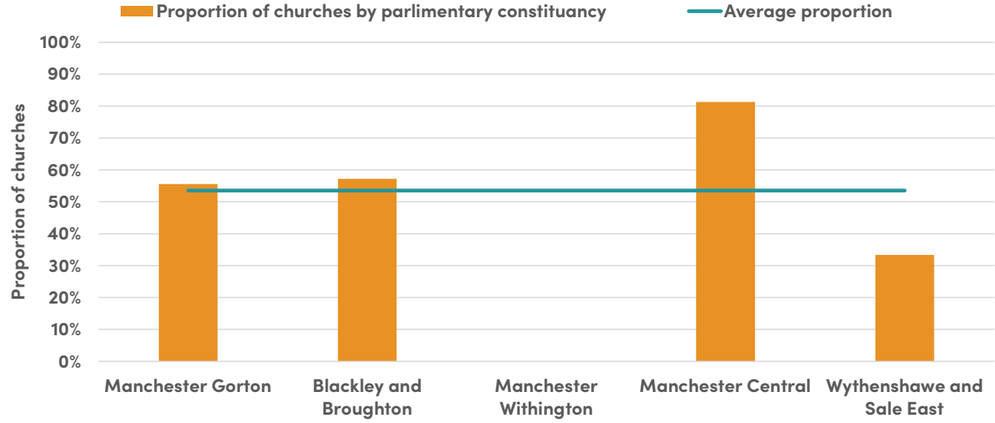
Local intercultural mission

Attitudes

We began by asking participants about their attitudes towards intercultural mission. After detailed discussion with SIM UK, we defined intercultural mission for the purposes of this project as 'efforts to cross ethnic and religious divides to show and tell the Gospel, in a way where the cultural distinctives of various groups are recognised and celebrated, with each group adapting where necessary in order to honour Christ above all competing identities'. In particular, we explored (1) the extent to which organisations in our sample prioritised intercultural mission and dedicated financial resources to it, (2) the specific groups they were trying to reach, (3) the activities in which they engaged, and (4) the impact of their efforts.

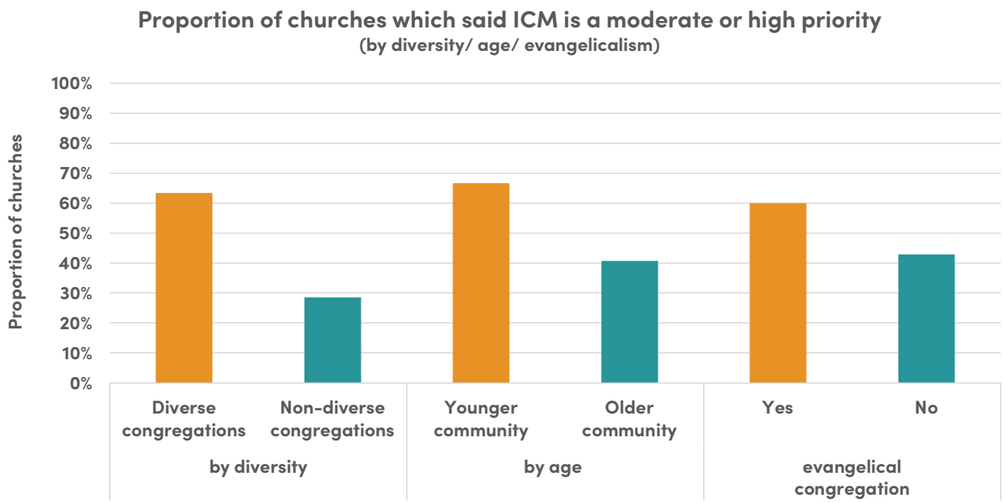
Is intercultural mission a priority?

Proportion of churches which said ICM is a moderate or high priorirty
(by parliamentary constituency)



First, we analysed whether the extent to which intercultural mission was a priority varied by constituency. Overall, across the Manchester region, 53 per cent of respondents said intercultural mission was a high or moderate priority. However, this average was significantly influenced by the results from the Manchester Central constituency, where 81 per cent of respondents said they prioritised intercultural mission (56 per cent high, 25 per cent moderate), whereas in Withington, no respondents said that intercultural mission was a priority for them, and in Wythenshawe and Sale East, just 33 per cent reported it being a priority, and that only to a moderate extent.

Diverse congregations, on the other hand, were more than twice as likely to value intercultural mission, with three-fifths (63 per cent) describing it a priority



We then examined the results by ethnic diversity, and drew a distinction between "diverse" and "non-diverse" churches. We defined diverse churches as congregations that had a non-white population above the regional average of 31 per cent; "non-diverse" churches, on the other hand, were churches with a non-white population below the regional average (ONS 2011c). Unsurprisingly, relatively few (29 per cent of) non-diverse congregations felt that intercultural mission was a priority for them, with 24 per cent claiming it was a moderate priority, and only 5 per cent describing it as highly important. Diverse congregations, on the other hand, were more than twice as likely to value intercultural mission, with three-fifths (63 per cent) describing it a priority, and two-fifths (40 per cent) considering it a high priority.

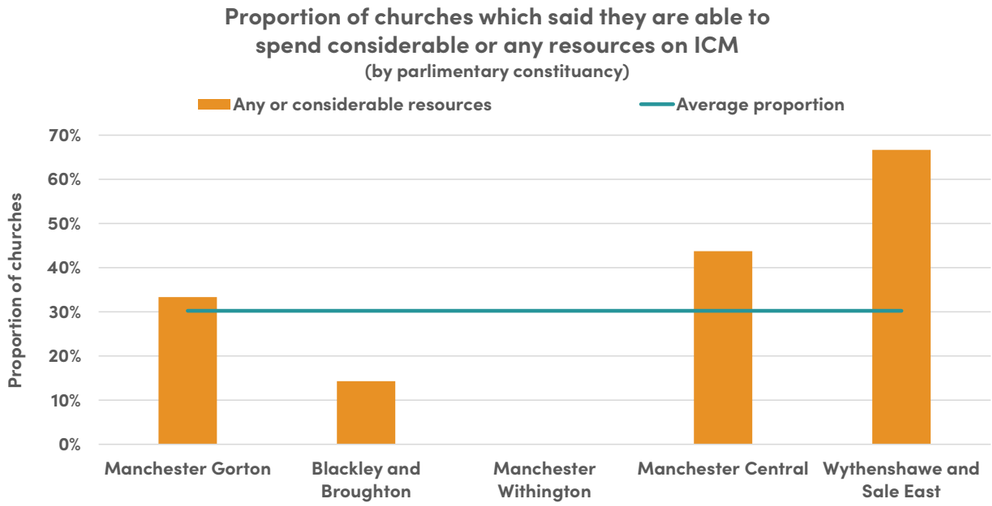
Next, we broke down the results by age groups. We asked survey respondents to estimate their congregations' populations in the following age brackets: 0-16, 16-25, 25-40, 40-60 and over 60. We then defined "young" communities as those where the population of people under 40 exceeded the population of those aged 40 and over, with the reverse being true for "older" communities. Perhaps as a product of growing up in an increasingly diverse society from a younger age, 67 per cent of younger communities reported that intercultural mission was a priority (high: 38 per cent, moderate: 29 per cent), compared with 41 per cent of older communities (high: 22 per cent, moderate: 19 per cent).

30 per cent of respondents said they would direct significant funds towards intercultural mission, with 14 per cent saying it was a top funding priority.

Lastly, we assessed the data by whether respondents belonged to evangelical or non-evangelical churches or organisations. Sixty per cent of evangelical groups reported intercultural mission as a priority (high: 35 per cent, moderate: 25 per cent), as compared to 43 per cent of non-evangelical groups (high: 23 per cent, moderate: 20 per cent). It is perhaps most unexpected that for nearly a quarter of non-evangelical congregations, intercultural mission remained a high priority, with these churches ranking only 12 percentage points lower than evangelical groups. In terms of church unity, therefore, it is heartening that there was the least difference between data on churches by denomination, meaning there were significant shared values between different groups.

To what extent is your organisation willing to spend resources on intercultural mission?

We then asked to what extent organisations were able to spend financial resources on intercultural mission. Overall, across the Manchester region, 30 per cent of respondents said they would direct significant funds towards intercultural mission, with 14 per cent saying it was a top funding priority.



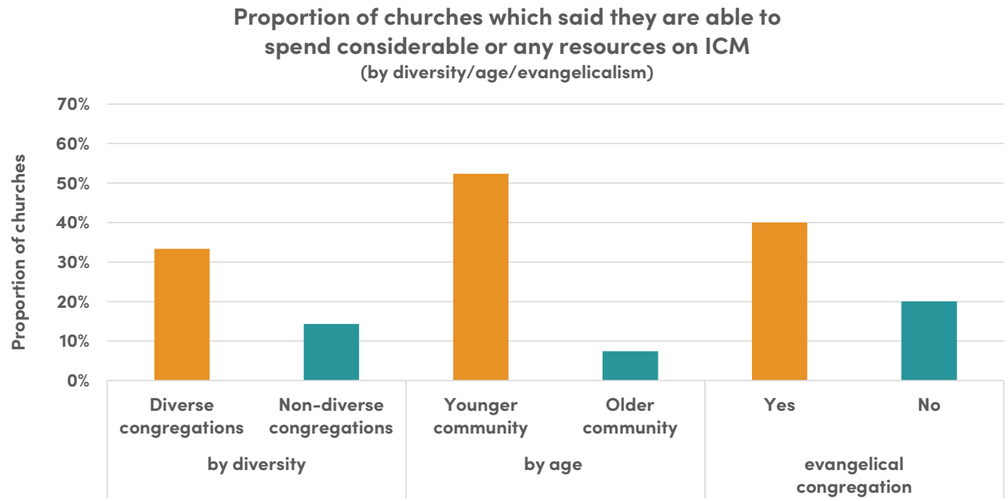
Since it was possible that churches' ability to support intercultural mission might depend on their congregations' wealth, we also compared churches' willingness to give with average weekly income in their constituency, as shown in the table below:

Ward	Average weekly income[1]	Proportion of churches willing to give significant resources
Manchester Withington	£542.10	0%
Manchester Central	£472.20	47%
Manchester Gorton	£395.00	33%
Blackley and Broughton	£389.20	14%[2]

Our analysis revealed no clear relationship between congregations' wealth and their eagerness to support intercultural mission. While Manchester Withington was the most affluent constituency in the region, no churches in this constituency considered giving to intercultural mission a priority. On the other hand, Manchester Gorton, a relatively poor constituency, was also one of the most likely to direct significant resources to reaching other cultures and ethnicities. Instead, the diversity of a given constituency seemed to be much more important in determining whether churches were willing to give: 47 per cent of participants in Manchester Central and 33 per cent of participants in Manchester Gorton (the most diverse constituencies in Manchester) claimed that they would dedicate significant resources to intercultural mission.

[1] Figures are drawn from ONS data; see ONS (2011a) in the bibliography below.
[2] Wythenshawe and Sale East has been excluded from this table because of our extremely small sample size for this constituency (three respondents).

Conversely, no churches in Manchester Withington, one of the most ethnically homogenous constituencies in Manchester, said they would dedicate significant resources to intercultural mission. (Only three churches responded to our survey from Wythenshawe and Sale East; therefore, while two out of three churches said they would support intercultural mission, there is simply not enough data to draw definite conclusions for this constituency.) Across Manchester, diverse churches (i.e., churches which were more than 31 per cent non-white) were twice as likely to give to intercultural mission as non-diverse ones – with 33 per cent of diverse churches and just 14 per cent of non-diverse churches claiming they would devote significant resources to intercultural mission. This is shown in the graph below:



Interestingly, younger churches also seemed much more disposed to support intercultural mission, with over half (52 per cent) of churches with younger congregations saying they would give significant resources, as compared to seven per cent of churches with older congregations. **Younger churches, that is, were five times more likely to prioritise giving to intercultural mission than older ones.** There are many possible explanations for this, including the fact that congregations composed of working-age people may have more disposable income than those made up of people who are retired, a tendency for younger Christians to attend larger, more wealthy churches (while small, struggling parish churches often have older congregations), or possible differences in theology or life experience between Christians of different ages. In any case, there is likely scope to take advantage of the funding capacity of younger participants for intercultural mission, while also listening to older respondents to see if and how a greater ability to give might be developed in their age group.

Lastly, we saw a significant difference when comparing evangelical and non-evangelical churches. Evangelical churches were almost twice as likely to prioritise funding intercultural mission, with four in ten evangelical churches (40 per cent) willing to give significant amounts to reaching other cultures and ethnicities, as opposed to just two in ten non-evangelical churches (20 per cent). These findings align well with evangelicalism's traditional emphasis on proclamation of the Gospel (cf. Bebbington 2005).

Which groups are you aiming to reach?

We then asked participants about which ethnic, religious, and cultural groups they were reaching, and compared this to ONS data on the representation of these groups in the region. Notably, while the graph below seems to show that White people groups were going unreached (as they were 69 per cent of the population but, at least at first glance, reached by only 16 per cent of churches), this was likely a result of how our survey was presented. As we included this question in a study on intercultural mission, respondents may have been more likely to mention groups that they perceived to be from other cultures and ethnicities, as opposed to White people whom they (perhaps revealingly) saw as being from their own culture.

More surprisingly, participants concentrated more on Black ethnic groups than Asian ones (34 per cent of churches claimed to be working with Black groups, as compared to just 29 per cent for Asian groups) despite the fact that there are twice as many Asian people as Black people in Manchester (16 per cent and 8 per cent of the population, respectively). While we initially wondered whether this trend might be related to there being a greater number of Black-majority churches in Manchester, this did not seem to be the case. In the first place, churches did not seem interested in only reaching people of their own ethnicity: just five churches said they were reaching a single ethnic group, and none of these five was primarily concerned with reaching their own ethnicity. Furthermore, of the eight Black-majority churches in our sample, only one specifically said they were interested in reaching a Black ethnic group.

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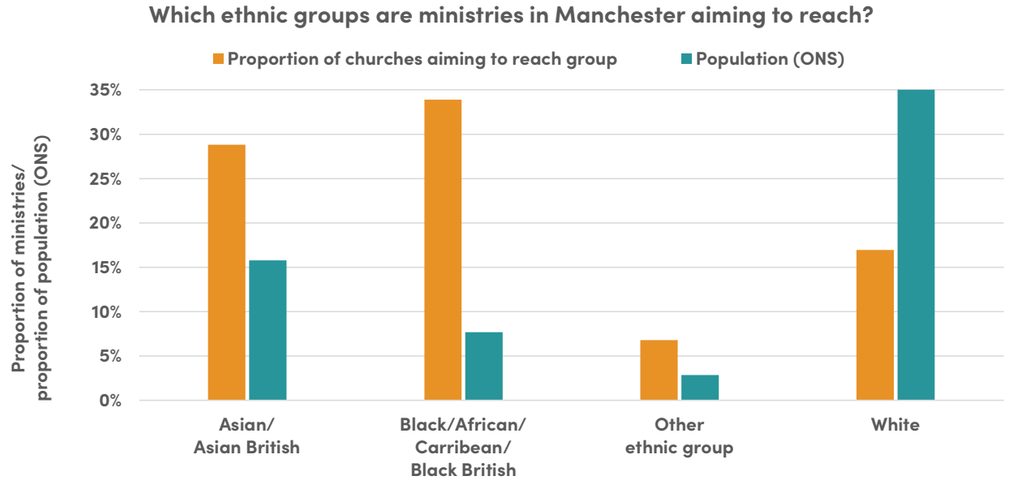
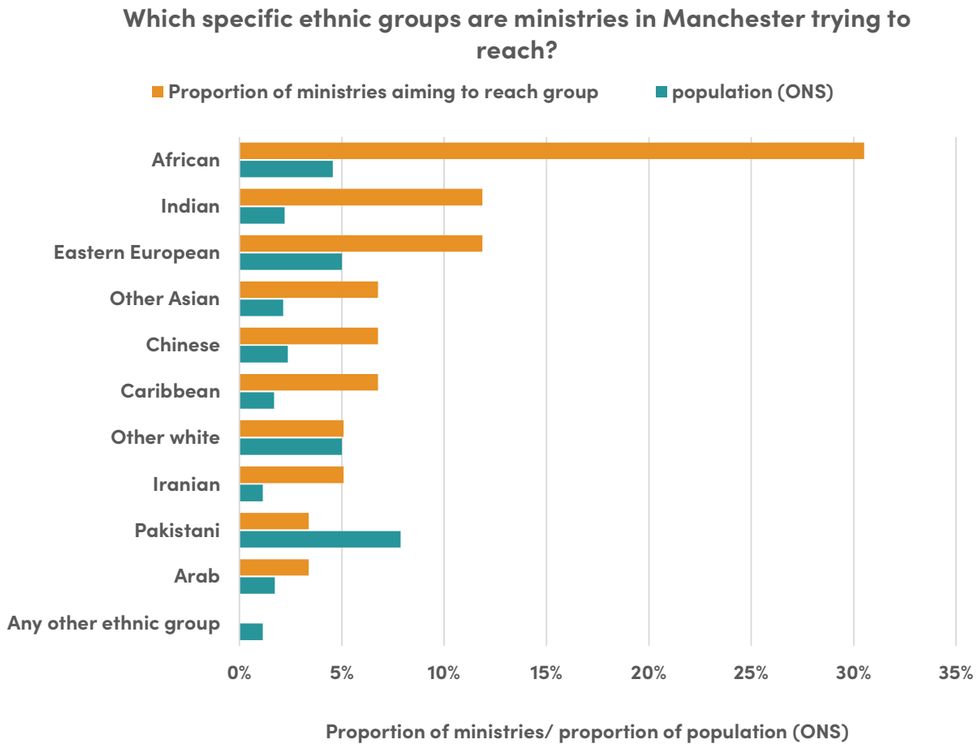
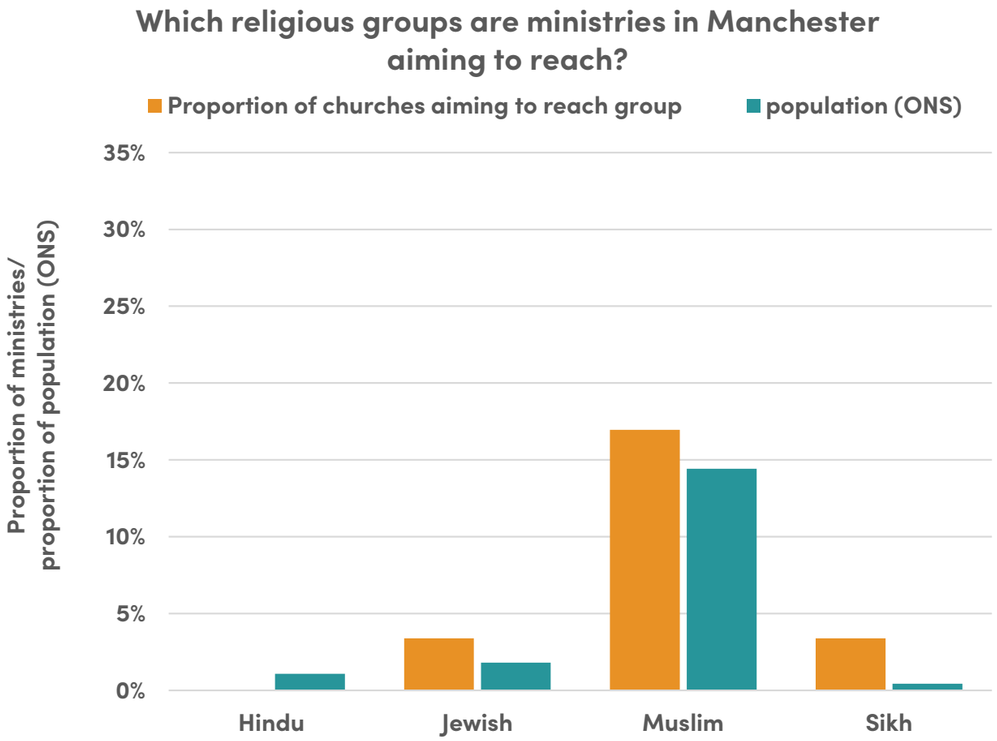


We also analysed results for this question using more specific ethnic data.[3,4] Encouragingly, **the proportion of organisations attempting to reach a given ethnicity was generally greater than the proportion of that ethnicity which actually resided in Manchester.** At least in theory, therefore, churches and mission agencies are well positioned to reach a wide variety of ethnicities. However, there was one major exception: while the proportion of organisations attempting to reach Africans was six times higher than the actual share of African people in Manchester (31 per cent, as compared to 5 per cent), the proportion of organisations aiming to reach Pakistanis was nearly three times lower than this ethnic group's representation in Manchester (3 per cent, as opposed to 8 per cent). Paradoxically, participants' interest in reaching Africans may actually have derived from a perception that many Africans were already Christian and thus might be more willing to become involved in church activities. It was certainly the case that when respondents discussed specific African countries, they often focused on ones with large Christian populations: participants mentioned, for example, 'Ghanaian' and 'Nigerian' people as groups they would like to reach. However, this theory cannot entirely explain the data, as other respondents discussed African Muslims and other non-Christian populations.

[3] The "Eastern European" group in the graph below was composed of all references to Eastern European countries (including Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, and Poland) in response to this question. Some respondents also mentioned "Eastern Europeans" as a generic category. However, since there was no ONS ethnic category with which to compare these responses, we paired it with the category "Other White". While "Other White" certainly includes non-Eastern Europeans, it is notable that the proportion of churches interested in reaching Eastern Europeans still exceeded the share of "Other White" people in Manchester. Similarly, since there was no ONS category with which to compare the proportion of churches interested in reaching Iranians, we contrasted it with the category "Any other ethnic group". Once again, the proportion of churches interested in reaching Iranians significantly exceeded the representation of "Any other ethnic group" in Manchester – despite the fact that this category also included many non-Iranian people groups.

[4] In our initial presentation of the data, we were also asked whether any churches were reaching Bhutanese people. No churches were reaching this group.





17 per cent were attempting to reach Muslims (who constituted 14 per cent of the population), and three percent were trying to reach Jews (two per cent of the population). Interestingly, no churches or mission agencies seemed to be reaching Hindus, despite the fact that a significant proportion (three per cent) were reaching Sikhs – a much smaller share of the population.

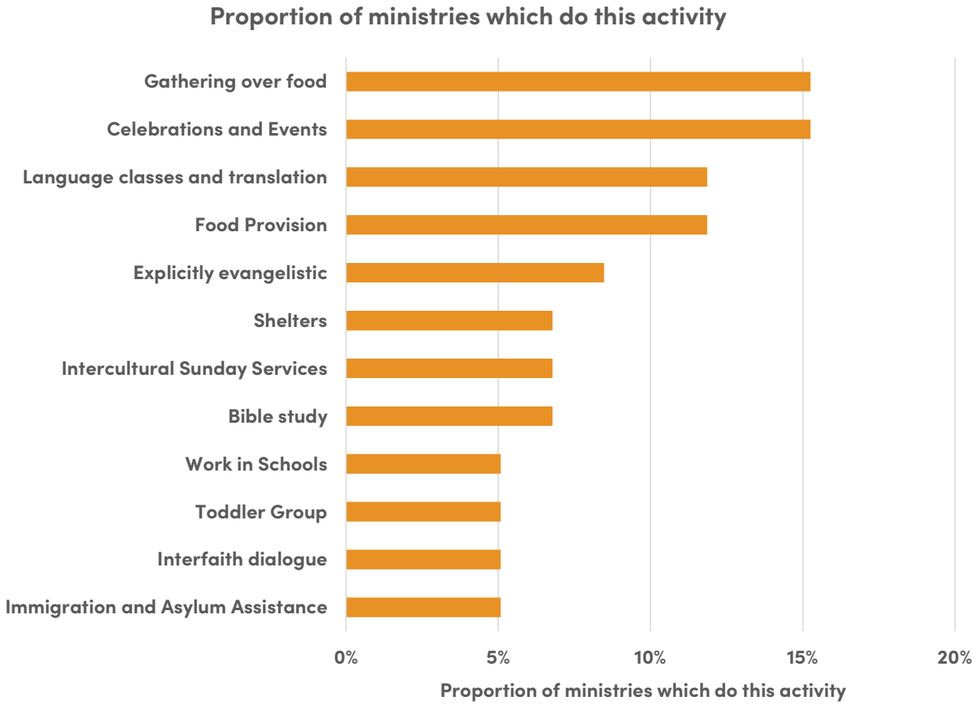
Finally, we sought to capture which religious groups organisations were aiming to reach. As shown in the graph above, 17 per cent were attempting to reach Muslims (who constituted 14 per cent of the population), and three percent were trying to reach Jews (two per cent of the population). Interestingly, no churches or mission agencies seemed to be reaching Hindus, despite the fact that a significant proportion (three per cent) were reaching Sikhs – a much smaller share of the population.

Actions

What activities are you doing?

We next asked participants to tell us about the activities they engage in on a regular basis, and categorised these into themes. The two most frequent types of activity were "gathering over food" (a relatively broad category including everything from potluck dinners with a Bible message to social drop-in cafes in church buildings) and celebrations and events, such as alternative Halloween parties or street parties. Fifteen per cent of organisations participated in each of these activities. Providing food (through food banks or homeless services) was also popular, as were language classes; each was mentioned by 12 per cent of respondents. Interestingly, however, only eight per cent of participants discussed evangelistic activities, and a shockingly low proportion (three per cent) mentioned student ministry. This should not be taken to mean, however, that only three per cent of organisations in Manchester (the city with the highest student population in Britain) are running student ministries at all, but that only three per cent see their student ministry as an opportunity for intercultural mission.[5]

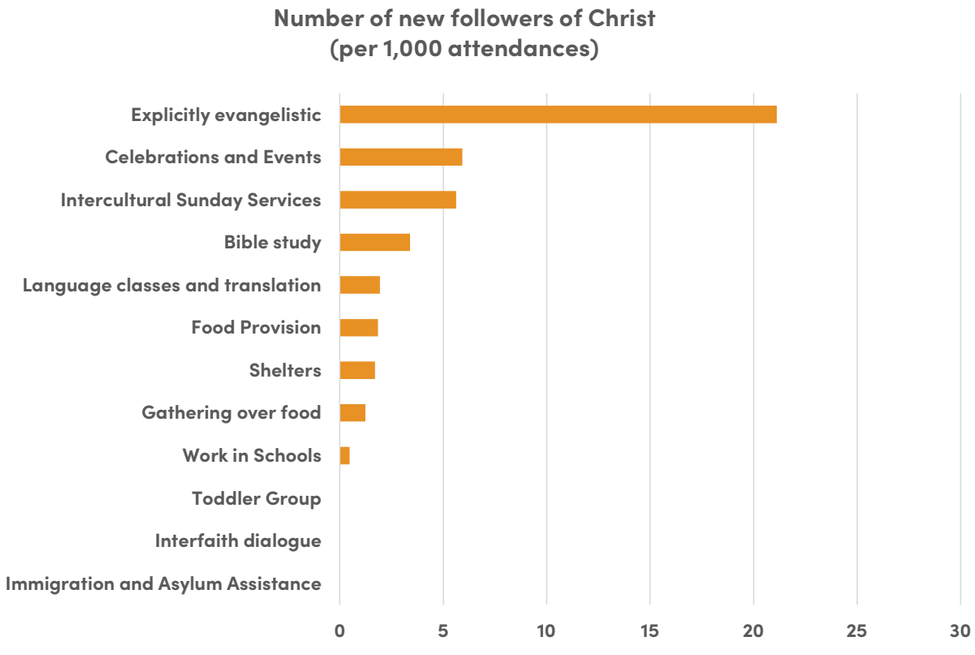
[5] Ten of the 59 responses also mentioned students as a group they would like to reach; it was merely that very few (two respondents) mentioned student programmes as part of their intercultural ministries. It is not entirely clear why so few churches discussed student ministries in this context.



Success as defined by leaders themselves

To better understand the effect of the activities discussed above, we also included an open-answer question on what leaders considered the most significant impact of their intercultural ministries. By and large, respondents concentrated on evangelism and discipleship, social impact (especially the inclusion of isolated people), and improved relationships with the community at large. One leader, for example, mentioned that their church had seen 'personal salvations', and another described a 'growth track' that they had instituted for new Christians. A surprisingly high number of respondents emphasised their organisations' role in reducing social isolation: as several leaders noted, one of the most valuable effects of the Church's ministry was 'reduced isolation in the local community' and an 'increase in social inclusion'. Finally, several participants underlined that intercultural ministries had improved churches' relationship with their communities and communities' impression of the Church. One leader, for instance, commented that his church had been 'engaging [with other community groups] over terrorist issues', and another observed that 'boundaries [had been] reduced and more people [had been] educated on different cultures'. A third stressed their church's commitment to welcoming outsiders: 'those coming from different backgrounds', they said, 'are very quickly part of the community'.

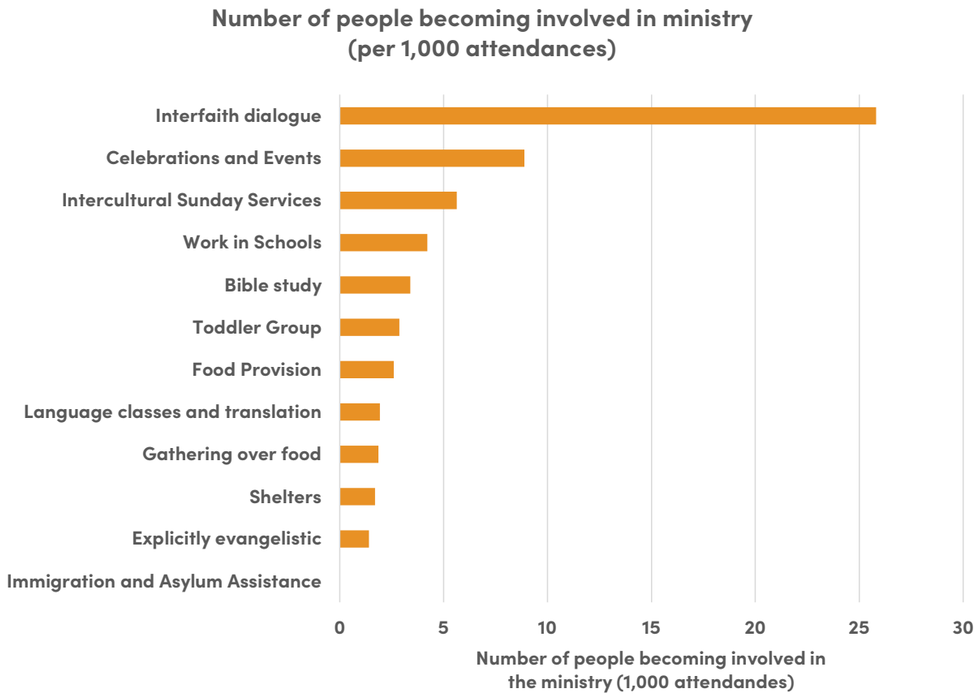
Success as defined by evangelism and ministry involvement



Not surprisingly, evangelistic activities were most associated with people coming to Christ, perhaps because these activities explicitly provided the opportunity for people to respond to the work that the Spirit had already been doing (and may themselves have been part of a series of events that the Spirit had orchestrated). While it is important to not attribute ultimate agency to these programmes – the Spirit could, for instance, bring more people to faith through the same activities in a time of revival – this research may hint at how the Spirit is currently working in Manchester: for every 1,000 attendances at evangelistic activities (including Alpha courses, evangelism training for Christians on how to reach their non-Christian friends, and door-to-door evangelism), 21 people were coming to faith.

It is also crucial to point out that lower numbers of people coming to faith through other activities (e.g. food provision, shelters, sharing food) should not be taken to mean that the Spirit is not at work in these programmes. Instead, these activities may be valuable means of demonstrating the love of Christ so that people are ready to respond when they are given the opportunity through evangelistic activities.

[5] In some cases, the proportion of churches running these activities may also have influenced our results. For example, only two organisations in our sample were running activities for asylum seekers. While neither of these churches reported many people coming to faith or joining church ministries, immigration and asylum assistance was actually one of the most effective activities in these terms in the other city in this study (Leeds). Interestingly, both organisations running these ministries also rated them as extremely effective, despite the fact that few people were coming to faith.



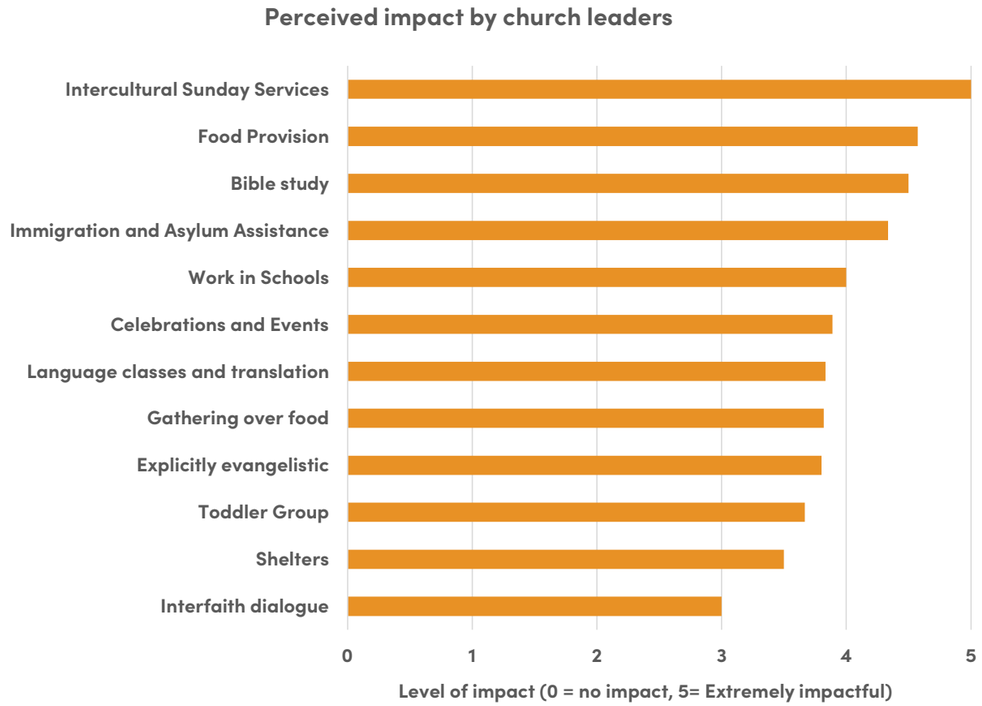
While evangelistic activities were closely associated with people coming to faith, however, they did not seem to necessarily result in these same people becoming involved in church ministries. **According to our data, only one person became involved in ministry for every 1,000 attendances at evangelistic events.** As discussed in the **Recommendations** section, there may therefore be a need for churches and mission agencies to concentrate on helping people who become Christians through their evangelistic events to more actively participate in church activities.

On the other hand, 26 people seemed to become involved in church ministries for every 1,000 attendances at activities involving interfaith dialogue. This high participation rate may be explained by organisations defining "involvement in church activities" to include programmes in which people of other faiths could partake without becoming Christians. For example, one respondent mentioned a 'Passover meal' which their church 'did together' with a Jewish rabbi, and that 'Muslims broke their fast in the church'. Although these activities may help communities become more integrated, it is unclear whether they are examples of new Christians assuming more responsibility within local congregations.

According to our data, only one person became involved in ministry for every 1,000 attendances at evangelistic events

Other high-ranking activities, however, did seem to result in Christians becoming more actively involved in their churches' ministries. "Celebrations and events", for example, referred to a range of (especially seasonal) events, many of which were designed to celebrate racial and ethnic minorities. One church had, for example, held a 'Persian New Year service' in partnership with Iranian members of its congregation, and another had, for Black History Month, invited 'young Black poets to perform in the church', enabling others in the community 'to see that the church is giving them space'. A third church described hosting 'dinners' and other 'events to celebrate the different cultures' in their congregation. It is not difficult to see how these types of events might help minorities feel more included and want to participate in church activities.

Similarly, "intercultural Sunday services" described programmes designed to help ethnic minorities feel welcome, such as conducting 'services in different languages' or holding 'small church services catering to each ethnicity'. These activities may also have helped minorities feel that they had a space to contribute to their church community.



the activities that leaders thought were most effective did not always coincide with the activities that were most closely associated with people coming to faith or becoming involved in church ministries.

Interestingly, however, the activities that leaders thought were most effective did not always coincide with the activities that were most closely associated with people coming to faith or becoming involved in church ministries. While many of the activities discussed above (such as evangelistic activities, celebrations and events, intercultural Sunday services, and interfaith dialogue) were also mentioned here, respondents also emphasised activities such as food provision and Bible studies which did not appear in previous sections. Participants may have valued these activities because they accomplished goals not explicitly captured by the metrics above – such as making disciples (in the case of Bible studies) or meeting physical needs (in the case of food provision) – or because they indirectly led to people becoming Christians and joining church ministries. As discussed above, it is possible that while activities designed to meet physical needs may not always lead to conversions, the Spirit may use them to increase non-believers' openness to Christianity and improve their opinions of Christians.

What are the secrets to success we can learn?

To better understand what contributed to churches' and mission agencies' success in intercultural mission, we examined data from three sources: (1) highly successful churches, as defined by the metric below, (2) "gatekeeper" churches and ministries in Manchester, and (3) in-depth case studies of churches selected for follow-up interviews. We here consider the data from "successful" and gatekeeper churches together, before concluding with an in-depth analysis of two case studies.

Defining "successful churches"

To define what constituted churches' "success", we ranked data from our telephone interviews according to the following criteria:

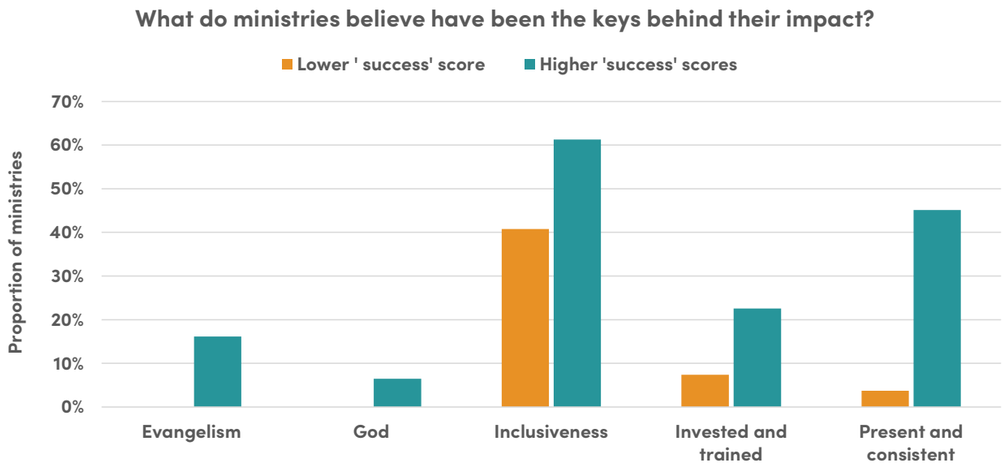
1. **The perceived effectiveness of an organisation's intercultural ministries (according to its leaders)**
2. **Organisations' perceived success in integrating minorities in their church communities (also according to leaders)**
3. **The number of people who began to follow Christ through these activities (although as noted above, this was ultimately a sign of whether the Spirit was working through a particular church or ministry and not of the ministry's own success)**
4. **The number of people who became involved in church ministry as a result of these activities**

We also chose to concentrate on the responses of churches and mission agencies which had scored highly on our metric (i.e., in the top 50 per cent). Although at certain points we contrast these responses with those of ministries which did not rank as highly, we thought it would be more fruitful to focus primarily on the factors to which already successful organisations attributed their impact – on the principle that these organisations would know how to replicate their results.

Defining "gatekeeper" ministries

To complement our study of the organisations discussed above, we also interviewed a group of particularly influential churches and ministries in Manchester. These participants were initially identified by SIM-UK, and tended to be larger organisations with well-established intercultural ministries. (Henceforth, we will refer to these participants as "gatekeeper organisations", as they also provided helpful context on mission in Manchester and introductions to other organisations.) In interviewing them, we sought to build on what we had learned from "successful" organisations in the previous section: what might intercultural mission look like when it was pursued by these highly experienced and dedicated ministries?

Understanding success



In discussing what allowed for success in intercultural mission, respondents mentioned a variety of factors, including (1) inclusiveness, (2) being present and consistent, (3) investment and training, (4) a concern with evangelism, and (5) God's direct agency.

Inclusiveness

Actively welcoming and listening

With regard to inclusiveness specifically, many leaders stressed the importance of welcoming all whom they encountered. As one noted, 'we train our welcome teams to be aware of new people… [and] teach a culture of welcoming and generosity'. Another agreed: 'we are the Body of Christ', they said, and 'are welcoming for whoever you are'.

Investing in particular relationships

At certain times, this commitment to welcome had been tested. One church leader, for example, recounted how converts from Islam to Christianity in his community had been ostracised by their community: these people, he said, 'get persecuted at the bus stops in Manchester', but the church had found them somewhere 'else to live'. 'People have been so good', he concluded; 'the Irish ladies are taking them hotpots'.

> *'we are the Body of Christ', they said, and 'are welcoming for whoever you are'.*

Gatekeeper organisations also emphasised the value of intentionally investing in relationship with ethnic minorities. As one respondent mentioned, 'authentic connection and investment in the lives of people who are different to ourselves, both economically and culturally' is crucial to healthy intercultural outreach. Likewise, other participants found that 'success' required friendships which 'bring people one step closer to Jesus', as well as 'food and building relationship'. Sometimes, these respondents suggested that a strong relationship with a single individual could provide access to other faiths and cultures – echoing the biblical counsel to find a 'person of peace' when engaging in mission (Luke 10:6). In the words of one participant, 'cultural groups' own leaders' can be 'bridge [people] with… language[s]' and cultures that might not otherwise be accessible.

Ensuring churches were accessible to minorities

Additionally, many respondents stressed the importance of ensuring that churches were accessible to people from ethnic minorities. One, for instance, commented that their church had invested in 'translated signs', run a 'Farsi Alpha', and held a Persian New Year's service for Iranian immigrants in their community. Other churches, too, had deliberately provided opportunities for church members to share in and learn from each other's culture. These opportunities often revolved around food: as one respondent mentioned, their church held 'Agape meals [in which] everyone brings their own cultural dish'; these meals, this respondent explained, allowed members of the congregation to 'showcase their national food'.

Gatekeeper organisations, too, stressed paying close attention to the needs of particular ethnic groups, and emphasised that focusing on particular ethnicities was not discrimination but rather honouring the needs and priorities of the people they were trying to serve. 'Highly educated Indian postgrads', said one respondent, have different needs from 'illiterate Kuwaitis'; it was therefore vital to tailor 'your ministry to them' and 'understand [the] specific discipling task cross-culture'. Similarly, another participant noted that visitors to their church often did not know the songs and struggled to fully understand the sermons as a result of their limited English; this leader had therefore tried to include 'fewer songs, so outsiders can learn', 'make [the services] more accessible without dumbing [them] down', make 'sermon cheat sheets', and 'do Google Translate into as many languages as possible'. While what constitutes an appropriate response may vary, these leaders underlined, adapting the services churches provided was essential.

Diversity as an opportunity for mission

Furthermore, as one church leader mentioned, diversity within a local church could sometimes also offer opportunities for mission to the community beyond it. This leader provided the example of sharing food: the 'Ugandans cook curry', they said, 'and then they invite other people, so that people see that they're missing out on the good food!' In this instance, cultural diversity within the church becomes a witness to

the community outside it: as this respondent suggested, when people who might not ordinarily visit a church see the goodness of cultural diversity (demonstrated through sharing food) and recognise what 'they're missing out on', they may be tempted to return. Crucially, this witness to the community emanated from the ordinary life and unity of the church: as this same respondent observed, 'it's all about doing activities together'.

An emphasis on missional church unity also translated well across church contexts. One Catholic priest, for example, wryly commented that the 'Mass is in Latin, so that's cross-cultural'. While this remark may at first appear facetious, it seemed to be partly in earnest: since the Mass was not in the language of anyone who attended the church – not even in English, the language of the cultural majority – it truly belonged equally to all members of the congregation. This priest also remarked that he 'put [up] different images of saints from other countries in the church' and 'celebrate[d] the… saints' from these countries. While these expressions of cultural diversity may look markedly different from expressions of Christian unity in certain Anglican or Protestant contexts, they constituted inventive ways of integrating a variety of ethnicities and cultures within a single church community.

Remaining present and consistent

Several participants emphasised the missional importance of simply being present on a regular basis in their communities. Interestingly, this was one of the criteria that most differentiated churches and mission agencies which scored highly on the criteria mentioned above from those which did not: 45 per cent of leaders from high-scoring organisations spontaneously discussed the theme of being "present and consistent" in their open-answer responses, as compared to just 4 per cent of leaders from low-scoring ministries.

High-scoring organisations were also remarkably consistent in their explanations of why being present in one's community mattered. One leader mentioned how he made time to spend in his local corner shop and have tea with the 'Sikhs across the road':

> *'Ugandans cook curry', they said, 'and then they invite other people, so that people see that they're missing out on the good food!'*

[7] Nonetheless, these findings must be held in tension with the fact that our quantitative analysis revealed that few people came to faith through "gatherings over food" specifically. This may be in part because the purpose of these gatherings was sometimes to cement existing church community (as in the 'Agape meals' above), rather than to invite people who were not yet part of the church (as in this example).

While 23 per cent of high-scoring organisations discussed it, this was true of just 7 per cent of organisations which scored in the bottom half of our metric.

> It's localism. It's not bothering about the big picture. It's doing the small things and sticking at it. We've got to stick at it. We've got to be there day in [and day out].

Other participants repeated this sentiment, focusing on the importance of 'working together, being rooted in the community, and having a strong reputation', as well as of 'just doing things naturally, not forcing things, making space for people to do normal things and that being enough'. This process could sometimes be slow: one mission agency working in Manchester, for instance, shared how it had been relating to an imam, 'two Jewish rabbis, [and a] Sikh two-to-three times a year' over the past five years. 'You've got to give them time', this mission agency's representative underlined, in order for real cross-cultural relationships to develop. Eventually, however, these cross-cultural relationships could become a natural space for evangelism: as another mission agency commented, 'healthy church members naturally bring people in'.

Being invested and trained

Other participants in Manchester highlighted that it was essential to be fully committed to intercultural mission and trained to reach their communities. Once again, this was a theme that differentiated organisations with high and low success scores. While 23 per cent of high-scoring organisations discussed it, this was true of just 7 per cent of organisations which scored in the bottom half of our metric.

Commitment

Participants especially highlighted the value of church leaders being invested in intercultural mission. As one leader stressed, 'it's important to lead them in this way, to set an example, showing the congregation that God loves [other cultures and ethnicities], and so we should, too. It therefore gives people the opportunity to join in or pray'. Gatekeeper organisations also underlined the importance of congregations investing in intercultural mission themselves, as opposed to leaving it to church leaders or dedicated teams: as one participant mentioned, the 'congregation have to own this'. In mission, as in all other church activities, 'the whole church should be ministering to each other, not just [the] leader from [the] front'; therefore, for mission to be successful, it is crucial to 'mobilise people [and] get them to serve'.

While mentioning God as a reason for success in intercultural mission may seem relatively basic, only six per cent of high-scoring organisations and no low-scoring organisations discussed this theme. Similarly, just 16 per cent of high-scoring organisations, and no low-scoring organisations discussed evangelism.

Training

Additionally, several leaders stressed providing training and teaching for mission. One participant, for instance, described how their church's mission team reported 'regularly to the congregation [on] what they're doing and how much they're enjoying loving their Muslim neighbours' in order to keep other members of the church informed and inspire them for mission. Likewise, other participants mentioned that the training that their church had provided for other ministries – such as the welcome team – had also been useful for intercultural mission. Interestingly, participants in Manchester did not mention intercultural evangelism training specifically, although this theme was present in Leeds, and may be an opportunity for growth (see the **Recommendations** section for further discussion).

God and evangelism

Another theme which differentiated highly successful ministries was the fact that they explicitly discussed evangelism and God's agency in mission in their open-answer responses. While mentioning God as a reason for success in intercultural mission may seem relatively basic, only six per cent of high-scoring organisations and no low-scoring organisations discussed this theme. Similarly, just 16 per cent of high-scoring organisations, and no low-scoring organisations discussed evangelism.

God

Participants who emphasised God's agency in mission generally did not go into detail: when asked what had led to their church's success in intercultural mission, one leader simply replied: 'God. And us, facilitating inclusion'. Likewise, another attributed their organisation's success to the 'Holy Spirit', as well as 'living the language, identifying with people, incarnating the Gospel, and proclaiming it'. Gatekeeper organisations also urged churches to remember that mission is ultimately God's work: as one participant observed, 'success is not up to us', and, despite the rough metric used above to identify "successful" churches, faithfulness in witness is 'not about the number of conversions'.

Evangelism

Similarly, respondents who mentioned evangelism often spoke of the value of

it is significant that ministries that explicitly foregrounded evangelism tended to be more successful in actually reaching cultural and ethnic minorities: while the Church may be able to share Christ just by "being the Church", it seems that some measure of intentionality is also vital.

concentrating on evangelism, as well as specific evangelistic activities in which their church had participated. One church leader, for example, shared that their church was 'keen on mission', and another commented that their church had shared about Christ through 'book tables [and] hand[ing] out Scriptures'. In a sense, it is not entirely surprising that organisations that concentrate on evangelism would score higher on a metric that is largely designed to evaluate evangelistic criteria. However, it is significant that ministries that explicitly foregrounded evangelism tended to be more successful in actually reaching cultural and ethnic minorities: while the Church may be able to share Christ just by "being the Church" (see the **Present and Consistent** section above), it seems that some measure of intentionality is also vital.

What specific activities worked?

In addition to our general question about what was essential to success in intercultural mission, we also asked gatekeeper organisations a follow-up question about which specific activities they had found helpful (or not) in reaching other cultures and ethnicities.

Activities that worked

In concrete terms, gatekeeper organisations identified five especially helpful activities for intercultural mission: (1) sharing food, (2) celebrations and events, (3) evangelistic activities, (4) sport, and (5) language classes. Some of these findings fit well with our quantitative analysis, which showed high rates of people becoming Christians through evangelistic activities and celebrations and events. Others (sharing food, language classes, and sport) did not feature as prominently in our quantitative data, but may represent effective means of building relationship with non-Christians even if they were not directly associated with conversions.

Sharing food

Respondents who focused on sharing food suggested that it was essential for both reaching people who were not yet Christians as well as ensuring church unity. In its evangelistic ministries, for example, one church provided a 'coffee break with cake, allow[ed] people to leave, then [did] a Bible study'. Another church similarly mentioned that 'multicultural meals after church' in which 'people [bring] their own national dishes' was an important part of how they celebrated diversity within their church.

Celebrations and events

Several participants also suggested that cultural events could be a crucial opportunity to build relationships across cultures. One leader, for instance, described how their church put on seasonal events, such as 'carol services, at which they have 400 per cent the usual congregation'. Likewise, another participant found that 'Christmas [and] Easter, Bonfire Night… [and] Wimbledon' could be fruitful times to reach people with whom their church would not usually come in contact. Yet another respondent felt that 'social events aligned with British culture – e.g., afternoon tea' could be opportunities to reach ethnic minorities who may be curious about British culture but would not ordinarily enter a church.

Evangelistic activities

While gatekeeper organisations cautioned against introducing spiritual activities before relationships had been formed (for which see below), they nonetheless emphasised that proclamation of the Gospel must be a part of intercultural mission. Perhaps most subtly, one leader felt that the 'presence of the Word of God' was vital to mission, and other leaders advocated for 'Gospel [or] explicitly Christian events' and affirmed that 'door-knocking works'.

Sport

Participants also highlighted that sport could be an opportunity to build relationships with ethnic minorities. One respondent, for example, shared the story of an Angolan man who had come to know a Syrian family through playing football with them. Similarly, another participant suggested that watching sport could also provide an opportunity for community-building, and specifically mentioned 'football matches' and (as seen above) 'Wimbledon'.

Language classes

Lastly, several respondents stressed the importance of language to intercultural mission and underlined that 'English language classes' were often a good opportunity to get to know ethnic minorities.

What doesn't work

Proclamation apart from relationship

When asked what did not work in intercultural mission, several leaders mentioned that spiritual activities were usually not effective when conducted outside pre-existing relationships. In some cases, this was because 'spiritual approaches', such as Bible studies, were attempted before relationships were formed; in others, it was because evangelism was attempted in contexts that were relationally unnatural, such as 'big events'. The apparent tension with our finding that celebrations and events were effective in reaching ethnic minorities, that is, may be resolved by the relational context of these events: when events were relationally stilted, respondents suggested, they were unhelpful, but when they were relationally natural, they were an effective evangelistic strategy.

One-size-fits-all approaches

Likewise, other participants warned against approaches that did not take account of personal and cultural diversity. 'Don't assume that one size fits all', said one respondent. Similarly, other respondents cautioned against 'anything… non-strategic to target the community', 'having an inflexible or impersonal approach', or initiatives such as 'flyering' which did not allow for personal adaptation. In general, one leader suggested, 'larger scale is less helpful than local'.

Pretentiousness

Especially in Northern contexts such as Manchester, participants were highly sceptical of anything that might appear 'pretentious', with one leader highlighting that churches should not attempt anything 'too arty or trendy' and another bluntly warning against 'anything pretentious'.

Limitations of good approaches

Finally, several leaders stressed that even good approaches were not helpful in every context. While some leaders were open to interfaith dialogue, one noted that the 'more [you] bring Muslims together, [the more] you accumulate resistance'. This finding was substantiated by the fact that our quantitative analysis showed that no one came to faith through interfaith dialogue. Similarly, another leader observed that, while 'English lessons [are] good for contact', it was 'harder to share [the] Gospel in that context' – an observation supported by our quantitative finding that only two people became Christians for every 1,000 attendances at language classes.

While several leaders discussed the benefits of seasonal events (as seen in the previous section), others mentioned that carol services can 'seem like a flash in the pan, with limited ensuing relationship'.[8] The same held true for programmes designed to produce a social impact: although one leader advocated certain types of social programmes, such as work with refugees, he also advised that other programmes (e.g., soup kitchens) 'don't bring people into church'.[9] Rather than selecting between "good" and "bad" activities, that is, it seemed that it was more important to choose programmes that fit the particular context and priorities of a given church.

Case Studies

To further explore what produced success in intercultural mission, we conducted follow-up interviews with some of the "successful" churches above. Unfortunately, (and unlike Leeds, for which see our forthcoming report), churches in Manchester proved extremely difficult to contact for follow-up interviews. We therefore decided to treat these follow-up interviews as case studies, rather than as larger datasets akin to the gatekeeper and "successful" church interviews.

For the purpose of this report, we will focus on two case studies in particular:

1. A diverse evangelical Anglican church (responses for this church were actually compiled from the experience of two churches in our sample). This church will henceforth be referred to as the "Anglican" church
2. A BAME-majority Assemblies of God church. We will refer to this church as the "AoG church".

What led these churches to engage with intercultural mission?

The Anglican church became involved in intercultural mission partly out of a desire to become more diverse. Its vicar had noticed that there was a 'lack of diversity in [church] leadership' (even though the congregation was more diverse) and felt that it was 'important to reflect' the 'diversity of [the] local community'. Like other survey respondents above, this vicar also thought that becoming a racially mixed church was also highly missional: 'see[ing an] inclusive and lively church worshipping the same God in different ways', she commented, was 'attractive for the Gospel'. Moreover, she continued, interculturalism was part of the church's history, and the church could not claim to truly serve its parish if it only met the needs of certain demographics within that parish.

[8] Although six people came to faith for every 1,000 attendances at "celebrations and events" – actually the second-highest rate for any activity included in our quantitative analysis, although well below the rate for evangelistic activities (21 people per 1,000 attendances).
[9] Our quantitative data showed that two people became Christians for every 1,000 attendances at food provision activities.

'Christianity has been so whitened', she noted. 'How can we fight against that?'

The AoG church's motivation for engaging in intercultural mission was slightly different. When a member of the leadership team was asked what had motivated the church to reach other ethnicities, she mentioned her vision to 'be a light where there is darkness'. This was particularly important to her because she saw her community as in bondage to sin, and suffering from 'pain', 'fear', and 'hunger'. She wanted the church to be part of the solution to these problems.

What issues did these churches have to work through with their congregations?

When asked what issues the church had to negotiate as a result of their commitment to intercultural mission, the Anglican vicar discussed tensions between and within ethnic groups. She also wondered about how to include the congregation in intercultural mission 'without micromanaging'. 'How do you think about power in the congregation?' she mused.

The AoG church, by contrast, had encountered a different set of problems. As part of reaching its community, the church had had to encounter a number of 'unexpected situations', including a 'suicidal visitor'. It had also struggled to find resources, including funding and food for its ministries. Nonetheless, the leadership team member reflected that 'it is a joy to do it; it is what we are called to do, to change one or two lives'.

What factors enabled these churches' success in intercultural mission?

To explain her church's success, the vicar of the Anglican church concentrated on the church's inclusiveness, the agency of ethnic minorities, the fact that her church's leadership was highly invested in intercultural mission, and the importance of relationships – thus touching on the themes of **inclusivity** and being **invested and trained** discussed by respondents above. Once a month, she explained, she sent the church leadership 'a book summary via email… from a Majority-World theologian', and had tried to 'widen [the] representation' of non-Western theologians on her church's bookstall. Furthermore, she ensured that ethnic minorities were represented during church services: 'the more different bodies we have and can see at the front is [a] help', she explained.

In addition to the initiatives above, this vicar also adopted a 'hands-off approach' and gave the 'congregation freedom to use their gifts'. She made a conscious effort to 'be ready to be surprised what they come up with'. Her approach was grounded in a deep conviction of the importance of 'relationships between church people'. 'Christianity has been so whitened', she noted. 'How can we fight against that?'

The AoG leadership team member also valued inclusivity, and cited her church's commitment to allowing people to 'come as you are [and] be yourself'. She emphasised that her church held this value so deeply that it made deliberate accommodations for behaviour that would normally be inappropriate in church: newcomers, for example, were allowed 'to go out to smoke and return'. Like the Anglican vicar, this leader prioritised relationships; as she observed, her church tried to 'witness through our lives, not just our words'. It also made a conscious effort to help new church members 'feel part of [the] family and at home'.

What advice do they have for including people from the Majority World?

As discussed above, the Anglican vicar prized equal representation of different ethnicities in church activities as well as well as intercultural mission specifically. True diversity, she suggested, 'ought to mean that anybody from any culture can have any role in the mission'. Her main piece of advice was to ensure representation of a variety of ethnicities so that minorities could feel at home in the church congregation (again, emphasising the theme of **inclusivity** from the previous section).

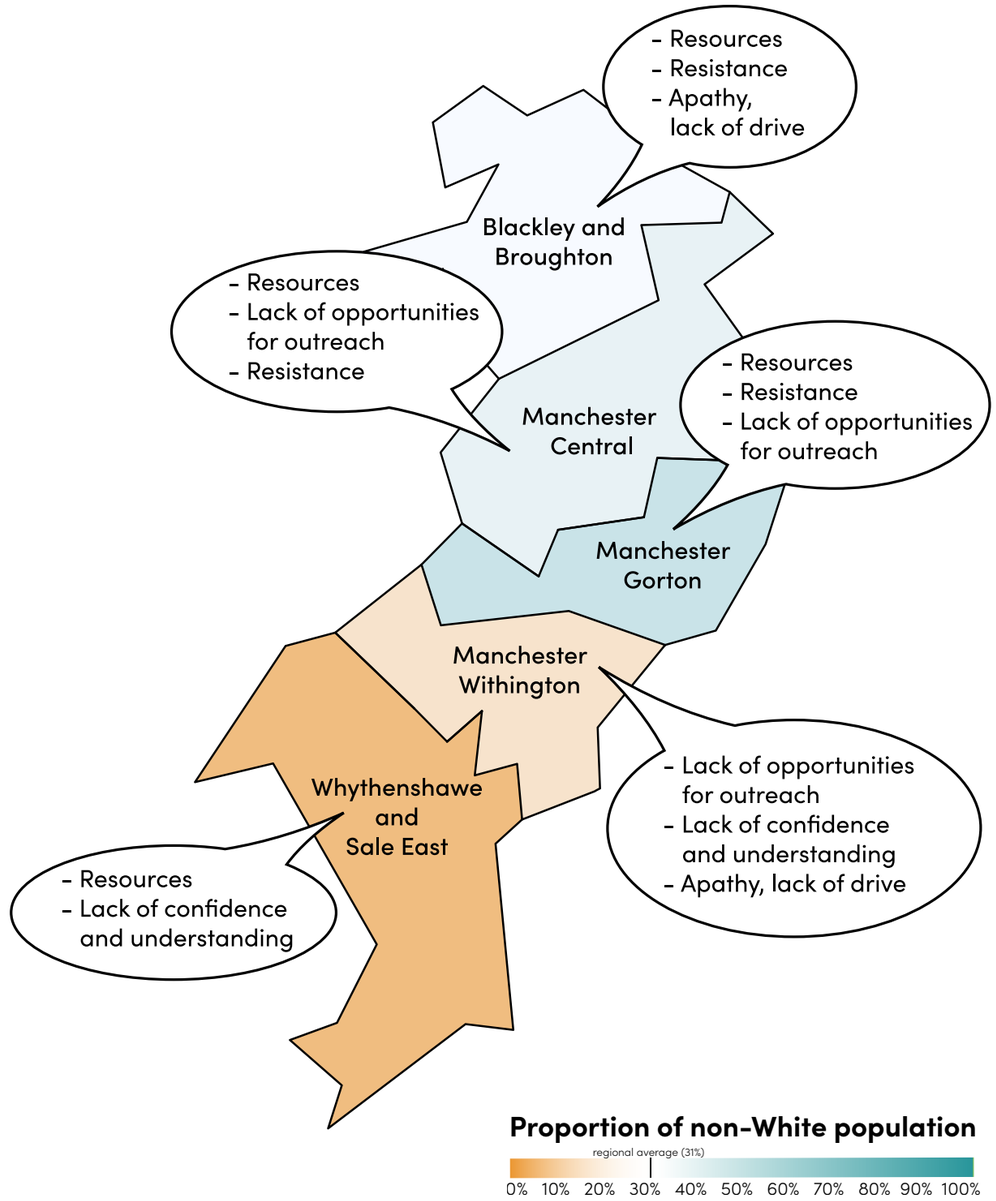
LIke the Anglican vicar, the AoG leader greatly valued diversity, which she equated with 'showing love to everyone'. She had also encouraged her church to be flexible in the way it presented the Gospel to ethnic minorities: 'don't assume the way you present the Gospel should be the way you have grown up with', she said, echoing gatekeepers' warning to **avoid one-size-fits-all approaches**. Crucially, she underlined that including people from the Majority World involved ministering to the whole person, and should include actions as well as prayer and demonstrations of God's power. Churches needed to address the 'physical, spiritual, and mental' aspects of a person. Finally, she urged churches to be sensitive in mission, exhorting them to 'think about the person you are trying to reach' and 'not to make them uncomfortable, like they don't belong'.

Can any church accomplish this?

Abstracted from their context, these case studies seem almost impossible: how could a single church accomplish this much? Nonetheless, the fact that each of these case studies is based on the experience of one or two churches (and that all quotations come from real interviews) should be highly encouraging: when committed to intercultural mission and open to God's guidance, churches can achieve an astonishing amount.

How can this city improve / what are the main problem areas?

Top three barriers to churches engaging more in intercultural mission (by parliamentary constituency)



As well as capturing what enabled churches and mission agencies to succeed in intercultural mission, we also wanted to understand what prevented them from reaching other cultures and ethnicities. We therefore analysed data from two sources: organisations as a whole and gatekeeper organisations.

When asked what prevented their organisations from engaging in intercultural mission, leaders pointed to five main factors: (1) a lack of resources (especially personnel), (2) a perception that there were no opportunities for intercultural outreach in their area, (3) a lack of confidence and understanding, (4) apathy, and (5) active resistance to intercultural mission.

Resources

Nearly two in five participants in Manchester (38 per cent) mentioned that their organisations lacked the resources they needed to reach other cultures and ethnic groups. Perhaps counterintuitively, this response was actually much more common amongst ministries with higher success scores: half (52 per cent) of organisations with high success scores discussed a need for more resources, as compared to one-fifth (22 per cent) of lower-ranking organisations. While further research would be necessary to reveal precisely what caused this disparity, it is possible that organisations that were already committed to intercultural mission were more aware of a need for resources than organisations that were not even attempting to reach ethnic and cultural minorities in their area.

Personnel

When discussing the specific resources they lacked, leaders emphasised that they did not always have the personnel required to carry out intercultural mission. Once again, this need was significantly more pronounced for organisations with high success scores, which mentioned it more than twice as frequently as organisations with lower scores (29 per cent of high success scores, as compared to just 11 per cent of low success scores). In the words of one church leader, 'we need more human resources; this is a big concern for us'. Likewise, others found that it was 'hard getting people to engage and to volunteer' – a phenomenon which they often associated with the age profile of their congregations. 'It's an elderly church, [and] the older you get, the less you can do', said one respondent; another similarly lamented 'a lack of young adults' in their congregation. As we shall discuss in the Recommendations section, however, there may be room to better incorporate these older congregants in intercultural ministry. Most churches in our sample had older congregations (56 per cent had an average age over 40), and therefore assuming that these churches had nothing to contribute would greatly inhibit intercultural mission in Manchester. Furthermore, while young people may be better suited to certain activities, older congregants may also have unique skills which they could contribute to mission.

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Funds and time

In addition to an absence of personnel, participants also stressed that they did not always have the funds and time required for intercultural ministry. In the words of one respondent, it could sometimes be difficult to 'financ[e]... initiatives and events'; likewise, others reported that 'time' could be a constraint because they were 'already doing a lot of different things' or because the 'calendar is too full'. However, as one participant acknowledged, a lack of time was sometimes a result of insufficient 'priority' being placed on 'spend[ing] meaningful time with people of other religions and cultures'. Rather than attempting to increase the amount of time available to churches in Manchester, therefore, it may be more rewarding to inspire them to prioritise intercultural mission over other claims on their time.

Building

Furthermore, some church leaders thought that the size or state of their building might prevent them from being effective in intercultural outreach. One, for example, expressed concern that unless they found a 'bigger venue, people will start thinking that there isn't room for me'. Similarly, another explained that their church's 'building is small, so [it] would need expansion for things like mum and toddler groups [and] evening events'. Other church leaders wondered whether the fact that their 'building is in... disrepair' might prevent 'people coming in', and suggested that a lack of physical space might be particularly acute for non-White churches: in the words of one leader, 'BAME-majority churches [are] often from lower-income households, so [there is a] lack of adequate venue and resources'. Interestingly, that is, the very churches that may be best equipped to relate to minority ethnic groups (because they are led by ethnic minorities themselves) are often least likely to have the resources to do so.

While 56 per cent of the bottom quintile discussed a lack of opportunities for outreach, this was true of just 17 per cent of the top quintile

Lack of opportunities for outreach

Unlike the lack of resources discussed above, organisations with lower success scores were significantly more likely to claim that they were unable to participate in intercultural mission because they lacked opportunities for outreach. Three in ten organisations with low success scores mentioned this theme, as opposed to just under two in ten with high success scores (19 per cent). This trend was even more marked when we separated success scores into quintiles (i.e., 20-per-cent increments). While 56 per cent of the bottom quintile discussed a lack of opportunities for outreach, this was true of just 17 per cent of the top quintile. Two explanations are possible: (a) either organisations with lower success scores truly did have fewer opportunities for outreach, thus explaining their poor performance, or (b) organisations with lower success scores believed that they had few opportunities to reach their community, and thus failed to take advantage of the opportunities that did exist.

Lack of diversity?

In explaining why they did not have the opportunity to reach ethnic minorities, several leaders claimed there was a lack of diversity in their communities. One, for example, thought that they lived in a 'very White' area, and another commented that it was difficult to 'understand the culture enough because they are not around enough us for to get to know them'. Organisations with low success scores were five times as likely to mention this theme as those with high success scores (15 per cent of organisations which scored poorly, as compared to 3 per cent of organisations which scored well). Further quantitative analysis also reveals that this perceived lack of diversity did not always correspond to the true ethnic and racial makeup of church leaders' communities, thus supporting option (b) above: that organisations with low success scores failed to take advantage of opportunities for intercultural mission. In Manchester Gorton, for example, more than one in ten respondents (11 per cent) thought that there was a lack of diversity in their community, while they lived in a constituency that was in fact more than 48 per cent non-White. Similarly, in Manchester Central 13 per cent of respondents considered there to be a lack of diversity in their communities, while the constituency as a whole was 37 per cent non-White. There may therefore be a need to alert leaders to the fact that there may be more opportunity for intercultural outreach in their communities than than they at first perceive.

Lack of interest from minorities

Other respondents thought that their ability to pursue intercultural mission was limited by a lack of interest from non-Christians. Amongst other issues, participants

their church's leadership was also 'very White, so [non-White] people don't see themselves in the context of leadership'.

suggested that 'secularism', the 'influence of [the] outside commercial world', and the fact that 'many people from ethnic minorities do not show much interest' prevented them from reaching their communities. Gatekeeper organisations also stressed that non-Christians were not always receptive to the Gospel. In the words of one participant, the 'blinded eyes of unbelievers' could be a serious obstacle to mission; likewise, some gatekeepers found that the Church could be impeded by 'people wanting to live their lives without Jesus' and 'non-Christians' misconceptions re God and Christians'. Several leaders also proposed that, even amongst Christians, ethnic minorities were not interested in participating in diverse churches: 'people choose the church that suits them', said one participant, and another agreed, noting that the main immigrant group in their area – Polish immigrants – had 'their own churches'.

Churches not accessible

Often, churches' ability to reach ethnic minorities was further restricted by the way they represented themselves to the surrounding community. One leader, for example, admitted that the music played in their church's services was 'very White', and might not be attractive to minorities. More seriously, another participant observed that their church's leadership was also 'very White, so [non-White] people don't see themselves in the context of leadership'. To make matters worse, several respondents noted that their congregations were resistant to change: one, for instance, thought their congregation would be 'too scared' to engage in intercultural mission: 'they're used to doing something their own certain way', they said, 'so [they] want to continue doing it the way they've always done it'.

Lack of confidence and understanding

Lack of confidence

Even when organisations were open to intercultural mission, some participants suggested that a lack of confidence and understanding had reduced their congregations' ability to work with other ethnicities. 'People don't feel confident to do the mission', said one leader, and another felt that 'big expectations' often impeded churches in actually reaching out to their communities. Intriguingly, one leader of a Korean church indicated that a sense of cultural impropriety had hampered their church in 'reach[ing] out to others': 'they are strangers or foreigners, being Korean', this participant remarked, 'so they don't feel that it's their place'.

Gatekeeper organisations were often especially blunt in their identification of the factors that could prevent churches from engaging in mission; one, for instance, listed 'fear of man, not relying on the Spirit, [and] fear of awkwardness' as the

primary obstacles to intercultural mission in his area, and another noted that 'lack of intentional prayer [and] confusion over the work of the Spirit' could hinder churches in reaching their communities. As is apparent in these quotations, gatekeeper organisations also tended to foreground spiritual concerns (e.g. 'relying on the Spirit' and 'confusion over the work of Spirit') alongside the material and logistical hindrances discussed above.

Lack of understanding

Even when organisations were willing to attempt intercultural mission, they did not always feel they had the skill to do so: one, for example, commented that 'understanding each other and what other cultures look like' could be difficult; others admitted that their congregations could suffer from an 'occasional lack of cultural fluency', or be unsure of how to navigate language barriers. As yet another participant suggested, while 'we presume [people from other cultures and ethnicities] speak English', this may not be true in every instance.

Apathy and lack of drive

In some cases, participants quite simply lacked the desire to participate in intercultural mission. As suggested above, this could sometimes result from a resistance to change: many congregations were comfortable with the monocultural community provided by their church. One Catholic priest, for example, noted that there could be 'barriers between the cradle Catholics and the converts' and that 'White people' at his church tended to engage 'with other White people'. Another church leader agreed, and observed that 'people feel comfortable with people who are like them'.

Sometimes, a lack of vision worsened this apathy towards mission. In the words of one leader:

> Overall, the congregation is rather inward-looking and doesn't consider local and global intercultural missions. There needs to be a cultural shift within the church and movement away from a "social/cultural" vision of Christianity.

Likewise, other leaders described their congregations as 'small-visioned' and 'not very good at going out'. Intriguingly, at least one leader believed that this lack of commitment to mission had a cultural component: '[It's the] hardest thing to get the African people engaged on anything that is not on a Sunday morning', he said:

> Culturally, people think that church is for Sunday. It's a cultural thing. People don't want to get involved in the leadership. [I've] tried to get them onto leadership, but people don't want to do that.

Intriguingly, it seemed that internal cultural misunderstandings were impeding this church's ability to be effective in mission: either this vicar was correct that African members of his congregation had a different understanding of church, or the way that he was inviting these congregants to participate in mission was not effective.

Either way, pursuing unity and understanding between ethnic groups within churches (including with regard to what "church" means) may be vital to ensuring effectiveness in intercultural mission outside the church: if churches are to succeed in modelling the Kingdom of God to unchurched ethnic minorities, they must first be united and able to demonstrate healthy relationships between ethnic groups as a church community.[10]

Rather than emphasising a lack of desire to reach racial and ethnic minorities, other respondents pointed to lack of awareness of other cultures and ethnicities. One leader conceded that 'getting the congregation to have more awareness of what's going on around them' could be challenging, and another found that her church tended not 'to think about it': often, she suggested, her church's attitude was one of 'if you don't look like us, we overlook you'. At least one respondent also suggested that a 'lack of leaders' could result in a weak commitment to mission: since this participant's church currently did not have a vicar, there was no one to organise the staff and congregation's approach to reaching other cultures and ethnicities.

In response to feedback from an initial presentation of the data, we also analysed whether the theme of apathy correlated to recent increases in diversity. As shown in the table below, there did not seem to be any such trend:

Area	Percentage non-White in 2001	Percentage non-White in 2011	Increase	Percentage mentioning apathy
Blackley and Broughton*	16%	32%	100%	29%
Withington	15%	23%	53%	25%
Gorton	29%	48%	66%	0%
Manchester Centre	27%	37%	37%	13%
Wythenshawe and Sale East	5%	13%	160%	0%[11]

*Blackley and Broughton is referred to as Manchester Blackley in 2001 and the area may not be identical

[10] In our initial presentation of the data, we were asked to what extent feelings of apathy were linked to previous experiences of intercultural mission which had gone poorly. While our data does not speak to apathy directly, no respondents linked apathy to poor past experiences in response to our question on barriers in mission.
[11] Data from Wythenshawe and Sale East may be unreliable because of our small sample size for this area.

Finally, some participants mentioned that they had encountered resistance in their churches' ministries to other ethnicities, most commonly as a result of racism and ethnic conflict. As one leader commented, there could be 'racism' as well as 'jealousy and fear' between White and non-White groups at their church. Likewise, another leader suggested that their church could suffer from a 'local people-village mentality', with congregants struggling to 'be inclusive or accepting of people of different cultures or even from other cities'. This ethnic conflict sometimes also occurred within minority groups: as another church leader observed, 'hatred between north and south Nigerians (Muslims vs. Christians)' had hampered Nigerian members of his church in reaching Nigerian Muslims in their community.

Some respondents also claimed that church structures had hindered them in pursuing intercultural mission. One Catholic priest, for example, found that his bishop and other members could 'wring their hands' and feel 'embarrassment' about outreach to other ethnicities. Likewise, another church leader described 'church structures' as a barrier to intercultural mission, and noted they could be 'powerfully controlling'.

Lastly, gatekeeper organisations also underlined an important obstacle to intercultural mission that did not appear in our study of churches as a whole: sometimes, other religious communities could actively resist fellow believers converting to Christianity. One leader, for instance, noted that his church had had 'some issues with some individual Muslims confronting ex-Muslims on [the] way to church… [and] having [an] issue with their freedom to choose Jesus'. While conflict between religious communities may be an issue that some churches are reluctant to discuss, alertness and sensitivity to the fact that some degree of conflict may accompany mission is crucial to sharing Jesus wisely.

While most participants concentrated on congregations' inability to participate in intercultural mission, that is, these final responses reveal that – at least in some church contexts – congregations, church hierarchies, and other religious communities may be actively resistant to mission to other cultures and ethnicities. Acknowledging and finding ways to diminish this resistance is crucial to enhancing churches' ability to reach religious, ethnic, and racial minorities in their communities.

Differences between gatekeeper organisations and churches as a whole

On the whole, churches and gatekeeper organisations discussed similar obstacles to intercultural mission. This in itself is an important finding: **gatekeepers and churches agreed that resources, apathy, and active resistance, as well as a lack of confidence, understanding, and opportunities for outreach, were the most important barriers to intercultural mission.**

Interestingly, however, gatekeepers tended to devote more time to issues that other churches mentioned less frequently. The following list ranks barriers to intercultural mission by how often they were discussed in churches' open-answer responses:

1. Resources
2. Lack of opportunities for outreach
3. Lack of confidence and understanding
4. Apathy and lack of drive
5. Resistance

Gatekeeper organisations, on the other hand, tended to rank these issues differently. Their most frequently mentioned themes were:

6. Lack of confidence and understanding
7. Apathy, lack of drive
8. Lack of opportunities for outreach
9. Resources
10. Resistance

It is difficult to know what to make of this discrepancy. On the one hand, gatekeeper organisations often seemed better-resourced than average churches in our sample, and thus may have underestimated the extent to which a lack of resources impaired churches' ability to engage in intercultural mission. On the other, gatekeepers' success in mission may have enabled them to call attention to themes, such as apathy or a lack of confidence and understanding, that other churches did not discuss as frequently out of embarrassment or shame.

What can agencies do to help?

In addition to learning from how churches in Manchester are approaching intercultural mission, we also wanted to understand what support outside agencies could provide. Consequently, we asked church leaders about what had worked well (or not) in previous partnerships and what support they would appreciate in sharing the Gospel across religious and ethnic divides.

Experience of previous partnerships

Surprisingly few participants answered our survey question on what had worked well in previous partnerships with external agencies, and some seemed to have misinterpreted the question, focusing on which agencies they had partnered with, and not what had enabled their partnerships' success. Church leaders who did answer this question emphasised that they valued (1) the knowledge, resources, and experiences these agencies had shared and (2) the results of the partnership.

Knowledge, resources, and experience

Several participants in Manchester stressed that their churches had benefited from outside agencies' expertise and resources. One, for example, described how a local organisation had provided the 'education, support, [and] training – especially around finance and housing' that they needed to work with refugees and asylum seekers. Likewise, another church commented that partnership with an outside agency had enabled them to 'understand… cultures in [their] congregation more', which had, in turn, 'built a strong relationship [with minority cultures], which has filtered through into the flourishing of the congregation'.

Achieving results

Similarly, some church leaders underlined that working with other organisations had allowed them to achieve results that they could not have produced on their own. As one observed, 'collaboration with other faith groups [and] local organisations' led to 'greater social cohesion and neighbourliness'. Correspondingly, another found that partnership with an external agency had enabled them to reach 'cultures that you wouldn't reach on your own'.

What did not work well

While very few respondents (less than one-fifth of the sample) answered the question on what had not worked well in previous partnerships, those who did commented on difficulties in crossing cultures, as well as a range of other themes, including disappointment when projects failed, a lack of congregational buy-in, and lost financial opportunities.

Regardless of partner organisations' skill, two churches suggested, intercultural mission remained highly challenging. 'Building friendships over different cultures… takes time and deliberate action' one leader emphasised; likewise, another explained that 'sometimes… other cultures have a lot of cultural baggage related to the Church, which has caused problems within interactions sometimes, or limitations'. Still other participants shared that when projects with external agencies had failed, it could produce 'disheartenment' within their congregations, and that some partnerships had not lasted because they had relied on a single member of their congregation. Rather pragmatically, another church leader admitted that 'having to turn some bookings away so they can use their own buildings' to partner with other organisations had cost them income.

Support appreciated from external agencies

Although many church leaders mentioned that they were not interested in receiving support to help them share the Gospel across religious and ethnic divides, some also said they would appreciate personnel, knowledge and expertise, training, funding, and ministry resources.

Not interested

The most common theme in this section of our data was that churches were not interested in receiving help from outside agencies. This may have been a result of the way that interviews were conducted: since respondents were contacted by phone, and generally had no previous contact with partner organisations, they may have been afraid that they would be asked for money if they indicated any interest in receiving help. Specifically, churches claimed that they were not interested in help because they believed that outside support would not be useful, were satisfied with the assistance they were already receiving from other charities, or were sceptical about intercultural evangelism.

Not helpful?

Some churches felt that assistance from outside organisations would not improve their ability to engage in intercultural mission. One participant, for instance, noted that while their church would, in theory, be open to external support, they did not 'know what more we could do that we aren't already doing'. Likewise, another felt that external support 'wouldn't make much of a difference'.

In other cases, respondents worried that external agencies might not have the local knowledge required to be truly helpful. As one church leader emphasised, 'the situation is so niche that they would need to know it really well', and another participant similarly expressed a preference for 'local charities'.

Other reasons

Still other church leaders saw no need for external support because they were satisfied with their existing partnerships: one leader, for example, indicated that they were interested in 'more of the same', rather than partnerships with new agencies. In some instances, participants equated intercultural mission with evangelism, which did not appeal to all church leaders. As one participant commented, 'God's love doesn't know limits. Sometimes groups involved with missional outreach have a very clear understanding of what they're about. And this doesn't really work for me'.

Interested

Nonetheless, many churches were interested in support from outside agencies, especially in these organisations' ability to provide personnel, knowledge and expertise, training and resources, and funding.

As one church leader emphasised, 'the situation is so niche that they would need to know it really well', and another participant similarly expressed a preference for 'local charities'.

Personnel

Most commonly, churches hoped that outside agencies might provide personnel to help them carry out their local mission. Sometimes, these churches requested assistance in intercultural mission specifically: one, for example, hoped that an outside agency might supply 'people' because 'working with other communities is a full-time job, and so people are so stretched and… very limited with time'. Other participants, however, mentioned that they would appreciate more support in their children's and youth programmes, or in their church activities more widely. These churches seemed to be in need of 'personnel to participate' and 'volunteers' across all their ministries.

Knowledge and expertise

Still other church leaders were primarily drawn to outside agencies' intercultural expertise. These respondents hoped that external organisations might provide 'resources and insight to help us better connect… with other cultures', as well as 'experts' who could give 'tips to the PCC and the church wardens and the ministers' about how to approach intercultural ministry. Some respondents expressed a particular desire for connections to other services so they could know 'who to contact for advice if issues are found', as well as in ensuring diversity in their leadership teams. One leader, for example, stressed their church's need to 'train… up leaders from more diverse backgrounds, in particular BAME young men', and wondered whether outside organisations might be able to support them in doing so.

Training and resources

Even more specifically, several churches requested training in relating to other cultures and faiths. 'I think if there are people trained in skills in different areas who can come and run courses to offer to people, that would be a big help', said one leader. Similarly, another leader mentioned a need for 'personnel with experience [in] mediation between different cultures and integrating different cultures into Britain to come and train people and share insight… [about] how to most effectively do this'.

In addition to training, some participants expressed a desire for resources to help them better respond to other cultures and faiths. One respondent, for example, suggested that an external agency might 'provide a resource that unpacks the beliefs of different worldviews [and] religions and helps people in the church understand how to engage with people who have different beliefs'. Likewise, another underlined a need for 'resources and insight to help us better connect at this individual church with other cultures'.

> *'resources and insight to help us better connect at this individual church with other cultures'*

Funding

Finally, three churches indicated that they would appreciate funding to further their ability to reach their communities. These leaders suggested that outside agencies might provide 'finances to continue to reach out to people on their doorstep', as well as funds to improve the quality of church ministries, including caring for the elderly and church services.

Case studies

As with the **Keys to success** section above, we conducted follow-up interviews with some "successful" churches to find out more about what support they would appreciate from external agencies. The following section therefore reflects the experience of the two case studies examined above: (a) the diverse evangelical Anglican church (which we will once again refer to as the "Anglican church", and (b) the BAME-majority Assemblies of God church (the "AoG church").

How might an external agency be helpful?

The Anglican church hoped that external mission agency might provide 'training', 'media resources', and 'funding of projects' for its intercultural ministries, echoing the respondents who suggested that mission agencies might provide **training and resources** and **funding** in the section above. Its vicar also suggested that an outside organisation might be able to provide links with churches led by other ethnicities in the local area; as she reflected, 'other cultures often have [a] strong faith', so not cooperating with them was a 'missed opportunity'.

The AoG church was especially interested in support for its outreach to Muslims: in the words of the church leader discussed above, the church needed 'help reaching Muslim ladies', which she suggested might occur through teaching 'computer skills' or 'English', or through 'social groups'. She hoped that an outside agency might be able to help her church start these ministries.

Were they interested in learning more about intercultural mission with others? If so, how?

The vicar of the Anglican church was highly interested in learning about intercultural mission with others, and commented that she would appreciate 'access to networks' of church leaders who led relatively 'monocultural churches' from other ethnicities (as an example, she mentioned the leader of a local Chinese church). She also hoped that mission agencies might be able to recommend or champion books, 'especially from Majority-World writers'.

The AoG leader, by contrast, emphasised that she would like to cooperate on training with other churches, especially with regard to increasing volunteers' knowledge and capacity. She believed that this would increase the effectiveness of her church: 'the more responsibility you have, the more capacity you can take on', she said.

Additional topics to be addressed with others

When asked what other topics she would like to discuss with others, the Anglican vicar concentrated on outreach to other faiths. She wondered how to build relationships with Muslims in her parish, and what to do once relationships were established. She also felt that women in her congregation needed to be equipped to 'keep going with sharing the Gospel' with Muslim mothers at her church's toddler group, and wanted to learn from outside perspectives on how to encourage and train them (once again, emphasising the importance of the training theme above).

Furthermore, this vicar had a deep sense of the ongoing distrust caused by 'race' and 'colonialism', and wanted to discuss with others what the Church could do to help. She believed that there was a need for the Church as a whole to recognise colonialism's impact and ask for forgiveness.

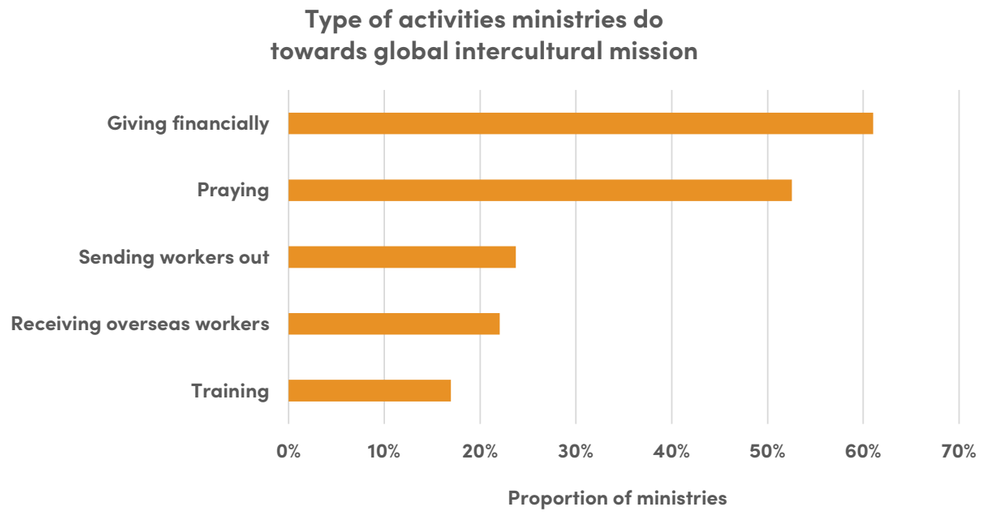
As discussed above, the AoG leader was highly interested in providing skills training through her church that might provide an outreach opportunity to other ethnicities. Specifically, she mentioned 'cookery courses' and 'computer courses', and emphasised that she would need 'more volunteers' to make these courses a reality.

Global mission

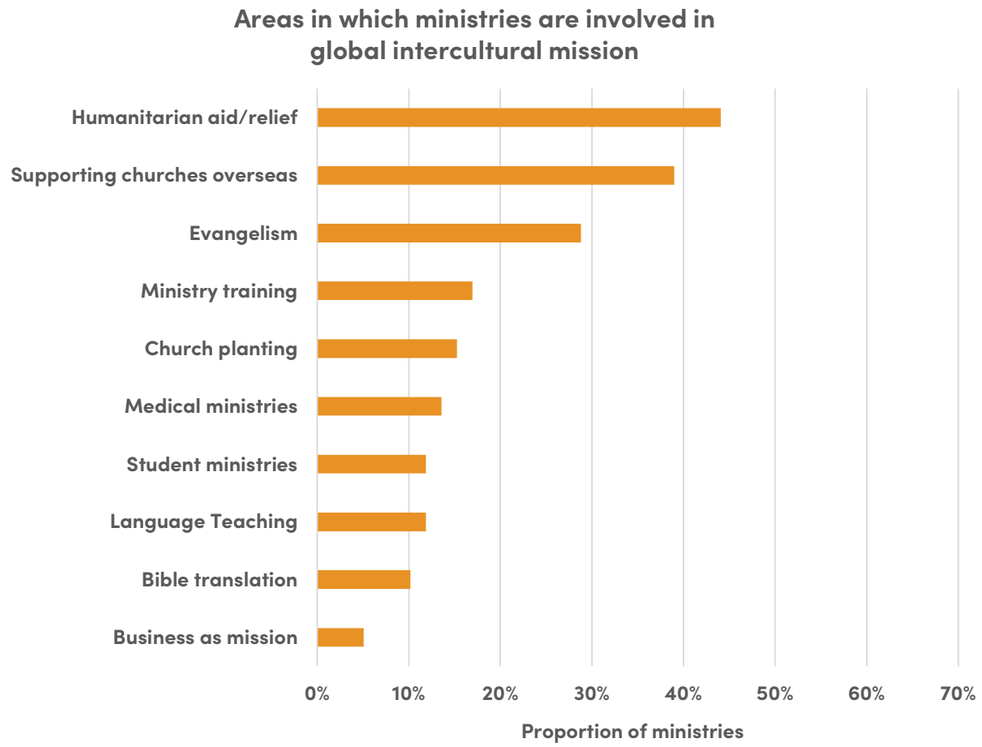
While we have so far concentrated primarily on local intercultural mission, many churches and mission agencies in Manchester were also deeply involved in global mission. More than three-fifths (61 per cent) gave to global mission, half (53 per cent) prayed for missionaries, nearly a quarter (24 per cent) had sent workers out, and one-fifth (22 per cent) had received overseas workers. Seventeen per cent of churches and mission agencies had also provided training for global mission.

Interestingly, sending workers out and receiving workers from overseas did not seem to be mutually exclusive: around 14 per cent of organisations had both sent workers out and received overseas workers. Churches and mission agencies, that is, did not seem to send workers merely because they had an abundance of resources, or receive them because they lacked staff. Instead, some organisations seem to have realised that they would benefit from receiving help from other parts of the global Church even if they had plentiful workers of their own.

More than three-fifths gave to global mission, half prayed for missionaries, nearly a quarter had sent workers out, and one-fifth had received overseas workers.



Ministries in our sample were involved in many types of global mission, although humanitarian aid and relief and supporting churches overseas were the most popular (44 per cent participated in humanitarian relief, and 39 per cent supported churches overseas). Nearly three in ten organisations (29 per cent) were involved in global evangelism, and many others contributed to ministry training and church planting (17 and 15 per cent of churches, respectively). A full summary of the ministries in which churches participated may be seen in the following graph:



'Jesus was cross-culture', she said, and 'the Church needs to be part of that'.

Case studies

To further explore churches' understanding of global mission, we interviewed a group of highly successful churches from our initial telephone survey. Once again, we concentrate on the two case studies discussed above.

What was these churches' vision for reaching communities where Christ is least known – locally and globally?

The Anglican vicar strongly felt that the story of the Bible involved crossing cultures from the beginning, and mentioned the stories of Hagar, Rahab, and Ruth (all non-Israelite women who were central to God's mission). 'Jesus was cross-culture', she said, and 'the Church needs to be part of that'. Therefore, her 'vision was that Jesus might be known', both locally and globally.

The AoG leader said that her church had not yet defined a vision for global and local mission, but that it was 'on her heart'. Her church was also contemplating how to become more involved in short-term mission. In general, she underlined, her church wanted 'to bring people in darkness into the love and light of Christ, and to welcome and serve them as family'.

How could an external agency be helpful in accomplishing this vision?

When asked how an external agency might be helpful in accomplishing this vision, the Anglican vicar hoped that mission organisations might provide opportunities for 'short-term mission teams' and provide links to Majority-World theologians and leaders. She felt that her church needed to learn from these leaders' perspectives on faith and mission.

The AoG leader's goals were extremely specific: the primary role that she saw for an external agency was in 'introducing the church to European short-term trip opportunities'.

How did churches mobilise members of their congregation with a call to global intercultural mission?

The Anglican church in our sample had relatively well-established measures for supporting members of their congregation with a call to global mission. The church provided 'a small accountability group', mentoring, and 'prayer and group discernment'. Through its links with a mission agency, the church was able to provide

to bring people in darkness into the love and light of Christ, and to welcome and serve them as family'.

the opportunity for prospective missionaries to meet with 'people with experience of [the country] where they want to go'. The vicar also mentioned that she may investigate whether a prospective missionary was interested in the 'formal routes of ordination'.

The AoG church leader explained that her church had not yet assisted someone with a call to global mission, but 'would help them through prayer and fasting'.

How could agencies help mobilise people with a call to mission?

The vicar of the Anglican church felt that mission agencies could primarily help through providing 'advice', 'practical tips', and 'training' for mission, thus reflecting the extent to which churches in our sample valued **ministry training** from mission organisations. She also believed that a crucial characteristic in a mission agency was that it 'be willing to refer people' and 'not to cling on to candidates if there would be another organisation better suited to them as a person'.

The AoG leader, on the other hand, suggested that her church's interest in short-term mission might be a way to discern a call to mission more widely: 'agencies could help with short-term trips as testing God's call', she said.

Discussion

While there are some commonalities in ministries' approach to global mission and the support they would appreciate from mission agencies (seen in the quantitative data above), these case studies indicate that there is real diversity in how Christian organisations support people with a call to mission and in the assistance they would appreciate from mission agencies. The Anglican church in our sample had a well-developed missiological understanding and impressive protocols for supporting people with a call to mission, but also noted areas in which it could grow: most centrally, in its connection to Majority-World leaders and theologians. The AoG church also brought real strengths to mission – notably, its deeply felt desire to 'bring people in darkness into the love and light of Christ, and to welcome and serve them as family' – as well as areas in which it might benefit from the support of a mission agency: such as the fact that it had never before assisted someone with a call to global mission or defined its vision for intercultural mission. Attending to these needs and assets – as well as the more general quantitative data above – may help mission agencies provide the help that is most useful both to individual churches and to the Church in Manchester as a whole.

Feedback from study participants

To share the results of this research, we held a Zoom conference in June 2020 with leaders who had participated in the study. In addition to presenting our findings and hearing from experts in intercultural mission, we intentionally set aside time for respondents' questions and observations about the research.

Direct comments on the research

'A sense of [belonging] is created when we are considered as contributors'

Several conference participants stressed that providing opportunities for ethnic minorities to serve and lead was crucial to helping them feel they belonged. This aligned with our findings about the centrality of inclusiveness and diverse leadership teams to intercultural mission. As one participant suggested, diverse leadership teams in particular functioned as visible reminders that churches were serious about welcoming ethnic minorities. Other respondents proposed that if minorities were not ready to lead, they could be encouraged to use their gifts by serving in other ways: as one suggested, 'you don't have to [have] kind of a high-ranked leadership position in the church'; instead, helping minorities feel they belong in the church depends on 'giving them [responsibility], trusting them, delegating [to] them… gradually'.

'How do you avoid… getting into a situation where you're just teaching English?'

Other respondents, however, expressed concern about the value of activities that did not seem to result in large numbers of people coming to faith – such as language classes. What happens, they wondered, if 'people come along to your English class, and then they don't get interested in the Bible?' While we have suggested above that these activities have independent value and may soften non-Christians' attitudes attitudes towards faith, some respondents had additional suggestions. As well as underlining these activities' evangelistic effectiveness, for example, one participant stressed that language classes were vital to non-Christians' own ability to share the Gospel should they accept Christ in the future. 'If we are here', he said, 'we need to learn the language; otherwise [we're] going to miss opportunities'. In this context, language classes represented a means of equipping 'new believers so they can make more disciples'.

'Encourage people that they don't often have to go very far to find people who are a bit different to them'

This conference also provided a crucial response to one of the most perplexing findings from our research: the fact that churches often believed that there was a lack of diversity in their areas despite living in regions of Manchester with high proportions of ethnic minorities. Above, we hypothesised that this finding may have resulted from respondents living in White neighbourhoods situated within more diverse constituencies.

As one conference participant suggested, however, living in a White neighbourhood did not constitute an excuse for failing to engage in intercultural mission: in cities such as Manchester, she underlined, Christians 'don't often have to go very far to find people' of other ethnicities.

New emphases

Moreover, conference participants stressed several themes which had not appeared as frequently in the research, including how to motivate churches for mission, a desire to learn more about intercultural discipleship, the effect of Covid-19 on intercultural mission, and coordination with mission agencies. We provide further detail on some of these themes below.

'The Bible compels us to love across boundaries'

Some conference participants felt that a combination of Bible teaching and exposure to other cultures might help people in their churches engage in intercultural mission. As one respondent mentioned, 'with Christians you have to start from their view of God and their view of the Bible'. This same leader also hoped that 'exposing people gently… to the beauty of other cultures' through hospitality, listening, and 'bringing in winsome speakers from other backgrounds' would help congregants see the importance of mission to ethnic and cultural minorities.

'Not just bringing people in but being able to disciple them'

Relatedly, another respondent asked for guidance in discipling ethnic minorities: 'I think part of the problem', she highlighted, 'is not just bringing people but being able to disciple them and teach them and bring them into serving… if we're going to think long-term what that change is going to look like'.

'An opportunity for greater collaboration and unity across the board'

Still other respondents concentrated on the effect of Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement on intercultural mission. While one worried that Covid-19, in particular, might limit the 'incarnational proximity' that was essential to mission, another wondered whether 'the devastating backdrop that we're in' might actually constitute an 'opportunity for greater collaboration and unity'. God, she suggested, might ultimately be at work in this time, despite the disruption it caused to traditional missional efforts

'To connect resources across the nation'

Finally, representatives of SIM-UK, in particular, emphasised that they hoped this research would enable further cooperation between churches and mission agencies. Several conference participants seemed excited by this idea: one, for example, shared his encouragement that 'that mission agencies see this country as a mission field now [when] until relatively recently we were a sending nation'.

Conclusion and recommendations

As the previous sections suggest, there is much to celebrate about churches and mission agencies' engagement with intercultural mission. Organisations in our study were committed to reaching a wide variety of people groups, and the proportion of ministries attempting to reach people of a given ethnicity generally exceeded the actual representation of that ethnicity in Manchester. Many of these same organisations were also highly faithful in supporting global mission: more than three-fifths (61 per cent) gave to global mission, half (53 per cent) prayed for mission overseas, and nearly a quarter (24 per cent) had sent out missionaries.

To build on their effectiveness in mission, churches and mission agencies may wish to consider the following recommendations, which are divided into three categories: (1) negotiating barriers, (2) keys to success, and (3) support from mission agencies.

Negotiating barriers

- **Creatively seek opportunities for mission**
  Our research suggests that churches were sometimes hampered by an assumption that there was a lack of opportunity for intercultural mission in their area: as the data indicates, many churches which made this claim actually lived in highly diverse constituencies. Furthermore, in some cases the absence of opportunity seemed to result not so much from a lack of diversity as from a slowness to adapt (by making church services accessible to minorities, incorporating different worship traditions, etc.). Churches may be able to overcome these barriers by creatively seeking ways to reach people of other ethnicities and include them in church activities.

- **Confront fear, apathy, and prejudice through training**
  To that end, church leaders may wish to directly confront the fear of the culturally unknown, fear of causing offence, apathy, and prejudice noted in the **How can this city improve?** section. Training and encouraging their congregations would likely be essential to changing these perceptions of mission – and would also provide an opportunity for further cooperation with mission agencies.

- **Smooth transition between evangelistic ministries and discipleship**
  Our analysis showed that, while evangelistic activities were strongly associated with people coming to faith (21 people became Christians for every 1,000 attendances at these activities), they were only very weakly associated with these same people becoming involved in church activities. (Just one person became involved in church ministries for every 1,000 attendances at evangelistic activities.) There may therefore be a need to smooth the transition between evangelism and discipleship, so that people who become Christians through church activities are more likely to actually become involved in the Church.[12]

- **Equip older churches for mission**
  Older churches were unlikely to feel that they could give or personally contribute to intercultural mission efforts (only seven per cent of older congregations said they were willing to give considerable resources to mission, for instance). Mission agencies may thus wish to listen to older churches to understand why they did not feel able to give or participate, and encourage and equip older congregations who do not feel they have a place in mission.

Keys to success

- **Focus on the five keys to success: inclusivity, remaining present and consistent, being invested and trained, remembering evangelism and God's role in mission**
  Churches might also benefit from respondents' suggestions for success in mission: specifically, **inclusivity** towards ethnic minorities, **remaining present and consistent** in one's community, **being invested and trained** for mission, remembering the importance of **evangelism** as well as social justice, and concentrating on **God's role in mission**. Relatedly, participants emphasised the importance of church unity as a witness to non-Christians and to enabling the church to function effectively.

- **Capitalise on the strengths of young and diverse churches**
  Younger and more diverse churches were far more likely to give to and prioritise mission than older and more monocultural congregations (younger churches, were, for example, five times more likely to give significant resources to mission). They may therefore be especially good partners for mission agencies.

[12] It could be that some people who come to faith through these activities went on to attend other churches, thus explaining some of the discrepancy noted above. Nonetheless, the enormous difference between the number of people who became Christians through evangelistic activities and the number who actually became involved in church ministries through these same activities suggests that some people may be falling through the cracks.

there is a good reason to be hopeful about what God is doing in Manchester. Participants noted that they had seen 'personal salvations' and that 'those coming from different backgrounds' had very quickly become 'part of the community'.

Support from mission agencies

Local mission

- **Supply knowledge, training, and resources**
- **Provide personnel**

  With regard to local mission, churches underlined that they appreciated when outside agencies **offered knowledge, training, and resources for mission** and as well as **personnel** to support churches in their ministries.

Global mission

- **Concentrate on student ministries, ministry training, and evangelism**

  Our quantitative analysis revealed that churches were most interested in help from outside agencies in the areas of **student ministries, ministry training,** and **evangelism.**

Conclusion

As this report has indicated, there is a good reason to be hopeful about what God is doing in Manchester. Participants noted that they had seen 'personal salvations' and that 'those coming from different backgrounds' had very quickly become 'part of the community'. These findings were reflected in our quantitative data, which showed that a majority of churches were committed to mission and that significant numbers of people were coming to faith through church activities. While there is much to celebrate, our hope is that this report helps churches and mission agencies in Manchester build on what God is already doing in their city so that they might become still more effective in mission.

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Appendix

ORGANISATION	RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION AND LINKS
SIM-UK	Intercultural Ministry (ICM) Training	SIM's ICM training was originally planned as a series of four day-workshops held over a six-month period for pastors and leaders of Christian organisations. These are being adapted for online delivery as twenty 90-minute interactive sessions over the same six-month timeframe. The aim of the workshops is to equip participants to lead, or contribute to, a change process in their churches or organisations so that the church or organisation transforms to embrace and propagate truly intercultural ministry. LINK: info@sim.co.uk
SIM-UK/ Two:Nineteen	Two:Nineteen	2:19 is an organisation set up to help local churches embrace the nations by promoting Christian engagement between members of local churches and the international people in their communities. Such engagement is encouraged through equipping churches to run English language teaching activities and other means of stimulating gospel outreach and cultural integration. 2:19 place special emphasis on two different aspects – reaching out and integrating within. LINK: www.twonineteen.org.uk
SIM-UK	ENGAGE	SIM's Engage project aims provide workers to help churches with gospel outreach into cross-cultural communities where Christ is least known. With workers sent from more than 35 countries, we can look for those with experience among particular people groups or faith backgrounds, or those with gifts in evangelism and discipleship. For more info contact Tim Barrow: engage@sim.co.uk
AWM Pioneers	Short Term Mission Trips	Sending church members on a short-term mission trip can be a great way to open their eyes to the reality of cross-cultural ministry. We run organised teams, known as Edge, and custom-made placements, known as Venture. Both of these are designed to deepen your heart for mission, working alongside long-term workers and learning from them. LINK: www.awm-pioneers.org/go/
AWM Pioneers	Equip: UK	Our Equip:UK training opportunity is a nine month placement in a multicultural city in England. This gives the participant the experience of ministry to Muslims, in an environment where they can learn and develop their own connections. LINK: www.awm-pioneers.org/go/go-short-term/internships-and-training-programmes/
AWM Pioneers	Resourcing Churches	We have a passion to help churches to engage with those from other nations that are on their doorstep. We can offer training and teaching in areas related to Islam, working cross-culturally and missional practices. We can also provide speakers for services, to explain more about our work and encourage you with what God is doing among Arab peoples. LINK: www.awm-pioneers.org/books-and-resources/
Eido Research	Impact Strategy Framework	Eido helps faith-based organisations measure and imrpove their impact. They do this through bespoke research, impact strategy workshops, and consultation. LINK: https://www.eidoresearch.com

AIM	Four Fields Strategy Framework Resource	Training resource for Intercultural and Diaspora Mission. LINK: https://globalfrontiermissions.org/church-planting/four-fields-training/
AIM	Connect Junior	Connect Junior is Africa Inland Mission's new quarterly magazine for children. LINK: https://eu.aimint.org/pray/connectjunior/
OMF	Local Training	Gerard and Sarah Charles represent OMF in the North of England and are committed both to inspiring and equipping Christians to engage in cross-cultural ministry. They regularly deliver training for Christians, whether in churches, student groups or Bible colleges, on engaging with people of other faiths (particularly with Muslims), on communicating the gospel to people of other cultures and worldviews (particularly Chinese, East Asian and Islamic worldviews), and on cross-cultural communication. They are available to any church leader in the North of England for an initial conversation as to how they might be used as a resource to inspire and equip that church in its current missional context. LINK: An example of the intercultural mission resources that Gerard and Sarah can help a local church engage with can be found here omf.org/uk/worldview/
OMF	Resources: A Taste of Asia	"A Taste of Asia" is a new devotional adventure book for 5-10-year olds and their parents. It combines prayers, Bible readings, true stories and fun activities. This is a resource to help families discover more about God's plan to share Jesus with the whole world and how he invites us to participate in that through prayer as well as exploring people and places around the world. LINK: See here for more details go.omf.org/tasteofasia
London City Mission	How to Guides and Training Resources	LINK: https://www.lcm.org.uk/what-we-do/how-to-guides https://www.lcm.org.uk/what-we-do/training
Evangelical Alliance	The (Im) Possible Dream Book	The (Im)Possible Dream from EA's One People Commission (OPC), written by Rev. Yemi Adedeji and Steve Clifford, aims to equip and enable all Church Leaders, heads of organisations and heads of networks to work towards unity, genuine integration, and greater ethnic diversity. LINK: www.eauk.org/resources/what-we-offer/reports/the-impossible-dream
Welcome Churches	Refugee Ministry	Welcome Boxes is a great way for churches to connect with refugees in their area. The Welcome Network enables refugees to find a church that is ready to welcome them. Free resources like contact cards in different languages and Refugee Worker Training. Resources to help Farsi speaking refugees. Safeguarding guidelines for churches working with refugees. LINKS: https://welcomeboxes.org/run/ https://welcomechurches.org/churches/join-the-network/ https://welcomechurches.org/updates/covid19/ https://welcomechurches.org/updates/farsi-support-for-churches/ https://welcomechurches.org/updates/safeguarding-guidelines/
Intercultural Church Planting Network	Intercultural Church Planting	LINK: https://www.icpnetwork.eu/

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