

1. Frankfurt as an Example in Germany (from Reverend Dietmar Will.)

I am working as a Pastor for relations to Migrant Churches in Frankfurt/M, Germany.

What is Migration?

Migration is as old as mankind.

All times people have been leaving their countries for different reasons, like war, poverty, searching for a better live, searching for work. They seek refuge from hunger or persecution.

In Germany in 19th People left to America because of poverty.

After the Second World War, when Jews were persecuted and killed, a lot of refugees came to Germany, from former Eastern Europe (expellee) and later from all over the world.

In the sixties many people from the countries round the Mediterranean Sea came to Germany. In those years Germany needed workers for their growing industries. Those people were called **guest-workers**, because the industry and the foreigners thought of some years staying and going home later.

But they didn't go home because they had families and their children wanted to stay in Germany.

The big cities in particular where places people went to. Like Berlin, Hamburg, Köln, Munich and Frankfurt/Main.

FRANKFURT AM MAIN - COSMOPOLITAN AND INTERNATIONAL

In comparison to large US or Canadian cities, Frankfurt am Main is a rather small town. By the end of 2004 it counted 650 000 inhabitants. The Frankfurt region of Rein-Main, which is a larger economical powerful growing area- has about 4-5 mio. inhabitants and consists of mainly urban areas still mixed with some rural parts. The daily pull in of people to Frankfurt from these areas around often gives the impression of millions moving into the city, coming from all over the world.

Frankfurt is an international and cultural centre, a hub of the European service-industry. The banks, the trade-fairs, the stock-exchange, the airport, the various agencies and publishers, the industries and small trades owe their attractiveness as commercial locations.

Immigration has been a standard feature of life in Frankfurt through out its twelve-hundred-year history like Huguenot's (protestant refugees from Belgium and France) coming more than 450 years to Frankfurt as traders. Some of them are the founders of the bourse.

Today, about 181 200 of the 650 000 inhabitants- approximately 30% are of non-Germany nationality.

On top of this there are thousands of people of foreign origin who have already obtained the German nationality. There are about 180 different nationalities existing in Frankfurt. 45% of school children still are having a foreign passport, although many of them are born in Germany.

Frankfurt has the highest percentage of foreign residents of any German city. The largest foreign minority groups are workers from Ex-Yugoslavia (about 45 000), from Turkey (38 000), Morocco (15 000), Italy (14 000), Poland and Russia, Spain, Greece and larger communities from Iran, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Indochina, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Africans (mostly West Africans).

In the last 10 years Frankfurt gave home to about 4 000 Jewish refugees from different parts of the former Soviet Union. The Jewish community counts at the moment ca. 6 000 people; before the Third Reich about 30 000 Jews lived in Frankfurt/Main.

A research has shown that appr. 10 000 undocumented people, (who lack the legal papers that permit them to stay in the country of their choice; so called Illegal) are living in Frankfurt/M. Historically Frankfurt has always been a centre of trade and commerce. The Frankfurt fairs are well known world wide.

As such, its inhabitants were treated according to their economical status. Differences in treatment and privileges were made between those who have money and those who were poor.

Today immigrants cannot be hindered to live in Frankfurt, but the tendency to privilege certain groups of foreigners with high income is still part of the informal policy.

Integration is one of the main issues.

For example 30% of the Frankfurt population is not allowed to vote!

Because of the German nationality law.

Another example is the **school education**: Few migrants are going to High-School. They only get unskilled jobs.

Or another example: Migrant youngsters, born and grown up in Germany, can be expelled out of the country in case of getting involved in crime.

Very often they do not speak the language of their parents and know the country of origin only through visits during their holidays.

Resocialization programs are because of the status “to be a foreigner” often not possible.

Besides the strongly growing poverty in the last years and a growing unemployment rate of migrant workers and unskilled labourers, who were employed in non-skilled industrial jobs, Frankfurt faces housing problems, drug problems and international criminality.

Compared to other cities in Germany the situation in Frankfurt is quite stable and solid. We do have only few percentage of xenophobia- criminality.

Since the beginning of the employment of so called “guest workers” in the early Sixties in Germany, we realised the development of approx. 140 religious communities in Frankfurt, amongst them 32 different Islamic groups, 8 Buddhist-Center and 5 Hindu groups, Sikhs and Bahai.

As well also a big Jews Community with different Synagogues.

Some of them are in Frankfurt since 30 or 40 Years.

2. What has been done in such an international City?

A. One a local level by the City of Frankfurt authorities.

Some examples:

THE DEPARTMENT OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (AmKA), was set up by The City of Frankfurt authorities in 1989.

AMKA is a local-authority body whose task is to foster the constructive co-existence of the various national, social, ethnic, cultural and religious groups within the population, and to promote their integration.

AmKA task is not only to combat discrimination and to develop integration measures designed to tie foreign communities into the city's life.

It also includes promoting mutual tolerance and understanding, producing information in various languages, mediating in conflicts with officialdom and the police, at the work-place, in neighbourhoods or schools.

- Orientation course
- Mama lernt Deutsch.

COUNCIL FOR PREVENTION OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE OF FRANKFURT CITY

The prevention council has the duty to implement development strategies to prevent criminal offences with all social power in the City of Frankfurt. The Prevention Council collects information and gives impulses.

B. By the Church.

I. The Church of strangers.

The Biblical basis is quite clear:

The Hebrew Bible reminds the people (and us) that they had been foreigners and slaves in their own history (Lev 19,33 and Dtn 10,19 and Ex 22,20)

Or Paul's theology of the various people united in the One body of Christ, Eph. 2,19 or Gal. 3,26.

Despite this wonderful Biblical basis, however, many Christians are obviously not immune to xenophobia and racism. Right wing Politicians all over Europe continue to exploit the issue of migrants in a populist way. This is only possible if we realise that also many Christians stay within the limits of their own national and cultural environments and do not extend the value of hospitality and love of the neighbour beyond their own skin.

What is necessary to be done?

II. Getting to know each other. The Program on a basic Level.

We need a **structure of hospitality**, not only on an individual or personal level but also on an **institutional level**.

Some Examples in Frankfurt/M. :

- We set up an Organisation called "**International Convent of Christian Churches in Rhine-Main Area**". 23 Migrant Churches (Asia, Africa, Europe and America) are belonging to this CONVENT. It is an Organisation **with** and **for** Christians from Migrant Churches. It is an example for Networking amongst the Migrant Churches.
- We are celebrating each Pentecost a feast, including a Public Service with more than 20 Migrant Churches.
- We set up **Intercultural Bible reading Weeks** between Eastern and Pentecost in German and Migrant congregations. When **we read the Bible together** we must be aware of the fact that we have **different backgrounds**. Our economic, social, political, confessional and cultural situations are often different (and these differences can be profound) and may produce problems and misunderstandings. On the other hand this is part of the Pentecost experience, where God always represents "the Other." This enriches us-
- Training Course for Leaders of Migrant Churches. Topic this Year is: [Pastoral Care in case of Migration, and "Second Generation" in Migrant Congregation.](#)
- We visited together with 6 pastors (also from an Indonesian and African congregation) Milan 2008 to learn about the situation of the Protestant Churches in Italy (Waldensian - Methodist Church) and a visit is planned from Milan to Frankfurt/Main 2009: [How do they cooperate with Migrant Churches and Migrants in Milan?](#)
- On the level of our Church (EKHN) we have integrated a Korean (2001) and an Indonesian Congregation (2005).
- My task is to be a bridge-builder between German and migrant congregations.

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