

# New Roots Review

*Fall 2016 Edition*



## Growth in Understanding *by Fred Wilgenburg*

It's a humbling experience, but somebody has to do it. I'm speaking of myself as the director of New Roots Ministry, specifically in my role as the chaplain at Smithfield Foods. Several of my colleagues--immigrant pastors--work there full-time (50+ hours/week) in production, and then they are the pastors of their congregations. Nearly all of them volunteer as pastors, preaching and leading worship most weeks among their congregations of 20--120 people. Pastor Victor of Ukraine sometimes says, "Fred, my work is 24/7."

I love what I do, but I'm humbled as a pastor who has always been paid for pastoral work, now working among pastors who largely volunteer for their churches. That leads me to my main point in this article. If your congregation has the opportunity, and you are looking for a new blessing and challenge at this stage, consider partnering with pastors and congregations of a different ethnicity than your own. You will most likely meet a lovely bunch of new friends who are motivated to grow spiritually, who are motivated for life in general, and who will appreciate you!

Many Anglo churches have done this to a degree, which has been very helpful, especially if a certain immigrant group is new to the community. They generously allow the immigrant group to use their facilities at no cost during the church's off-hours. But by now, many immigrants and their congregations have been around for several years, the people of their congregations have enough income to pay for space, and both congregations may be more blessed by a partnership.

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## NEW ROOTS MINISTRY



New Roots Ministry provides 18 hours/week of chaplaincy at the Smithfield Foods pork packing plant. Of the 3400 people employed, 85% are immigrant.



*Picture: First of 3 Timothy Leadership Training sessions in order for Pastor Fred to become a certified facilitator.*



Donations are needed;  
please help support the  
New Roots Ministry!

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Picture: Interfaith meeting with these Sudanese men who want to reach out to their Sudanese people struggling with alcoholism and other problems in Sioux Falls. Rehan is Muslim and William is a Christian pastor.

## Continued...

Recently, I interviewed Pastor Samuel Gaytaye and Pastor Rich Merkouris. Samuel and his congregation, International Outreach Ministry, are from Liberia. Rich is the pastor of King of Glory, an Anglo congregation. I encourage you to watch this interview which is honest about blessings and challenges: <https://youtu.be/n-IRVGuguRg> They and their congregations have chosen to be partners. They have not fully blended their congregations, including their worship services, as they are quite different from each other. Rather, they accept and appreciate their differences, and they realize they can still bless each other as pastors and congregations by doing many things together. It is not a relationship of charity where the one congregation is the giver and the other congregation is the receiver. Rather, they mutually give and receive so everyone is empowered.

Maybe this is not an opportunity for your congregation, **but it is for you as an individual.** By becoming better acquainted with someone from a different country, you will be blessed! If possible, take it beyond the employer/employee relationship, and beyond the giver/receiver relationship, so you are mutually blessed. Through it, you will probably get a bit humbled, as I have been through my new acquaintances, but that may be good too.

Thank-you, friends, for your interest in our fellow people made in God's image who are different from us! That aligns with God's plans for his world: "by your (Jesus') blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God" (Revelation 5:9-10).



Picture: Bhutanese and Nepalese believers worship at their joint assembly of congregations. The unity displayed at this gathering was encouraging.

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