Food for Thought

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Go to the people  
Live among them.  
Love them.  
Learn from them.  
Serve them.  
Plan with them.  
Start with what they know  
Build on what they have.  
And when the best leaders leave  
The people will say,  
“We have done it ourselves.”  
Lao Tsu

There are at least streams of migrants in the world: refugees or displaced persons fleeing war and persecution, those living in poverty who seek a better life in another place or country but have little academic training or skills that would pass the criteria for immigration selection, and those who are highly skilled or have financial assets who are welcomed (but not necessarily given the jobs they are qualified for) into countries like Canada.

Non-status immigrants have for a long time been the mainstay of Canada’s underground economy. No one knows for sure, but 150,000 to 300,00 persons are believed to be staying in the country illegally, contributing to the economy and doing jobs that others care not to or cannot do, such as in the construction or cleaning industry...

Government has the task of adopting policy that acknowledges the reality and yet balances public justice and the rights and interests of all involved, especially those caught in the crossfire. After all, they are just like the rest of us, looking for a better life and a place where they can live and work in peace.

Chris Pullenayegem,  
The Catalyst

Food for Thought

I do not think the question is whether we should make an effort to bring back the lapsed; of course we must. I am asking the question, “What are we bringing them back to?” I would contend that the best the church can offer the lapsed is a lively parish community where they will feel welcome, involved and at home on Sunday — and continue to feel that way.

The lapsed, after all, are not an alien species, and they are not fools. They are people in my own family, some I went to school with, neighbours and friends. Had life gone differently for me, I might well be happily among them. Finding out what happened to cause them to “fall away” is easy: I can simply ask.

Fr. Bernard Cotter,  
The Tablet

A Hand of Friendship across the Divide

It challenges the Churches to reassess traditional views of missionaries and missionary work. It challenges us to ask where are today’s mission fields? The role of the missionary has changed so radically from the days of my childhood — those days in which it was seen as one of recruitment officer, winning converts for our version of the truth, our view of God — headhunters or soulhunters in a big numbers game. A view in which those of other faiths and traditions were seen at best, as misguided, at worst, as enemies of the one true faith. That role has changed, — you are all evidence of that — but has it changed radically enough? Have we moved sufficiently beyond those outdated, confining preconceptions and succeeded in defining a new role for missionary work, indeed for the Churches generally, that meets the challenges of the new millennium? Have we fully realized the potential of building bridges of friendship and trust with those of other faiths, who in the past were seen as competitors in the race for saving souls?

Today’s mission fields are the streets we were born in, not just the African bush, the South American favela, and we have made a start at mission with a difference.

Mary McAleese, President of Ireland