Session 07.01-07.03 - Summary

Lab title: Mission Paradigms — Three Hope Labs on mission in and from Europe
Dates: 6, 7 and 8 October 2026
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1. The challenge we addressed

Across three linked sessions, the Mission Paradigms Labs asked what faithful mission in and from Europe looks like at a moment when evangelicals are a minority within an already-declining Christian minority — on a continent that is at once deeply secular and newly, visibly multi-religious. The challenge we set ourselves was to meet this moment without either an anxious defence of what is passing or a naïve optimism about what is emerging: to hold hope and honesty together.

2. What we learned

- Europe is not one story: the transition is uneven across regions, generations and institutions, and the grief that comes with it is real but unevenly timed.
- The inherited pattern of mission is fading: West-to-rest instincts, institutional self-preservation, number-driven success and funding models built for another era are no longer fit — and the deeper instinct to measure people by output must give way to mutuality.
- The emerging church is polyphonic: many-voiced and one in essence; migrants and minority-background believers are theological contributors, not a diversity problem to manage. Europe is a land of "two wounded strangers," long-established and newcomer alike.
- Representation alone does not shift power: real change redistributes money, authority and legitimacy, and discerns vision collectively rather than importing it.
- The crossing calls for discernment: in the contested in-between, faithfulness means discernment over preservation, listening as a discipline, shared leadership, and resilience rooted in the leader's own inner work.

3. Our proposed response

We propose that renewal in Europe be tested, not assumed. Every emerging initiative — partnership, structure, appointment or venture — should be weighed by four questions: does it redistribute power (not only the vocabulary); does it treat people as co-participants rather than metrics; does it strengthen the church's minority vocation; and does it keep our allegiance in Christ across nations, rather than in nation or status?

Alongside this testing, we commit to a polyphonic, mutual and resident-alien vocation — a church at home in its strangerhood, listening across cultures, languages and faiths, and confident in its witness among neighbours of other faiths.

Three concrete commitments

1. Test our own initiatives, partnerships and structures by the four questions — and to change what fails them.

2. Platform migrant and minority-background believers as theological contributors and shared decision-makers, not diversity representation — shifting budgets, agenda-setting and gatekeeping, not only who is visible.

3. Practise mutuality that bears real fruit — trust, co-creation and local ownership — across our networks, each beginning with one concrete personal step.

4. Support needed from the EEA and the wider HOPE community

- A standing platform for minority-background and diaspora theologians within the EEA One People Network.
- Peer-learning space across Western and Eastern Europe on their diverging trajectories.
- Shared work on funding and sustainability models for a new era of mission.
- A willingness to test real initiatives honestly by the four questions, and to change what fails them.

5. Message for external communication

One short paragraph for a HOPE report, newsletter or website article.

At HOPE 2026 in Golem, the Mission Paradigms HOPE Labs brought network, organisation and Alliance leaders together to ask what faithful, hopeful mission looks like in a Europe where the church is becoming a minority among many. Rather than defend what is passing or chase what is new, we chose to hold hope and honesty together — naming our grief, discerning the polyphonic, many-voiced church already being born among diaspora and migrant communities, and testing every emerging initiative by whether it truly shares power, honours people, strengthens our witness and keeps our allegiance in Christ. We leave not with a programme, but with a vocation and a first step: to become, together, a church of many voices and one Lord.