

## Study Group: Christian Communities and Mission

### Reintroducing the Church to Mission

By Robert Lilleaasen

Mission societies that previously focused on sending missionaries abroad are today establishing new congregations in Norway. The Norwegian mission movement has turned its attention towards its own context and church development in Norway. This is not a case of reintroducing mission to the churches, but rather a case of reintroducing *the church to mission*. These new congregations represent a change in understanding of both western culture and mission. They find their roots in the (Scandinavian) pietistic tradition, and their emphasis on global mission, i.e. sending and supporting missionaries overseas. I will investigate in what way this background influences their ecclesiology.

I have previously conducted an empirical study (PhD, published 2018) on the worship in two congregations affiliated with this development in the Norwegian mission movement. In the proposed paper I will focus on the ecclesiastic aspects of these congregations. In terms of theological change and development, the local church is the *locus* in this movement, i.e. from global mission to local churches. Traditional solutions and theological positions are revisited within and in view of local perspectives. In connection with the empirical material obtained from the two congregations, I will introduce the main features of these ecclesial developments. I will investigate their emphases on personal relationships, view on leadership, ecumenical orientation, focus on lay participation, and their understanding of mission and evangelism. The basic question in my paper is; *what can we learn from these ecclesial developments?*