

Q: How would you describe the relationships at Cable Street?

Q: What relationships have been important in your formation as a disciple? Who has helped you on the journey of discipleship?

3. Teaching and learning

As fresh expressions of church develop, three broad approaches to teaching and learning are emerging.

The first, and still fruitful approach, utilises published discipleship resources ranging from well established courses such as *Emmaus* to new materials such as the online course *Foundations21*.

Other fresh expressions are developing their own courses and resources. This has the advantage of being developed in the midst of the culture and context in which the fresh expressions is set. When developing materials 'in house' it is important to ask critical questions such as, is it:

- biblical?
- true to the Christian tradition?
- whole life?
- both open and challenging?

The third approach sees many fresh expressions rediscovering ancient pathways of discipleship. The saints of today are being encouraged by revered saints of the past such as Brendan, Ignatius, Francis and Benedict. This new monastic approach uses daily rhythms and liturgies, spiritual exercises, contemplation, symbol, and pilgrimage to deepen personal and corporate discipleship.

PRAYER – thank God for the people and churches that have encouraged you on the journey of discipleship. Pray for those who have recently responded to the call of Jesus that they may grow as disciples.

Editor's note:

The paper this year has been produced for Spectrum by Pete Pillinger and Andrew Roberts of "Fresh Expressions".

Your feedback is invited.

Do you like the use of DVDs to stimulate discussion ?

Have you found the suggested resources easily available?

How did you find the balance between bible study and discussion of the contemporary world and church?

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Changing Church for a Changing World

There is a danger that 'fresh expressions' is being over-used. Almost anything can be re-baptised as a 'fresh expression' especially if a grant application is being made! Pete Pillinger and Andrew Roberts explore not just what is happening on the surface but also the theology underpinning the fresh expressions movement.

You are recommended to read or watch the following alongside this study:

Changing Church for a Changing World –
Methodist Publishing House

Mission-shaped Church – Church House Publishing
The Fresh Expressions DVD's (1 & 2) – Church House
Publishing

All are available from www.freshexpressions.org.uk or your local bookshop.

Within this material are group activities always in bold italic typeface. Depending on the size of your group you may wish to do some of these in smaller groups (2's or 3's).

1. Rediscovering Mission

What frustrates you and what excites you about the church?

What has changed in church from the time you can first remember church and what is the same?

More than 50,000 people are involved in the fresh expressions registered with Fresh Expressions. This is probably less than a quarter of all fresh expressions. A fresh expression is 'a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.'

Archbishop Rowan Williams talks of a 'mixed economy' church – consisting of both 'traditional' and 'fresh' expressions of church – each recognising and giving honour to the other.

● **Look at the first five clips on DVD1** – stop the DVD after 9 minutes 12 seconds

Discuss what you think of these.

List ways in which life and society have changed in recent years that have had an impact on your local church.

Surveys show that roughly 10% of people come to church at least monthly. 10% come a bit. 20% used to come and are open to coming back. **Total 40%**. The rest of the population is made up of 20% who used to come to church and are NOT coming back. 40% who have never been part of any church. **Total 60%**

Here are a few ways society has changed:

Sundays – shops open, sports, workday for many.

Relationships – internet communication, don't know neighbours.

Cultures – multiculturalism, multiple TV channels, lots of choice.

Less knowledge of faith – Christian stories cannot be assumed to be known by all.

Spiritual hunger – seen in people visiting 'Mind, Body, Spirit' fairs. People call themselves 'spiritual' but not 'religious'.

Q: Think of some people you know who are not part of any church. What sort of church might they wish to be part of?

Q: What does the example of Jesus tell us about the sort of church he might have wanted? Who would he invite?

Q: What does our understanding of God as Trinity tell us about the nature of the church?

(You may need to pool your knowledge of the Bible here).

'Misseo Dei' means 'the mission of God'. It is the calling of the church to be a partner with God in God's mission. 'It's not the church of God that has a mission in the world. It's the God of mission who has a church in the world.' [Tim Dearborn, *Beyond Duty*, World Vision, ISBN: 1-887983-04-X].

Q: In groups of three create the top three priorities you think God wants the church (that is us!) to engage with. Be specific rather than general.

PRAYER: Spend the last part of your meeting praying for the impact of your local church in its local community.

Q: Were there any you would like to question?

In the DVD sequence Steve Croft says that fresh expressions are seeking to encourage *whole life discipleship*. The focus of discipleship is changing. Sometimes churches seem to have been geared more to helping individuals become good members than to live effectively in the world. - 'this is what Holy Communion is about', 'this is how you can share your gifts', 'this is how you can be a better small group leader'.

Many fresh expressions have discovered afresh that discipleship is much wider than that. It involves allowing every part of life to be under the influence of God.

'Everything a Christian believes and does is an aspect of discipleship; the goal of discipleship is to grow ever more Christ-like in every aspect of life.'

Jesus provides the classic example. He lived distinctively as he went to homes, market places, festivals, weddings and designated places of worship. He spoke about marriage and divorce, taxes, government, wealth, work and disease. He got involved in discussion and debates. His statement, 'love your enemies', was highly political in a country where their Roman rulers were hated.

He taught his followers to pray 'Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven.' This was a prayer that the entire planet - the whole of life on Earth - would be under God's authority, just as God's will holds complete sway in heaven.

Christians are called to be part of the answer to this longing for the kingdom.

They are to live out their discipleship at home, at work and in their leisure, as well as in the church.

Questions for reflection or discussion.

Q: How 'whole life' is your church?

Q: How can we help our brothers and sisters in Christ to live out their discipleship in every part of their lives?

As fresh expressions develop, three things are proving crucial for the nurture of disciples.

1. A gracious environment

When asked how disciples are nurtured at *Somewhere Else*, Barbara Glasson said:-

'Through friendship, laughter, being real with each other, finding a way to engage in honest conversation, honouring questions, encouragement and mutual learning.'

Q: How would you describe the environment in your church?

2. Supportive relationships

These take a variety of forms including;

- small groups.
- mentoring relationships.
- companions who covenant to journey together.

● **DVD clip – DVD 1 – Chapter 14 – Cable Street Community Church [5'42"]**

which is integral to their life and mission. Sanctus1/Nexus is an emerging church in the city centre of Manchester.

● **DVD clip – DVD 1 – Chapter 12 – Sanctus1 [5'45"]**

Creative worship will look different in different places but here are some common threads. Creative worship;

- reframes tradition.
- is multi-sensory.
- is accessible to all needs, learning styles and ages.
- is participatory.
- uses contemporary culture.
- creates space for response.

Design an act of worship.

In small groups choose a forthcoming Sunday and one of the suggested readings for the day and then design an act of 'liquid worship' suitable for a variety of needs, learning styles and ages. Then share your designs in plenary.

PRAYER – pray over the people you would love to see coming to regular worshipping relationship with God. Pray that your church may have the wisdom and courage to develop worship in ways that provides open windows for the Spirit to blow and opportunities for all to engage in creative ways.

5. Re-imagining Church

c. – Discipleship

Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' (Matthew 28:18-20)

This is the task that we have inherited, to 'make disciples' of all people - not just to count converts, or fill our churches, but to create environments where people grow and develop in their faith, becoming mature, whole life followers of Christ. This is true of all churches and is a particular challenge for fresh expressions. John Howard the Chair of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist District has said we can have as many fresh expressions as we like but if they do not make more disciples of Jesus Christ we will have failed in our mission.

Q: Does your church aim to make converts, fill the pews or make disciples?

Q: What particular opportunities would a fresh expression offer for making disciples?

Optional

- **DVD clip – DVD 2 – Chapter 9 – Discipleship [5'56"]**

Q: Which comments do you particularly agree with?

Appendix 1:- What is Mission?

'Mission is seeing what God is doing and joining in.'

The Five Marks of Mission:

- To proclaim the good news of the kingdom.
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
- To respond to human need by loving acts of service.
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Q: What do you think?

2. Changing Church?

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'nightclub'? (Bring your ideas together as a group).

What might a church aimed at people who live in a nightclub culture look like?

[Culture is 'the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, which encompasses — in addition to art and literature — lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs'. (UNESCO).]

- **Look at Nightshift - chapter 6 on DVD1 – (5'44")**

How many different varieties of ways of buying carrots are there in your local supermarket? We counted 20! In the

1960's the average supermarket carried 2,000 products, today this average is 22,000! Consumer choice has exploded. In the early 1960 there were two TV channels, today there are hundreds.

Q: How does the church adapt to a 'choice' culture?

Q: Is adapting to a 'choice' culture selling out?

If Jesus had followed cultural expectations he would not have called both Simon the Zealot and Matthew the tax gatherer into the same group of disciples (Lk 6:15). He would not have spoken to the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4). He would not have eaten with Zacchaeus (Lk 19).

Q: How can we be true to the 'DNA' of church while adapting the cultures we live in without selling out?

Q: What aspects of consumerism should Christians challenge?

Q: What aspects should we work with?

Q: What new things might we do in response to changes in our culture?

We suggest that the following aspects of consumerism should be challenged:

- The belief that happiness can be bought or obtained through consumption.
- The selfishness of consumerism – its me that matters.
- That we should move on from what does not satisfy to something that might.

The following can be worked with:

- Providing events at a time and place and in a way that suits those we are trying to reach.

- Encouraging diversity in worship, and means of discipleship.
- Working with the need of some people for transformational experience.
- Allowing people to try things out without 'signing up'.

Some churches offer spirituality through local education colleges, if they will do courses on Reiki why not Christian spirituality courses such as Essence.

Some run parenting classes. Some offer Christian 'life coaching' or spiritual direction.

Once upon a time there was a struggle to have the Bible and the liturgy in other languages than Latin. Those against said that Latin expressed the unity of the church, those for wanted people to be able to understand.

'A faithful church is continually shaped by its inner dynamic, the flow of the Apostolic Tradition with Scripture as the norm. The Church is however also shaped by the kind of world in which it finds itself. This must mean a constant receiving of the Gospel into our particular context.' Bp. Michael Nazir-Ali

Consumerism is complemented by the rise of social networks based around the internet, schools, special interest groups, sports. These are not new, but they are much more important. Networks are based on common interest more often based on what we do than where we sleep.

Q: Parish based systems are based on geography, what would a church look like that is based on a network of common interest?

- **Optional DVD clip – DVD 2 'Work rest and play' (stop after 5'20")**

Q: What do you think?

Think of a person you know who is not part of any church:

Q: Name one priority in their life – what do they make sacrifices for?

Q: What do they do for fun?

Q: What do they have opinions about?

Q: What would a church that your friend would feel at home in be like?

Q: How might they get involved?

Q: When and where might it meet and to do what?

'We need people-shaped churches not church-shaped people' – Discuss.

PRAYER: Spend some time in silence praying for the individual people you have been thinking about.

Appendix 2 – Missional values

Five Values of a missional church:

- Focussed on God the Trinity – focussed in worship and prayer.
- Incarnational – seeking to be Jesus body in their local cultural setting.
- Transformational – The Gospel always transforms the culture it exists within.
- Makes disciples – the primary calling is to make disciples not to make churches.
- Relational – the Emmaus Road and the Woman at the Well show Jesus at his relational best.

- Acts 2:46-47
- 1 Peter 2:5.

Key points to draw out;

- Worship is for the glory of God.
- Worship is sacrificial (which for many today is *counter* cultural).
- Worship energises mission.

'... helps me to worship.'

Spend a few moments in twos or threes saying what helps you to worship - then share your thoughts in plenary.

Key points to draw out;

- Different people find different forms of worship helpful.
- These differences sometimes have theological roots but more often they arise from cultural differences – especially when it comes to music!

The needs of others in worship.

In small groups use the character cards. Choose a character and think together how he or she might like to worship.

(See centre pages vi & vii).

Pete Ward says that one of the unseen key values of solid church is this one-size-fits-all environment and that even worship must fit in with that key value. [Pete Ward, *Liquid Church*, Paternoster Press, 2004].

The result is that we sometimes provide a rather bland and inoffensive diet of middle-of-the-road music and safe spirituality. Variety in what we have to offer is severely limited by the tastes and prejudices of those who attend. We stand up at the same time, we sit down at the same time, we read together at the same time, we all listen to the sermon at the same time. Extremes are tempered because one of the key values is that we do not offend anyone who comes to church regularly. One or two critical comments will prompt the leaders of the church to tell the youth group to turn the instruments down!

Ward urges us to move away from the traditional notion of church as a gathering of people meeting in one place at one time to the dynamic notion of church as a series of relationships and communications.

However, it all depends on what sort of culture we find ourselves in. If your culture warms to regular gatherings, a solid expression of church will be appropriate. As people live more fluid lives, the church needs to be more flexible too.

Q: Do you agree with Pete Ward?

Q: Would your parents or children or grandchildren want to worship in the same way as yourself?

Q: If we need variety for different people and effective mission how do we express our unity?

Many fresh expressions of church are experimenting with creative worship

[cf Philippians 2:5-11]

Community is 'the sum of relationships a group of individuals has with one another'.

Q: Is this an adequate definition?

Q: What would your definition be?

Read Acts 2:42-47. Rewrite it in reverse.. "they met together whenever they felt like it..."

Q: What sort of community was the early church? Spend some time describing the sort of community you perceive the church of Acts to have been.

They were: worshipping, praying, sharing, caring, witnessing, open, spanned many languages, attractive, ...

'The only hermeneutic of the Gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it. The church exists to be the primary agent of mission and if it does not exhibit evident community and transformed lives then any amount of evangelistic events and church projects will have limited credibility.'

Share stories of good Christian communities you know of who model the attributes of the church in Acts.

Look at the following texts:

Rom 12:10; 15:7; Eph 4:32; 5:21; Heb 10:24; James 5:16; Gal 6:2; 5:13; Col 3:13

Q: What do these tell us about the way community is formed and sustained?

PRAYER – Identify some issues which prevent your church being true community and pray together about them. Identify facets of your church in

which you form good community and thank God for them.

Appendix 3 – Community Values

Genuine Christian community has been described as having the following five values:

- Jesus at the centre.
- Church is community – marked by openness, honesty and sacrificial love.
- Every member growing.
- Every member ministering.
- Every member witnessing well.

Cell Church values cf

<http://www.celluk.org.uk/about/whatiscell.php>

4. Re-imagining Church

b. – Worship

[You will need some large pieces of paper and some marker pens.]

'Worship is . . .'

Spend a few moments in twos or threes completing the sentence above with as many statements as you wish - Then share these in plenary.

Again in twos and threes followed by plenary discuss these verses and what they say to us about worship.

- 1 Ch 16:29
- Psalm 98.
- John 4: 23-24.

3. Re-imagining Church

a. – Community

[You will need four large pieces of paper and some marker pens.]

Where do you belong?

Edward T. Hall, an anthropologist, talks about four arenas in which people sense belonging:

Public Space – something big where you feel anonymous; a football club, a festival, a denomination.

Social Space – the bar where everyone knows your name, a smallish local church.

Personal Space – family and close friends with whom you share a lot. These are the people who know you well and with whom you can be vulnerable and honest.

Intimate Space – in which you share everything with someone – your spouse, a 'best friend', your parents or a sibling perhaps.

On the four pieces of paper, one for each 'space' – allow some time for people to go to each piece in turn and write down the places in their lives which fit these descriptions. They may draw or represent the 'space' by other means than writing if they wish.

The last study looked at consumerism, the 'I want' society. When combined with 'Satisfy me!' these produce the 'passive consumer' – who issue demands, hold out their credit cards and wait to be fed with the products or experiences they fancy. In healthcare the passive consumer is the person who takes no responsibility for their own

health – wanting pills rather than exercise, for example. In education, teachers are under pressure to coach pupils to pass exams, to produce the right answers, possibly at the expense of learning how to learn for themselves.

'Satisfy me!' is not a stranger to the church.

'I got nothing out of it,' is a frequent criticism of worship. Church which puts 80% or more of its resources into Sunday services may find it is creating Christians who rely on their 'weekly top-up', who judge the church on the basis of what they got from the sermon or the 'worship'. A Christian's spiritual health becomes the churches responsibility.

• If you have access to U-Tube look up 'meChurch' or 'Me worship for the "me" church'

True discipleship balances the need of the individual to receive from God with their responsibility to use what they receive for the benefit of the whole church community and the community beyond the church. Abraham was chosen by God to be a 'blessing to all the nations'. Jesus put aside the 'fullness of the Godhead' to be incarnate as one of us and to die.

• DVD clip – DVD 1 – Chapter 8 – Somewhere Else [5'46"]

Q: What would you have done had you been Barbara? What strikes you from this clip?

Q: In our Trinitarian theology (study 1) there is Christology. How does our Christology shape our local church?