



TOWARDS PIONEER MISSIONAL **(For Mission Shaped Church)**

Pilot Project for New Selection, Training & Deployment Processes

The following outlines a proposal for a new initiative in the selection, training, recognition and deployment of pioneer missional leaders.

PROPOSITIONAL BACKGROUND

The proposal is both precipitated and shaped by the following foundational understandings

1. Our Cultural Context and Mission Imperative:

On the one hand, our mission context is principally post-modernism, post-Christendom with pre-Christian, and we cannot expect a natural swing back to church going (some have been waiting for this since early last century but instead we've only seen a consistent and deepening decline so that most "have no back to go to").

We have many faithful (largely aging) congregations in inherited mode church and we should support and honour them. However, it is critically urgent to develop a major emphasis on exploring and developing emerging mode/expressions of church. These new expressions will be defined by mission (Mission Shaped Church / Building Missionary Congregations, etc). The resulting strategy of these twin imperatives is to develop a "mixed economy" approach to church from now on. This is the concept developed by the Church in Wales under Archbishop Rowan and coming out of the "Good News in Wales" process.

It is our conviction from ten years of working with Building Missionary Congregations and Springboard, that emerging mode church is largely *not* being achieved by efforts to "polish the old box". Rather we urgently need the emphasis on a lot of "out of the box" thinking and practical exploration.

2. God's Gift of a Communities Characteristic:

We believe that the prime or even only way that God imparts a quality to his faith community (church), is by the gift of leadership/leaders. If we are to be a prophetic church he gifts prophetic leaders, if a caring church, then pastoral leaders, **but if a missional church then this is primarily dependent on God's gracious gift of missional leaders.** These are pioneer, apostolic leaders who make breakthroughs and take frontiers, which are all around us.

Missional leaders above all have the gift of **leadership**. And we need to redeem our current theology and practice of leadership from over democratisation. They are visionary and entrepreneurial. Their focus is leadership rather than management or administration and apostolic rather than pastoral.

The inherited mode of church has not encouraged or made space for missional leaders. We have largely misunderstood them, suppressed them and diverted them to ministry either overseas, in para-church agencies or free/new churches. Our processes of clergy selection, training and deployment have and still do all drastically work against the mobilisation and release of missional leaders (both centrally and in the dioceses). Considerable research and experience in the business field has shown that pioneers and innovators are not primarily formed through formal academic institutions. Rather they thrive through an experience of apprenticeship and when given scope to explore and experiment in a risk-encouraging environment (new business incubators).

3. Understanding Learning Processes to Shape a Training Strategy for Change:

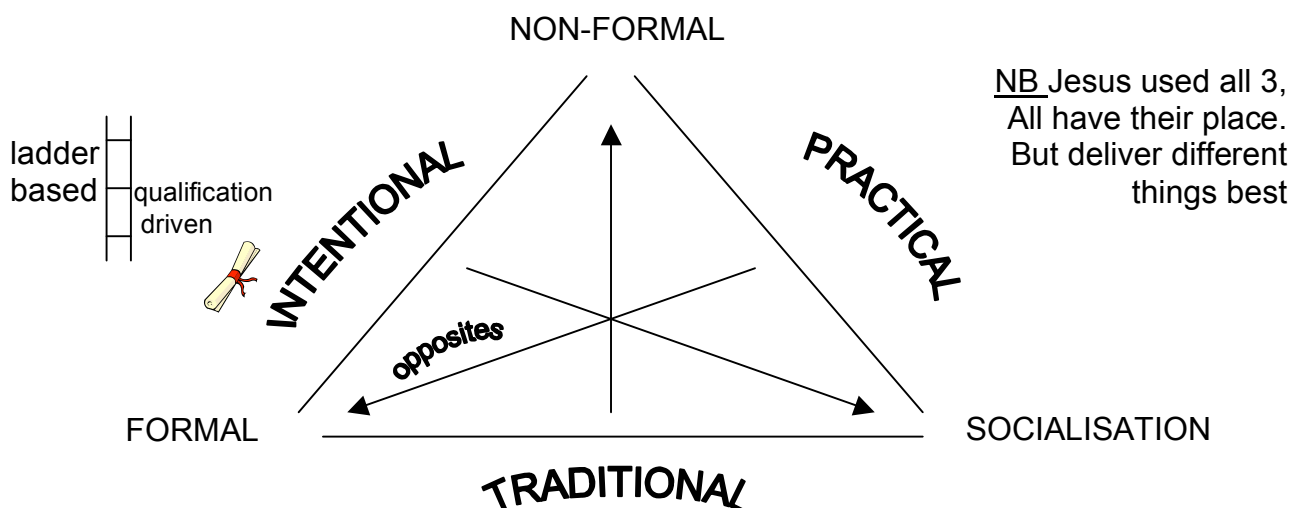
Based on insights gained from learning theory (via Professor Ted Ward of Michigan University, 1993), I see a key understanding for our situation from the inter-relationship of the three primary human learning processes. It must be emphasised that all three are vital and excellent – but they deliver quite different things. It is vital we understand this for our context.

Until the second half of the twentieth century, only 2 learning processes had been described/identified in Educational Theory. These were Formal (academic) and Socialisation (Family/Community) learning. A good example is learning a language – English (mother tongue). We learn by socialisation (non-intentional, practically learnt)... versus what we learn of English “at school/college” by formal education which gives an understanding of the science of the language, the Theory (this learning process, in contrast is intentional, but not practically driven).

Then the third mode of learning was “discovered” – or rather described/identified (obviously it had been around for centuries). This is sometimes referred to as a NON – FORMAL process. It is an apprenticeship model and in common with Socialisation it is practically driven/focussed... and in common with Formal... it is intentional. The apprentice learns from the master carpenter. He learns joints because he is building a table, he learns polishing because he is finishing a sideboard. The learning is not only practical, but is an impartation from the master of skills and attitudes. In contrast the formal process develops powers of reason and understanding as it deals with conceptual information.

Another very important finding for our purposes, is that the characteristic of the non-formal process which is distinct from the other two, is that it is non-traditional – it’s not so prone to be shaped by and re-enforce norms (as family traditions/cultural norms of Socialisation). It has often been shown to move to open up new possibilities. Here again, this explains why existing formal theological colleges and courses tend to reinforce existing patterns of ministry and inherited mode church. It emphasises the importance of apprenticeship formation to open up fresh expressions of church.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between these three processes. It can be seen that the triangle has pairs of learning mode sharing a characteristic along each of the three sides, whereas at the points of the triangle it is the opposite of the shared characteristic on the opposing side.



Some have consciously or intuitively tried to complement or address the limitations of the Academic mode by isolating the practical element of Non-Formal and Socialisation and adding “placements” to a Formal academic process/program. This enriches the Formal process but is not the same as the thoroughgoing Non-Formal process.

The key distinction is the focus of each process, which is as follows: -

FORMAL PROCESS	the priority and driving/shaping influence is STRUCTURED, THEORETICAL TEACHING
SOCIALISATION PROCESS	the priority and driving/shaping influence is COMMUNITY/RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
NON-FORMAL PROCESS	the priority and driving/shaping influence is TASK/PRACTICAL OUTPUT

- 1) For the future of missional church, the key insights are that Apprenticeship to experienced/anoointed missional leaders functioning in that task, IMPARTS skills, attitudes, instincts and understanding of such leadership. Like the master-craftsman (i.e. carpenter) the apprentice learns by making furniture with the carpenter. Doing, teaching and being will all happen with the master... but the prime driving/shaping of the enterprise is producing furniture. Joints, planing, polishing etc. are all learnt in this context of doing, discussing and reflecting with the master, as also the skills, attitudes and motivation of the master are all learnt by doing, living and eating together.
- 2) Second key insight is that best learning of what a missional church is like and how it works... is through Socialisation in ONE!... or even better... two or three! To experience what can change and what needs to stay the same. Short-term placements, even to a second or third missional community, are fine to compare with ones base experience but very weak if one hasn't LIVED missional church.

The heart of Socialisation learning is when the primary driving and shaping of the enterprise is Building and sustaining Community/relationship. Lessons learnt through this can't be absorbed in a few weeks... precisely because its not intentionally organised, and its not primarily conceptual, but experiential. Both the Non-Formal and Socialisation processes of learning, take a lot of time...working alongside the master and living in the missional community. Bolting on these elements as short placements to a Formal driven program is not at all the same.

The Formal education processes (Theological Colleges & Courses) serve an invaluable function... such as giving broad theological understanding, ability to reason, critique and apply principles to situations... but they do not (cannot... at least not well) deliver training for visionary leaders (Non-Formal) with the instincts of missional church (Socialisation). Hence in partnership with such institutions we want to select appropriate modules to give formal theological input to emerging leaders but we must guard the foundational process/mode of a Non-Formal learning process. This will mean keeping trainees in a mission context alongside a missional leader(s) and then selecting appropriate modules to take by evenings, block weeks and distance learning (mixed mode).

However, it's vital to recognise the radical difference between this and existing mixed mode or Regional Courses, where the socialisation is in inherited church and there is rare apprenticeship and almost never to a missional leader in a pioneer project.

THE ORDINATION QUESTION

It is our pre-supposition that Ordination is the recognition and appointment by the church to leadership. It seems clear that the new testament gives warrant to local, largely settled leadership and to trans-local pioneer leaders of church planting bands. Such trans local pioneers as Paul, Barnabas, Titus, etc. were clearly as fully recognised and set apart by the church as those functioning more in building up and developing the local churches planted.

The fact that pioneers may always move on to new things and not tend to settle the frontiers taken, doesn't make them any less ordained of God and recognised by the wider church (probably the more so).

To apply this to today's Anglican mission challenge, we need two sets of criteria for selection. One for those called to the centre of the institutional church to maintain the inherited mode. For these, criteria that anticipate the role of team vicar in a traditional group of parishes, is entirely appropriate.

The second category is that of pioneer missional leader described in this paper. They are highly unlikely ever to lead church in the inherited mode and so selection criteria are not appropriate based on this role and context. Rather quite different criteria are required.

As for training for ordination of pioneers, we have already made our case that this should be through apprenticeship to a proven pioneer, socialisation in missional church or churches and with selected academic theology taken by distance/mixed-mode.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

It is proposed that certain Bishops establish within their diocese a pilot process for selection, training, deployment and ordination of pioneers in a context of encouraging the planting and development of fresh expressions of church.

- 1. Selection Criteria** As regards selection criteria, we would suggest working with established and tested review processes to select pioneers/entrepreneurs. There are existing criteria, processes of interview, review and assessments which have been shown to be effective in identifying such pioneer leaders. We are aware of these from CRA (Christian Resources Associates) www.cra.org.au and Bill Bolton (developed in secular contexts). We suggest obtaining detailed information on these and adopting/adapting for our pilot project. We would also suggest the following criteria be considered.

Mission and Ministry

- Show ability to read and understand different social/cultural contexts
- Have the “nose” to recognize how to relate the Gospel to different contexts
- Possess the gifts to pioneer and establish a faith community in a mission context

The above to be evidenced by having successfully researched a neighbourhood/people group, engaged with it and planted a missionary congregation (cluster) or celebration of at least 5 small groups.

Personal Formation

- Having been in a discipling/mentor/coaching group (huddle) with a more senior leader.
- Having completed the TT/EmL formation track. (Level 1&2 / 2 years)
[TTs are Tribal Trainees (a year out programme for young potential leaders run at some 6 or 7 centres in England& Ireland). EmLs are second year Emerging Leaders. We now have changed the names of TTs & EmLs to FORM1 & FORM2.]
- Evidence of personal spiritual disciplines and corporate prayer and worship.

Study and Education

- A good working knowledge of the bible and other texts.
- Proved themselves able to study and reflect and having a pattern of personal study.
- Shown a desire to gain wider Theological Understanding.

Missional Leadership

- Evidenced seeking God for a vision and ability to cast the vision through to ownership and implementation.
- Proven in modelling an evangelistic lifestyle
- Ability to form and lead a task-focussed team
- Show potential to lead through change.
- Proven their ability to multiply themselves in emerging leaders.

2. **Training** Our discussions with Christina Baxter and her staff at St John's; with Gary Wilton at Church Army College and Steve Croft at Cramner, all confirm their enthusiastic interest to work along the lines we have proposed here for partnership in mixed mode training for pioneers.
3. **Deployment** We suggest the identification of Minster or Resource Churches that are functioning under Missional leaders. In the Mission Shaped Church report these are described as resourcing networks (p66). Secondly existing pioneer projects and potential pioneer mission opportunities need to be identified. Thirdly a level 1 and 2 local training program of personal formation in mission should be identified or initiated (such as the Tribal Training Centres). The vision would be that these three elements together become like an innovations centre / new projects incubator. They might not be in the same location but would need to be appropriately networked.
4. **Funding** This should be sought from the church commissioners new mission development budget once established. In the meantime funds from the diocese and /or Springboard 2 could be considered as seed money.
5. **Example of Sort of Leaders/Mission Strategy Combination** Recognising the mission realities that have been researched elsewhere and highlighted here, a Diocese might:-
 - a. Encourage the appointment of children and youth workers in each deanery, parish cluster or region to pioneer and lead kidz church and youth congregations. These leaders to be trained and supported on scheme such as CYM. [Certificate in Youth Ministry run at several theological colleges & Uni accredited.]
 - b. Appoint an overall leader as planter/apprenticer who has had experience of planting/leading youth congregation. Their brief would be:
 - i. Planting a diocesan young adult congregation and
 - ii. Supervising/mentoring the team of youth and children's workers.
 - c. This overall leader to themselves be apprenticed to someone more experienced and to undertake modules of theological training at the regional college(s) by distance/mixed mode. Ordination being a likely part of their development through this process.