

Missional principles from a Methodist perspective

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with love to
David and Yvonne

Missional principles from a Methodist perspective

ABSTRACT

This research project sought to explore the possible reasons why some local Methodist ministers appeared neither to be aware of missional concepts nor to be seeking an alternative to the inherited, attractional model of church.

Methodist ministers' understanding and interest in missional principles were investigated using semi-structured interviews based on a questionnaire with four subject areas: Cultural context and change, Mission as *missio Dei*, Distinguishing marks of the missional church, and Missional leadership. Data were collected through a Likert-type scale indicating level of agreement, and through respondents' comments expanding on their scaling of the statements in the questionnaire. These were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Twenty-two ministers from six of Devon's circuits took part.

Responses showed a high percentage of agreement to the distinctive principles and practices of the missional movement selected for this study. This suggests that such principles represent an authentic expression of biblical faithfulness to the church's calling, whether or not a leader would describe themselves as 'missional.' It was, however, unclear whether all the missional principles were fully understood by ministers. Further research is needed to probe this question in greater depth.

It appeared that, despite assent in theory, few respondents were putting these principles into practice. It is suggested that the issue of plural leadership and the fivefold ministry model in particular merit attention if the Methodist Church is to prevail in twenty-first century Western culture.

The clear presentation of missional principles appeared to be an effective mechanism to heighten awareness and rekindle a zeal for mission amongst the respondents. This could provide a model for promoting the understanding of such principles and practices in a wider church context.

The study also revealed that Methodist ministers, though passionate about mission, in many cases feel constrained by two factors. The first is the straitjacket of historic Methodist practices which, rather than fostering mission, appear to strengthen a maintenance ethos. The second is the rigid, change-averse congregation, many of whom do not understand their role as missionaries in the world. Many churches were described as little more than social clubs for insiders. It is possible that the meaning of discipleship requires further clarity and purposeful teaching in order to fulfil the Methodist Church's current vision of 'A discipleship movement shaped for mission' and to recover Methodism's founding missional heart.

It is hoped that these findings will contribute to the conversation concerning the way in which traditional, inherited churches in the UK can more effectively fulfil their mandate to make disciples of all nations.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The question

The research question arose from some puzzlement as to why, despite the lively and important ongoing conversation on the need for the church in the West to become missional,¹ some local Methodist leaders appeared neither to be aware of missional concepts nor to be seeking an alternative to the inherited, attractional model of church. Or perhaps they believed themselves already to be missional, depending on their definition?

This disinterestedness was observed as a member of the local church leadership both in general terms and specifically in the context of a request from the Circuit for each church to develop their own ‘mission plan.’ This was met with a certain lack of engagement, even when couched in ‘missional’ terms where possible, leading to further curiosity regarding leaders’ attitudes towards the future of the church in terms of its health,² its influence in society and indeed its very purpose.

Frost & Hirsch, writing in 2003, suggested that ‘everyone is only now getting used to the idea that the church in the West must become a missionary church in its own milieu if [it] is to survive.’³ The research question addressed whether, a decade later, leaders of local Methodist churches had caught up.

¹ Following Guder *et al.*, 1997

² Court, 2011, p 9 states that church attendance in the western world is in decline, citing Bruce who estimates that by 2030 mainstream Christianity in Britain will have largely disappeared.

³ 2003, p 81

Aims of the research

The aim of the research was therefore to investigate the understanding and interest of missional principles amongst ministers of Methodist churches in the southwest, and perhaps to discover whether any of these concepts have a greater impact than others in terms of their acceptance or rejection. As it appears to be the exception that a church or a leader becomes missional organically without any external influence,⁴ it was hoped that the findings might identify factors for accelerating the acceptance and practice of missional principles amongst church leaders in the UK. To this end, the study was in dialogue with the foundational understanding of the missional movement and its relevance to mission in the twenty-first century.

The research was undertaken using semi-structured interviews with twenty-two ministers from Devon's Methodist circuits, based on a questionnaire. This questionnaire aimed to investigate ministers' response to four distinct but complementary subject areas: Cultural context and change, Mission as *missio Dei*, Distinguishing marks of the missional church, and Missional leadership. Each subject was divided into a number of clear and concise statements, developed from a thorough review of missional literature, and ministers' responses analysed to ascertain their level of understanding, agreement and, where possible, practice.

⁴ One exception was noted by Michael Frost (2001, pp 38-39) on visiting Cambodia, when Pastor Hang was found to be leading a missional church apparently solely from his understanding of the scriptures.

From a leadership viewpoint

It seemed likely that within local evangelical churches like the researcher's own, the understanding of 'missional' would prove essentially to be about being more intentional about evangelism,⁵ and also that a high percentage of the distinctive missional principles would either be rejected by the respondents or be new to them.

This project approached the subject of missional church from a leadership point of view, and from a missional ecclesiology.⁶ It does not see being missional only as individual Christians living missionally as a way of life but as part of a missional community. It therefore looks at the importance of missional leadership within the church body.

Missional church – a working definition⁷

A community of God's people apprenticed to Jesus in which God's holistic mission to restore and heal creation and to call all people into a reconciled relationship with Himself informs every aspect of their life and witness.⁸ In God's power and following His initiative, they are sent out to incarnate the gospel in their locality in order to transform persons, systems (including the church), communities and culture.⁹

⁵ Petticrew, 2012, <http://abrahamsfootsteps.wordpress.com>

⁶ Following Newbigin's premise that there is no church without mission and no mission without the church (Karkkainen, 2002, p 159).

⁷ Writer's definition

⁸ Hirsch, 2006, p 235; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p x

⁹ <http://www.nationalministries.org>

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

1 Cultural context and change

Newbigin and Guder¹⁰ have suggested that the radical secularization of Western culture during the second half of the twentieth century has meant that the Christian church must seek to become missionary in what was once Christendom.¹¹ Whereas formerly the church in the West had been looked upon as the respected authority on matters of life and faith, the seismic shifts in culture after the first world war resulted, by the mid-1960s, in the church unexpectedly finding itself and its values pushed to the margins of society (Robinson & Smith¹²). Frost & Hirsch, Gibbs & Coffey and Alan Roxburgh have suggested that the church is now considered irrelevant by many and has generally lost its place of influence.¹³ Roxburgh & Romanuk comment that although emerging generations are deeply interested in spirituality, they are turning their backs on inherited, institutional church.¹⁴ If this is so, the church needs to find a way to share the good news of the gospel that will have a transforming impact on the post-Christendom, postmodern¹⁵ culture of the twenty-first century.

¹⁰ Newbigin, 1995, p 2; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p 127.

¹¹ Guder, 1998, pp 4 & 192, defines Christendom as the culture which resulted from the gospel's having been passed along for centuries in the shape of the Western church. This church culture had largely lost its missional identity and represented a settled, static Christian world in which membership of the church was concomitant with citizenship in the state. Frost & Hirsch (2003, p 19) suggest that the Christendom way of thinking was attractional, dualistic and hierarchical.

¹² 2003, p 16ff.; Also discussed in Newbigin, 1983; and Roxburgh, 2005, p 28ff.

¹³ Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 151; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p x; Gibbs & Coffey, 2001, p 17ff.; Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006, p 7.

¹⁴ Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006, p 9

¹⁵ Postmodern describes a mindset, mood or outlook prevalent in the West. Difficult to define in absolute terms, postmodernism is a reaction against the logic and reason of modernism which believed that if something was provable, it was real. Postmoderns are perhaps more sceptical, more spiritual and

The postmodern context in which the church now has to engage in mission is one of consumerism, where the search for experience trumps the search for meaning.¹⁶ Greene & Robinson explain that there is now a suspicion of foundational stories in a world of religious pluralism where it is no longer acceptable to proclaim one Truth:¹⁷ the Christian gospel may be considered, but only as one story amongst many possibilities within a society in which the principle of individual freedom is paramount. But Murray, Frost & Hirsch remind us that man is made to seek God and that the church in its life together can witness to a lost confidence and hope through genuine Christian community.¹⁸

These influential voices in the missional movement posit that whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to have a future in the West.¹⁹ Murray has suggested that, having been forced to the margins, the church in the twenty-first century may recover the ‘subversive but effective “mustard seed” and “yeast-in-the-dough” strategies’ inspired by Jesus’ teaching and practised by the early church.²⁰ Many missional practitioners believe that the church should study the organic movement of the early church as an example of God’s mission (*missio Dei*) in order to work out in practice what it means to be Jesus’ committed disciples today.²¹

more reflective, focussing more on themselves and their experience, having evaluated that not all technological progress is necessarily good. It is an attitude of seeking after authenticity and journeying together, rather than accepting ‘wisdom from on high’. Reality for postmoderns is therefore relative, indeterminate and participatory. Grenz, 1996, pp. 1-10

¹⁶ Grenz, 1996, p 6

¹⁷ Greene & Robinson, 2008, p 31

¹⁸ Murray, 2004, p 175; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 134.

¹⁹ Roxburgh, 2005, p 29; Guder, 1998, p 77ff.; Hirsch, 2010. p 6

²⁰ Murray, 2004, p 149

²¹ Newbigin, 1995, pp 16-17; Hirsch, 2006, p 16, 50; Bosch, 1991, p 50

Pondering how the church could in today's culture bring the gospel to bear on public life in such a way as to contribute to the restoration of society's 'cohesion and direction,'²² Lesslie Newbigin proposed that the only answer is the congregation as the hermeneutic of the gospel.²³ Whilst submitting itself to being interpreted and reformed by the gospel, the community becomes an interpretive bridge, proclaiming Jesus Christ and faithfully living out the gospel within their setting.²⁴

2 Mission as *missio Dei*

The foundation of missional thinking is the understanding of mission as *missio Dei*, the mission (sending) of God. This interpretation of God's and the church's role in mission has become increasingly explored from the 1930s onwards,²⁵ and, as Robinson & Smith observe, represents a paradigm shift in the church's self-understanding and its thinking on mission.²⁶ This concept continues to be explored as churches attempt to put theory into practice but, as Bosch (following Newbigin²⁷) cautions, the concept of *missio Dei* is, by virtue of being God's work, impossible to contain fully within human understanding²⁸ and 'institution and movement may never be mutually exclusive categories; neither may church and mission.'²⁹

²² Newbigin, 1989, p 223

²³ Newbigin, 1989, pp 141ff and 222ff.

²⁴ Newbigin, 1989, p 227

²⁵ Following Karl Barth's paper to the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932 in which he revived the Trinitarian understanding of God's mission: Bosch, 1991, p 389

²⁶ 2003, p 107 ff.

²⁷ 1995, p 149

²⁸ Bosch, 1991, p 389 & 512

²⁹ Bosch, 1991, p 53

The original acceptance of *missio Dei* by the church was summarized as:

(i) the church is the mission, (ii) the home base is everywhere, and (iii) mission in partnership.³⁰ MacIlvaine has stated that ‘a truly missional church will not be in competition with other denominations but will strive for unity within the body of believers.’³¹ There are hopeful signs that this latter principle, the visible unity of the whole church under God and ‘the end of every form of guardianship of one church over another,’ as Bosch put it,³² has begun to develop in the form of apostolic networks and other initiatives.³³ As Roxburgh & Romanuk have said, ‘We are all in this situation together.’³⁴

Bosch states that, primarily, the term *missio Dei* encompasses the understanding that mission is derived from the very nature of God,³⁵ the Father sending the Son, and the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit. “As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.”³⁶ Thus the purpose of the church becomes one of service to God’s mission:³⁷ As David Wesley said, the church does not have ‘missions;’ the church *is* the missionary.³⁸

Hence, as Newbigin explained, the church moves its stance from one of sending to being sent, from initiating and implementing its own missionary

³⁰ At the Ghana assembly of the International Missionary Council (Bosch, 1991, p 370)

³¹ MacIlvaine, 2010 (b), p 91

³² Bosch, 1991, p 370; also Gibbs & Coffey, 2001, p 78

³³ Other examples could be that offered by Alan Roxburgh in *The Sky is Falling*, in suggesting that ‘Liminals’ and ‘Emergents’ work together under the wise spiritual guidance of an Abbot/Abbess-type leader; and the Cooperative church planting model concerning which Murray (*Church Planting*, 2001, p 7) writes that ...*such collaboration ‘may result in more substantial progress toward unity ... than decades of ecumenical dialogue.’*

³⁴ 2006, p 10

³⁵ Bosch, 1991, p 390

³⁶ John 20:21; Newbigin, 1989, p 48

³⁷ Bosch, 1991, p 390

³⁸ Wesley, D. In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 21

endeavours to humbly seeking God's plans and power and cooperating with what He is already doing, secretly, through the Spirit.^{39 40} Mission is God's agenda - he is the architect and the church his instrument.⁴¹ Bosch, quoting Moltmann, summarizes: "It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church."⁴² There is complete agreement within the missional conversation that the church's mission does not have a life of its own.⁴³ 'The nature and shape of mission is not already decided but must be discerned in relation to God's participation in the world.'⁴⁴ *Missio Dei* gives profound encouragement to those intent on mission as 'God is already doing the heavy lifting.'⁴⁵

There appears to be no dispute amongst missional thinkers that God's mission is far broader than saving souls for eternity. Bosch suggests that mission encompasses nothing less than the healing and restoration of all creation and the reconciliation of all people to himself,⁴⁶ through the work of his Messiah – a holistic purpose of which evangelism is but one dimension. Newbigin and others concur that God's purposes in mission are to bring his *shalom* to creation: his restoration, liberation, justice, peace, wholeness and flourishing,⁴⁷ or as Bosch puts it, the absence of injustice, oppression,

³⁹ Newbigin, 1995, p 130; Bosch, 1001, p 391

⁴⁰ Bosch, 1991, p 49, posits that authentic mission always presents itself in weakness

⁴¹ Newbigin, 1995, p 60 & 110; Guder, 1998, p 4ff

⁴² Bosch, 1991, p 391 from Moltmann 1977:64

⁴³ Bosch, 1991, p 370; Roxburgh, 2011, p 44; Newbigin, 1995, p 139; Hirsch, 2006, p 51; Gibbs & Bolger, 2006, p 62; Guder, 1998, p 5

⁴⁴ Love, 2010

⁴⁵ MacIlvaine, 2010 (b), p 103

⁴⁶ Bosch, 1991, p 10, 399f & 412ff.

⁴⁷ Newbigin, 1995, p 48; Spellers, p 33

poverty, discrimination and violence.⁴⁸ Newbigin pointed out that, 'The very meaning of the word salvation is that it is a making whole, a healing of that which sunders us from God, from one another, and from the created world.'⁴⁹ This 'means the church joins God's activities of justice and reconciliation in those places where social systems and power structures allow for the destruction of well-being and of human life.'⁵⁰

Missio Dei posits that since the church itself originated in the mission of God, her nature, by definition, is missionary,⁵¹ and therefore when the church is not in mission she is not functioning as church.^{52 53} Andrew Kirk has said: 'The church is by nature missionary to the extent that, if it ceases to be missionary, it has not just failed in one of its tasks, it has ceased being church.'⁵⁴ Without a conviction by the leader and every member that this is the essence of what it means to be 'church', there will always be competing agendas, with mission seen as one of a number of equally valid facets of church activity.

⁴⁸ Bosch, 1991, p 10

⁴⁹ Newbigin, 1953, *The Household of God*, p 147, quoted in Karkkainen, 2002, p 153.

⁵⁰ David Wesley, In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 26

⁵¹ Bosch, 1991, p 372

⁵² Bosch, 1991, p 371ff; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p 151; Guder, 1998, p 128; Donovan, 2001, p 82.

⁵³ Emil Brunner's phrase [In: *The Word and the World*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, p 108] has become a classic: 'Mission work does not arise from any arrogance in the Christian Church; mission is its cause and its life. The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no Church; and where there is neither Church nor mission, there is no faith.' Quoted in Bliese, 2006, p 237.

⁵⁴ 2000, p 30 *What is Mission?: Theological Explorations*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, quoted in Schwanz and Coleson, 2011, p 27; Also Newbigin, 1995, p 2.

3 Distinguishing marks of the missional church

These marks⁵⁵ seek to answer the question, What does *missio Dei* look like in a church attempting to be faithfully missional? Following the insights of Lesslie Newbigin, the effective starting point for the current missional conversation was the seminal publication *Missional Church, A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*,⁵⁶ in which the authors proposed how the church might put the *missio Dei* concept into practice.⁵⁷ Frost and Hirsch have suggested that the missional paradigm, representing a complete revolution in church thinking, may prove to be the necessary second reformation of the church.⁵⁸

Hirsch has emphasised that in order to be missional and to sustain an outward-facing stance, the church must intentionally and consciously understand itself as a sent-out centrifugal movement rather than an attractional (centripetal) institution.⁵⁹ The antidote for focussing on the church building as the centre of mission is 'for a congregation to turn inside out and focus on what God [is] doing in their community' (David Wesley⁶⁰). Guder posits that the church should no longer think of itself as 'a place where certain things happen,'⁶¹ instead of 'going to church,' the people learn to 'be church,' moving outward 'to listen to, to love, and to engage a complex world.'⁶²

⁵⁵ As explained in Chapter 3 - Methodology, only those marks that could be clearly distinguished from more traditional expressions of church were included in this study.

⁵⁶ Guder, *et al.*, 1998

⁵⁷ McKinzie

⁵⁸ 2003, p 15ff

⁵⁹ Hirsch, 2006, pp 53 & 142; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 12; Karkkainen, 2002, p 152; In Verbatim 406.6.2, p 42, however, it cautions that "Some, but not all, missionary movements have represented a recovery of the centrifugal paradigm evident in the New Testament church as it was sent out."

⁶⁰ In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 19

⁶¹ Guder, 1998, p 80 & 192

⁶² David Wesley, In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 20

Newbigin was clear that a missional church should be intentionally proactive in being aware of how it may be being conformed to the prevailing dominant culture.⁶³ The church therefore vigilantly examines and repents of how it is being shaped and compromised by the beliefs and behaviour of the world, and asks God to convert and transform it. Guder stated: 'It must discern [through study and prayer] where its allegiance to the reign of God demands nonconformity.'⁶⁴ The church's aim is to become an authentic alternative, countercultural community, sensitive to yet challenging the surrounding culture.⁶⁵

As reflected in the 'Great Commission,'⁶⁶ the gospel is for every culture and context.⁶⁷ Hirsch stated that whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the gospel message must be shaped to fit each specific context,⁶⁸ though Newbigin cautioned that the gospel cannot be completely domesticated within any culture.⁶⁹ The aim is to make the gospel comprehensible and accessible for every tribe and culture in order to transform that context for the sake of the

⁶³ Bosch, 1991, p 386

⁶⁴ Guder, 1998, p 120

⁶⁵ Bosch, 1991, p 11; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p xiii; Guder, 1998, pp 14 & 119; and MacIlvaine, 2010, p 91ff, who also quotes Goheen's summary of Newbigin's philosophy of cultural engagement thus: "The church is part of the cultural community that embodies idolatrous faith commitments. On the other hand, the church is called to be part of a new humankind that embodies a different story. The incompatible stories intersect in the life of the church, producing an unbearable tension; the church must separate itself from the idolatrous story that shapes its culture and yet participate in the ongoing development of the cultural community. Living in this tension, the church challenges the idolatrous story of the culture with an alternative way of life ... The church is called to embody the cultural forms yet at the same time subvert them and given them new meaning shaped by the gospel. In this way, the church is both for and against its culture." (*As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you*, 423-24.)

⁶⁶ Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." King James Version.

⁶⁷ Hirsch, 2006, p 81

⁶⁸ Hirsch, 2006, p 16 & 81

⁶⁹ Newbigin, 1995, p 149

kingdom of God.⁷⁰ To achieve this, the church goes native, becoming 'God's missionary presence to the indigenous community that surrounds them,'⁷¹ moving out of the building and into the neighbourhood as Jesus did.⁷² 'If the gospel is to transform a people, it must be allowed to take up its home in that new culture,' said Selvidge. 'Among the people of our own society is the place to begin to find the *missio Dei* and the place to begin being missional.'⁷³

The missional church understands that it is each member's responsibility to live obediently, sacrificially and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives (Roxburgh & Romanuk and Guder).⁷⁴ This was well illustrated by the way Lesslie Newbigin received new members into his church. He would announce that they had now become the Body of Christ in that place, and that through them the neighbourhood was to be saved. He would pray for them, visit and help where needed, but essentially gave them the responsibility for being the mission.⁷⁵

Frost & Hirsch concur that missional living sees no division between the 'sacred' and the 'secular', the 'material' and the 'spiritual': every aspect and dimension of a believer's life is brought under the rule and reign of God.⁷⁶ It is a holistic, whole-life, whole-world response to the confession that Jesus is Lord of all.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Newbigin, 1995, p 143ff; Newbigin, 1986, p 3ff; Hirsch, 2006, p 7

⁷¹ MacIlvaine, 2010, p 91 ff.

⁷² Roxburgh, 2011, p 115ff; Gibbs & Bolger, 2006, p 50; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 27

⁷³ Selvidge, B. In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 130

⁷⁴ Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006, p 13; Guder, 1998, pp 7 & 9

⁷⁵ Wesley, D. In Schwanz & Coleson, 2011, p 24

⁷⁶ Newbigin, 1986, pp 99 & 143; Hirsch, 2006, pp 22, 76ff.; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 12

⁷⁷ Newbigin, 1995, p 17

When Barrett *et al.* were seeking missional faithfulness amongst churches attempting to put theory into practice, one suggested indicator was that a missional church's vitality is assessed in terms of its faithfulness to God's calling and sending,⁷⁸ rather than simply numbers, having first discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church community and for each of its members. Newbigin points out that in the New Testament the emphasis falls on the faithfulness and integrity of the disciples rather than numbers *per se*.⁷⁹ He cautions the church not to try to get growth by worldly strategies but by following biblical principles. Robinson & Smith refer to this as 'authenticity' – not counting heads but putting quality before quantity.⁸⁰

4 Missional leadership

Church leaders (in this case, Methodist ministers) were chosen for this research study because it is they who influence the direction and understanding of their flock. Guder has stated that 'The key to the formation of missional communities is their leadership.'⁸¹ Reporting on research amongst growing English churches amid general decline, Gibbs & Coffey found that strong, high quality leadership was the primary requirement for growth.⁸² Furthermore, leading a congregation into mission-oriented ways requires vision, courage and determination. As Roxburgh & Romanuk and Hirsch affirm, without ongoing attentiveness by the leadership, all the programmes and organizational changes that have been implemented

⁷⁸ Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p xii

⁷⁹ Newbigin, 1995, p124-6

⁸⁰ 2003, p 157

⁸¹ Guder, 1998, p 183

⁸² 2001, p 57

evaporate and the congregation reverts back to its previous state.⁸³ The leadership of a church congregation is therefore worthy of examination, and, according to Frost & Hirsch, is 'possibly the single most important question of strategy in this decade.'⁸⁴

The starting point of leadership, as Roxburgh & Romanuk rightly say, is to know God, thus making the foundation of Christian leadership distinct from worldly or business models.⁸⁵ Guder suggests that 'the purpose of leadership is to form and equip a people who demonstrate and announce the purpose and direction of God through Jesus Christ [and] through the agency of the Holy Spirit.'⁸⁶ Robinson & Smith add that 'the outcome of leadership is always the same: Christ's people are empowered.'⁸⁷

The goal of Christian leadership is transformation, as stated by Greene & Robinson: 'Working with the gospel of grace, to have a transformative impact on local communities and society in general.'⁸⁸ Gibbs & Coffey concur: 'The issue is not 'Who can attract the biggest crowd?' but 'Who is making the biggest impact on society?''⁸⁹

Marshall and Guder agree that effective leaders lead from the front like a shepherd; they are facing toward future goals.⁹⁰ Guder adds that leaders

⁸³ Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006, p 63; Hirsch, 2006, p 253.

⁸⁴ Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 165

⁸⁵ 2006, p 118

⁸⁶ Guder, 1998, p 183

⁸⁷ Robinson & Smith, 2003, p 144

⁸⁸ Greene & Robinson, 2008, p 203

⁸⁹ 2001, p 47

⁹⁰ Marshall, 1991, p 13

must therefore lead the way toward the recovery of a missional church.⁹¹ As a result of the Western church now finding itself in a world of unpredictable or discontinuous change, many writers agree that missional leadership is required to be of a different kind to that within Christendom.⁹²

Firstly, missional leadership is always plural. It is collaborative and highly relational. This is exemplified by the emergence of 'new apostolic networks' amongst numerous denominations and across previously guarded boundaries, as described by Gibbs & Coffey.⁹³ Roxburgh also urges the coming together of networks of discourse as an essential criterion if 'we are to hear together what the Spirit may be calling forth among us.'⁹⁴

Plurality is emphasised by Bilezikian who says, 'Leadership is a servant ministry, based on spiritual gifts and always plural.'⁹⁵ As suggested by Barrett *et al.*,⁹⁶ Jesus himself chose a team pattern that would allow the fledgling church to survive after his death. Contrary to the traditional *sola pastora* pattern of church leadership, therefore, it is widely agreed that the missional church functions best when various gifts are brought together in team ministry.⁹⁷

There is a wide consensus that an effective missional church will be led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and

⁹¹ Guder, 1998, p 183

⁹² For example, Robinson & Smith, 2003, p 147ff.; Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006, p 5ff.

⁹³ 2001, p 78

⁹⁴ 2005, p 145

⁹⁵ 1997, p 130

⁹⁶ 2004, p 142

⁹⁷ For example in Robinson & Smith, 2003; Roxburgh, 2005; Hirsch, 2006; Bilezikian, 1997.

Teacher.^{98 99} Although the principle given by Paul in Ephesians may be accepted in theory by the inherited church, it does not appear to be generally practised and, according to Robinson & Smith, it is often the Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists who are missing from the leadership.¹⁰⁰ This has hindered the church in its missionary role to the world.¹⁰¹

Frost & Hirsch urge the rediscovery of this fivefold ministry pattern as one of the foundational building blocks for effective missional engagement.¹⁰²

Hirsch suggests that 'without apostolic ministry the church either forgets its high calling or fails to implement it successfully.' Furthermore, state Greene & Robinson, 'it is the apostolic gifting that draws the other gifts into a team relationship ... in which all of the various ministry gifts can flourish.'¹⁰³

A leader's primary role is seen by Greene & Robinson, Gibbs & Coffey as the preparation of all God's people for works of service in the world, fostering their God-given gifts, forming, resourcing and mobilising them to be whole-life disciples.¹⁰⁴ Hirsch and Barratt both describe transformative disciple-making in the missional church as the norm.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Ephesians 4:11; In many publications, for example: Hirsch, 2006, p 158ff; Robinson & Smith, 2003, p 128; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 12 & 165ff.

⁹⁹ The APEPT model is not intended to be definitive for all time and in all situations; the gift of Poet, for example, one who is able to process and articulate new interpretations from the stories, hopes and dreams of the congregation, is not cited in the scriptures. God will sovereignly raise up additional gifts according to contextual need.

¹⁰⁰ Robinson & Smith, 2003, p 131

¹⁰¹ Hirsch, 2006, p 169.

¹⁰² 2003, p 169

¹⁰³ 2008, p 198

¹⁰⁴ Greene & Robinson, 2008, pp 198ff; Gibbs & Coffey, 2001, p 74

¹⁰⁵ Hirsch, 2006, pp 24, 41 and 103ff.; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p 60

So, leadership in today's world requires revision, as Petticrew quotes Hudson, 'from a pastoral *care* contract to a pastoral *equipping* contract' [his emphasis].¹⁰⁶ This reliance by church members on being cared for by the pastor¹⁰⁷ and the concomitant reluctance to follow Christ's command to live sacrificially and missionally, dying to self, is possibly why it is very difficult to transition a traditional church to being missional. In this new paradigm, leadership is no longer focussed primarily on the church's own growth, life and well-being but on mobilizing the large majority of its membership to be witnesses to the kingdom of God in their everyday lives.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Petticrew, J., 2012, <http://abrahamsfootsteps.wordpress.com>

¹⁰⁷ See also Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006, p 5

¹⁰⁸ Verbatim 406.1.2, p 22

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research project aimed to investigate Methodist ministers' understanding of missional concepts. It falls within the remit of Practical Theology as it explores and reflects on the faithfulness of a local church's practice of mission in light of biblical revelation.¹⁰⁹ Results were analysed iteratively, the analysis and reflection being done alongside the data collection.¹¹⁰ The ontological assumption was that a missional church is distinguishable in some specific ways from an inherited or corporate expression of church,¹¹¹ and that these distinguishing marks would be understandable to those who participated in the research.

As this study explored the personal responses of a small number of ministers in their settings in order to understand their perspectives, a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate.¹¹² The data were obtained in December 2012 and January 2013 through both a questionnaire and semi-structured one-to-one interviews,¹¹³ this combination deemed to be the most effective way to obtain the required information.¹¹⁴ In terms of sample size, twenty was considered reasonable as a purposive sample,¹¹⁵ and included all but two of the ministers leading the Methodist churches in six south west

Devon Circuits.

¹⁰⁹ Swinton & Mowat, 2006, Chapter 1

¹¹⁰ Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p 54

¹¹¹ Van Gelder, 2004, p 426

¹¹² Guthrie & Stickley, 2008, pp 29 & 391; Haley & Francis, 2006, p 65; Denscombe, 1998, p 273

¹¹³ Denscombe, 1998, p 175; Haley & Francis, 2006, p 53

¹¹⁴ Guthrie & Stickley, 2008, p 391; Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p 56

¹¹⁵ Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p 205

The purposive sample

Ministers presently in pastoral charge of a church or churches were chosen for this investigation because of their leadership role.¹¹⁶ In order to reduce variability, only ministers within one Methodist District – Plymouth & Exeter – were included. With permission from the Superintendent of each circuit, all 24 ministers located within a 40-mile radius of the researcher were invited to take part. Twenty-two agreed - three women and nineteen men aged between 40 and 65, including five Superintendents and one probationer in his first post.

Data collection

The investigation was based on a 14-point questionnaire in which each statement, phrased in straightforward and uncompromising terms, encapsulated one distinguishing mark of a missional church.¹¹⁷ In order not to make the questionnaire too long or confusing, these statements did not represent a fully comprehensive description of missional church but were selected for their distinctiveness in comparison with traditional expressions of the Christian church.¹¹⁸ In any case an exhaustive description was unnecessary for the purposes of this research aim. The statements, representing essential missional concepts, were formulated after a thorough review of the literature cited in the bibliography. Some biographical details

¹¹⁶ Ward, 2006, p 170

¹¹⁷ Haley & Francis, 2006, p 65

¹¹⁸ A number of lists of missional indicators have been compiled in recent years (see Appendix 1) but, as might be expected, many of these indicators appear virtually indistinguishable from traditional expressions of church. It could be argued that if a leader does not yet have an understanding of the distinctiveness and benefits of missional principles, such generic descriptions of what a missional church is and is not could serve to confuse or to foster complacency rather than interest. For clarity, therefore, only specifically distinctive missional marks that could also be stated succinctly were chosen for inclusion in the questionnaire.

regarding the participants were also sought¹¹⁹ and analysed for links as appropriate. The original request, the questionnaire and its covering letter can be found in Appendix 2.

In line with good practice,¹²⁰ the questionnaire was designed in such a way as to be accessible and interesting to the participants. It was therefore divided into three sections. Section 1 concerned the present reality of culture and the church, a relatively non-threatening subject, allowing the respondent to engage in the process without undue resistance. Section 2 concerned mission as *missio Dei*, and Section 3 concerned distinguishing marks of the missional church in practice - perhaps the most personally challenging section. Optional biographical details, in the event completed by all, were placed at the end. Having gone through the questionnaire together, ministers' immediate reactions were sought through three further optional, previously unseen questions. For the sake of busy ministers the questionnaire was designed so that interviews could be completed within one hour.

Each statement was scaled according to that originally proposed by Likert,¹²¹ allowing respondents to select one of five answers from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. There was also an opportunity to indicate whether any statement represented a concept that was relatively new or as yet unexplored by the respondents. These responses were analysed quantitatively.

¹¹⁹ Such as age bracket, number of churches for which they are responsible, and the stage they are in their current ministerial posting

¹²⁰ Denscombe, 1998, p 161ff.

¹²¹ Haley & Francis, 2006, p 65; Denscombe, 1998, p 243

Ministers were also invited to comment during the interview on their response to each statement, giving a deeper understanding of their standpoints than a questionnaire alone, and enabling the researcher to probe beneath the surface. This open, discovery approach yielded rich data for qualitative analysis.¹²² With permission, their comments were recorded - in shorthand rather than audio, due to time limitations. These field notes were transcribed immediately following the interviews and can be seen in Appendix 3.¹²³

All data were treated anonymously and confidentially, a separate file being kept on the computer showing the key to each respondent's name and questionnaire number. No names were used on the questionnaires or the transcribed data.

Timing and piloting

First requests for participation including a summary of the research proposal were emailed in November, followed by the arrangement of interview dates. The questionnaire was sent to respondents a week ahead of the interview, giving them time for reflection, and inviting them to complete the questionnaire beforehand, if wished. The majority did so.

In early December a pilot questionnaire was worked through with four ministers who agreed to be 'pilots,' and amendments to both the instructions and to five of the statements were subsequently made to improve clarity and

¹²² Denscombe, 1998, p 175

¹²³ In order to protect confidentiality, personal references and biographical data have been removed. The unabridged version is available on application.

meaning.¹²⁴ The 'pilots' were chosen at random, depending on who preferred to meet in December. The remaining 18 interviews took place in early January. Interviews were held at the respondents' chosen venue: all but one (who requested the researcher's home) chose their manse or church.

Data analysis

Quantitative data from the focussed questions and qualitative data from the open comments were analysed, looking for the percentage agreement, links and themes,¹²⁵ including the occasions when responses did not directly match the questions.

Potential weaknesses and bias

The researcher was aware of bringing a possible bias as to the subject matter, and that spoken words may be – indeed undoubtedly are – interpreted differently by speaker and hearer. The project was therefore entirely dependent upon the understanding, honesty and ability to communicate and to hear by both parties at the time of the interview. In addition it was hoped there was sufficient sensitivity on the researcher's part to prevent reactions detrimental to the respondents' ease.¹²⁶ In the event it was found to be quite challenging not to slip into counsellor mode, and in future a stricter eye would be kept on such tendencies, as well as a note made of pauses, other body language, and when further comments were elicited.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Denscombe, 1998, p 162

¹²⁵ Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p 12

¹²⁶ Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p 58ff; Denscombe, 1998, p 179ff

¹²⁷ Denscombe, 1998, p 195

Chapter Four

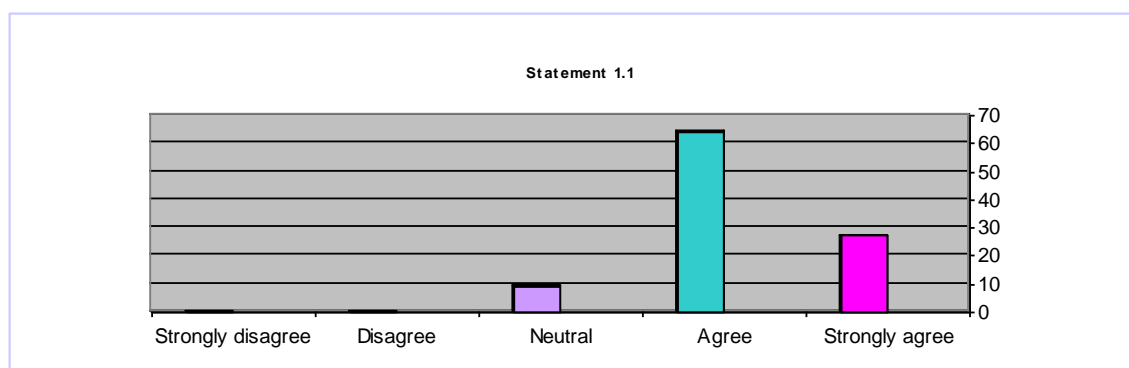
RESULTS

Profiles of the ministers and their churches can be found in Appendix 4.

SECTION 1¹²⁸

1.1 Church in relation to society - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 91%**

It was generally agreed that the church is marginalized by secularization, fundamental atheists, scientists, and so on, but some suggested it is also the church's fault with its poor presentation and defensive attitude. In some ways the world appears to have learned to live without the church, but people still want the church to be there for them when they need it. There remained an underlying current of optimism concerning the future, with schools more open now than hitherto, and the ministries of Street Pastors, Christians Against Poverty, Food Banks etc. being appreciated and impacting lives.

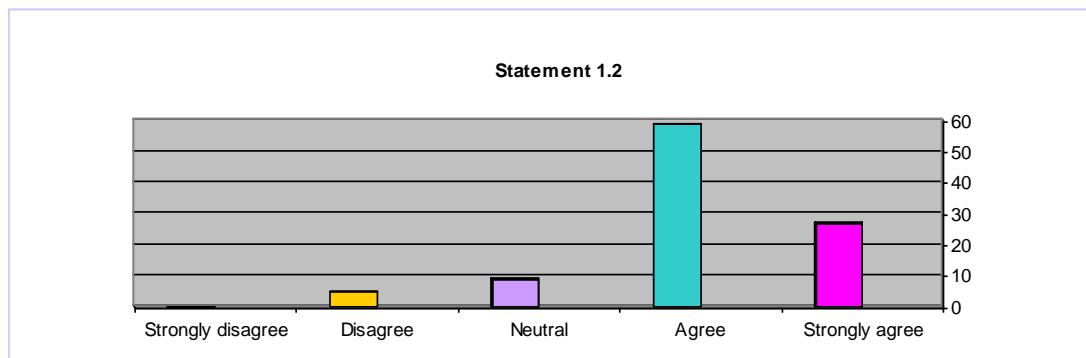


¹²⁸ The statements in Section 1 of the questionnaire, 'Cultural Reality Check – Where We Are Now,' were:

- 1.1 Church in relation to society: The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society.
- 1.2 Interest in inherited church: Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church.
- 1.3 Responding to the unpredictable change of today's world: Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21st century Western culture.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 86%**

Although there was much agreement that young people in general distrust organised religion, and commitment in general, experience has shown that, given the chance, many are hungry and receptive to the gospel if it is relationally-based and gatherings are done well. Confidence in the ability of the church to succeed in the latter, however, was low: the church was described as old-fashioned, unwelcoming and intolerant. Frustration was expressed by a number of ministers that the congregation think they are there to keep the church doors open for their funeral (perhaps a prophetic word!). Church people need to recognise their missional nature (a theme repeated often) and tailor their message, format and timing for a young audience.



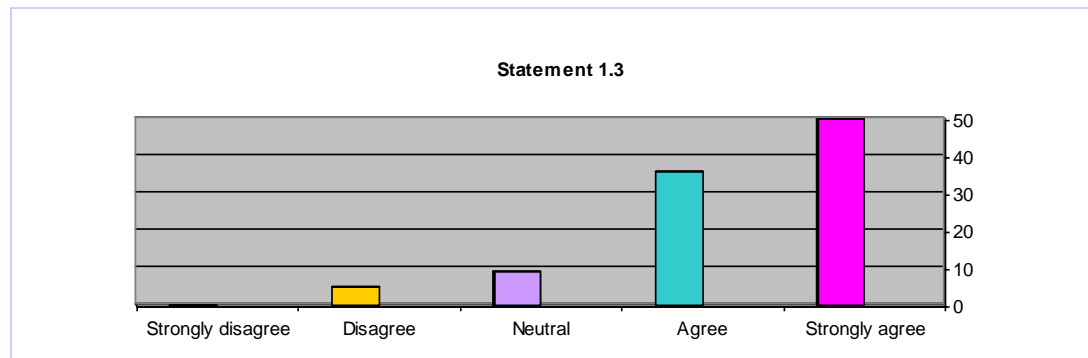
1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World – **Agree + Strongly Agree = 86%**

Opinions on this statement ranged widely, from focussing more on past experience than passing fads, to the fact that change and transformation should be a given in the church.

A number expressed frustration with the resistance amongst their people to die to their own tastes and preferred style. Some favoured keeping some absolutes whilst changing structure, rituals, venues and timing, thereby

helping people connect via many avenues. These generally referred to change in terms of worship gatherings.

Some others suggested the church needs to change in the way we develop disciples, our terminology and our perception of what we ought to be in the world - being faithful to the gospel whilst moving with the times.



SECTION 2¹²⁹

2.1 The Meaning of Mission - Agree + Strongly Agree = 90%

Although there was strong agreement with this statement, a few appeared unfamiliar with the term *missio Dei* if not the concept. Two favoured an emphasis on evangelism as being paramount. A number commented that the church has forgotten God's missional purposes and was nowhere near this ideal.

¹²⁹ The statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire, 'The Big Picture of Mission, God and Church,' were:

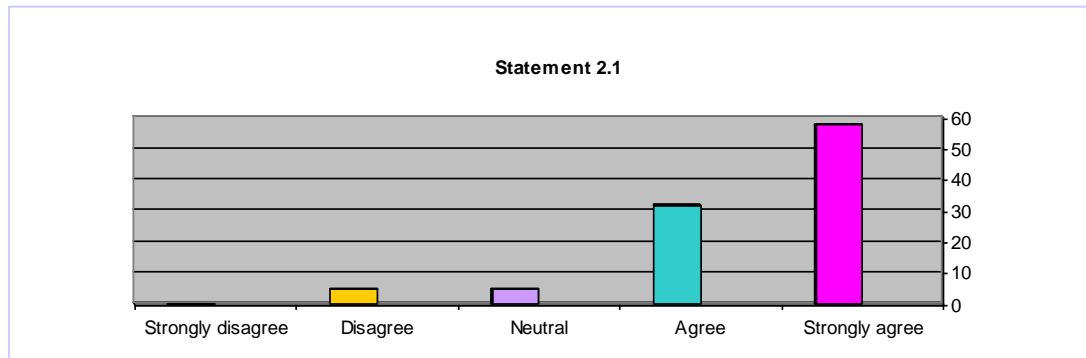
2.1 The Meaning of Mission: Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (*missio Dei*). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission: Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment.

2.3 The Nature of the Church: Mission is not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the church. The church is missionary by its very nature; therefore mission is not something the church *does*, but what it actually *is*.

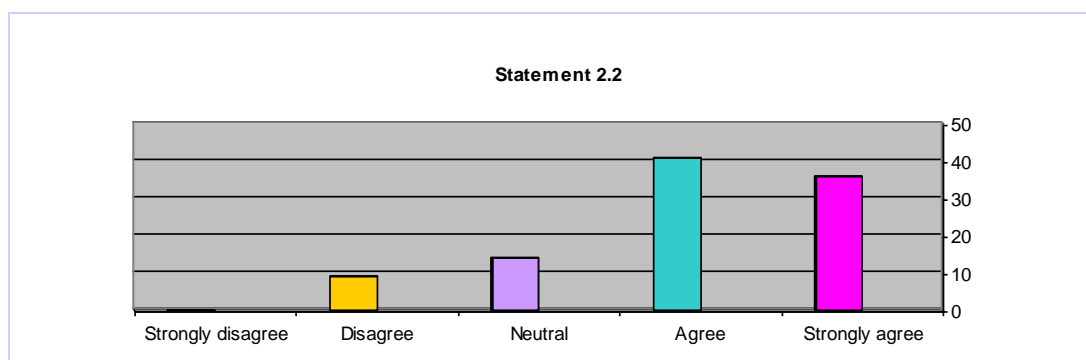
2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church: The church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself and its own growth – church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission.

Perhaps predictably as Methodist ministers, many respondents' thoughts went immediately to Wesley's pattern to make and then to grow disciples, although this was not the direct focus of the question.



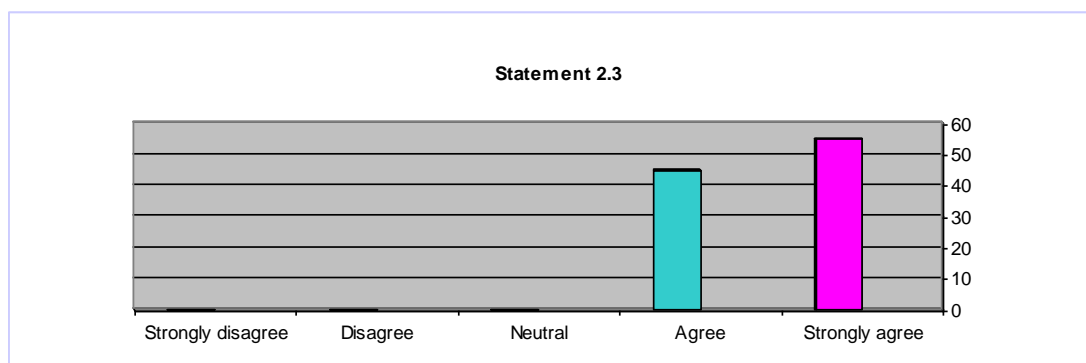
2.2 The Impulse of Mission - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 77%**

Many respondents appeared to miss the idea of 'impulse' in the heading and picked up on 'activity.' There was overall agreement that God provides the opportunities and the power, and that the church must discern where God is at work and then go out as partner with God. It was acknowledged that the church can sometimes take too strong a lead with its own agenda but there nevertheless remained much talk of 'doing', 'work', 'activity', 'hands and feet.'



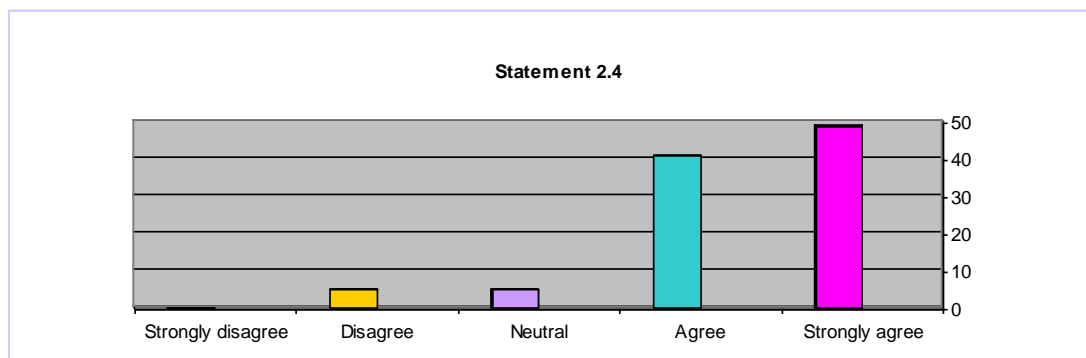
2.3 The Nature of the Church - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 100%**

With 100% agreement, a number linked this concept to Jesus' command to go and make disciples, but suggested the Methodist Church may have failed to remember this and become instead a social club, maintaining those who are already there. It was agreed that mission is not a bolt-on extra, it is the essential quality of the church, Respondent #3 saying a church without mission is like a fruit cake without fruit.



2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 90%**

As in many of the statements, although the majority of respondents agreed with the concept, they experienced a wide discrepancy between this ideal and actual practice. Two saw the role of the church jointly as the gathered, believing community and as serving the mission of God. The idea of seeking the kingdom rather than church was reflected in a number of responses.

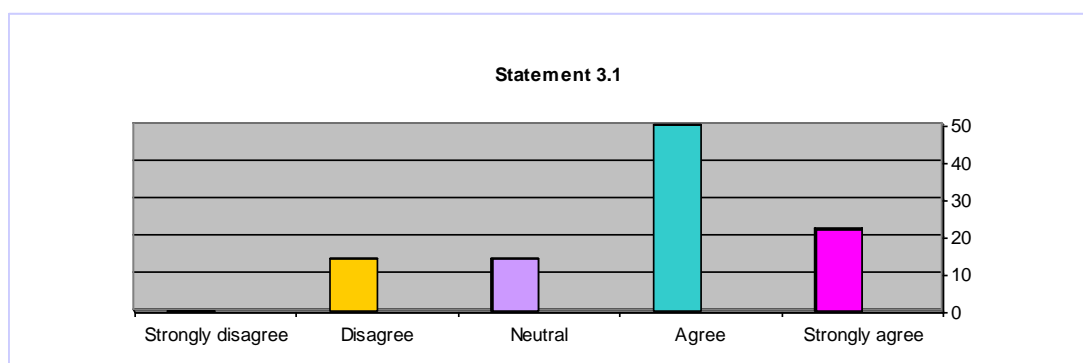


SECTION 3¹³⁰

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding - Agree + Strongly Agree = 72%

Many expressed regret or frustration that most churches fail to be outward-facing: they may think they are, or would like to be, but struggle to make it happen and remain inward looking.

Two intertwined challenges to the statement became evident. The first was that church should be *both* invitational to the package of worship + pastoral concern + discipleship *and* missional. The second was the belief that the building up of the body automatically results in mission. A number had



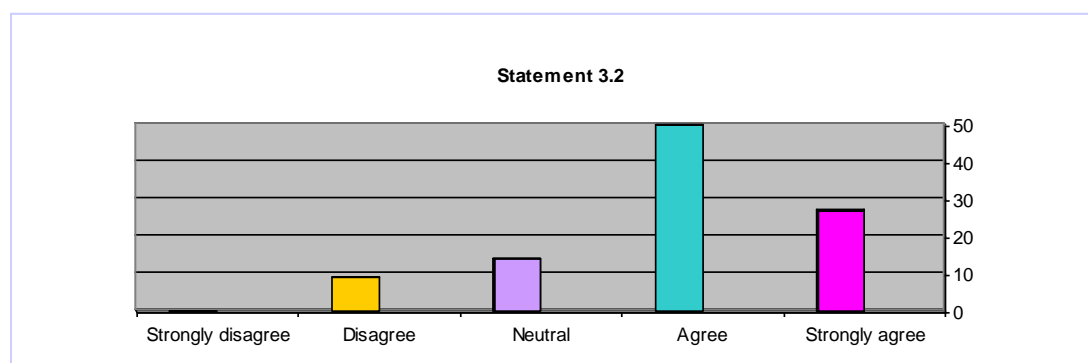
¹³⁰ The statements in Section 3 of the questionnaire, 'Distinguishing Marks of the Missional Church,' were:

- 3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding: Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement rather than an attractional institution, building or fellowship.
- 3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It: The church as a contrast community vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by the world's values, and discerns where God requires its nonconformity to the surrounding, dominant culture.
- 3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context: Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native,' moving into the neighbourhood alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context.
- 3.4 Leading the Church: A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.
- 3.5 The Leader's Main Function: A church leader's primary role is to foster the gifts of the saints for works of service in the world: absolute priority is given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple.
- 3.6 The Members' Function: Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives.
- 3.7 The Meaning of Success: Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling.

elderly congregations who only understand church as attractional and pastoral, which could indeed be God's plan in that context.

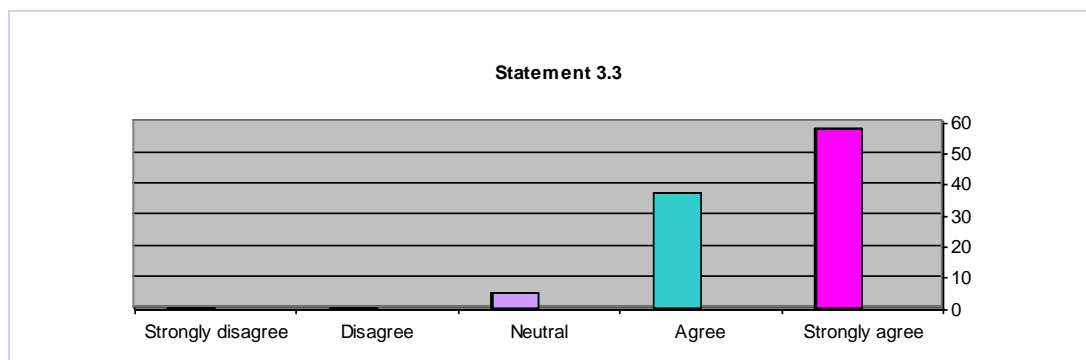
3.2 Being the Church in the World but Not Of It – **Agree + Strongly Agree = 77%**

This statement concerned the church not compromising with cultural norms, eg consumerism, individualism, class, power, celebrity: the adoption of a contrasting lifestyle. Concern was expressed that this might mean the church developing an exclusive, holier-than-thou stance. The main caveat therefore was that, whilst not conforming, the church must stay within society and not become an alien culture.



3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context – **Agree + Strongly Agree = 95%**

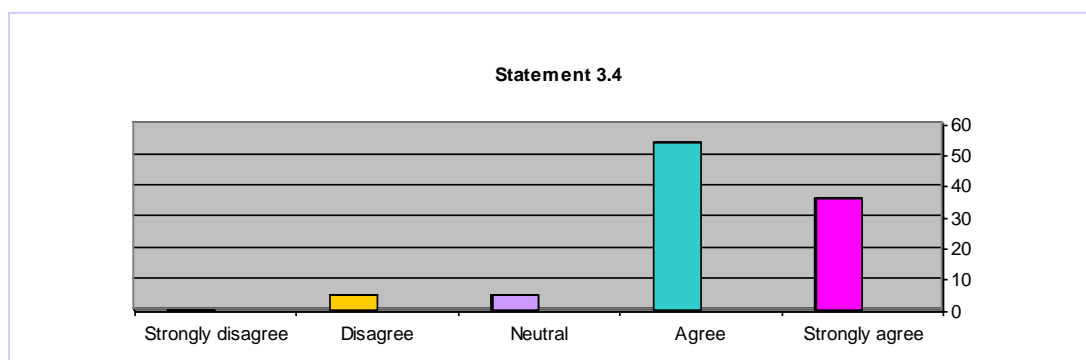
The respondents were very much of one accord, either confirming that the church should follow Jesus' example, being incarnational and contextual, or describing ways it currently fails to be so. In some cases Methodism has retreated behind walls and expects people to conform to the church's largely middle-class culture and style.



3.4 Leading the Church - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 90%**

This statement elicited a high level of agreement which belied actual practice. Just over 50% claimed to intentionally gather a team for ministry, or expressed the desire to do so in theory.

Much frustration with the Methodist system was expressed here and the church appears to be far from practising a team leadership model.

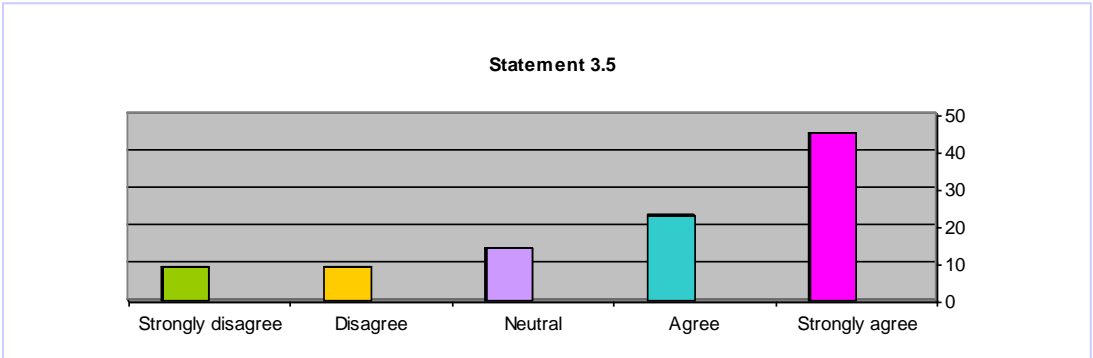


3.5 The Leader's Main Function - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 68%**

Response to this idea was very divided, receiving the only Strongly Disagree votes in the survey and the lowest percentage agreement. Many felt that the statement did not reflect the importance of other aspects of ministerial oversight such as being a faithful role model, mentoring and pastoring. The drawing out and deployment of gifts was a central thought, although it was

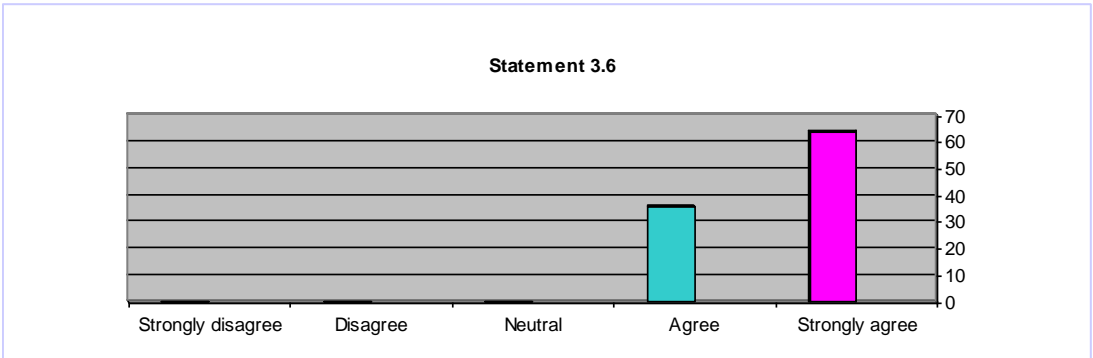
unclear at times whether this was in order to serve the outside world or the church.

Respondents focussed strongly on their role in discipleship as building faith and developing a personal relationship with Jesus, though none described discipleship as following Jesus out into the world to become fishers of men and obedience in the areas of character and lifestyle.



3.6 The Members' Function - **Agree + Strongly Agree = 100%**

In marked contrast to the previous statement, this concept was embraced without hesitation. It was suggested that many churchgoers simply focus on Sundays or see mission as the minister's job, not theirs, in some cases believing that their role in mission is simply to welcome people when they come in.

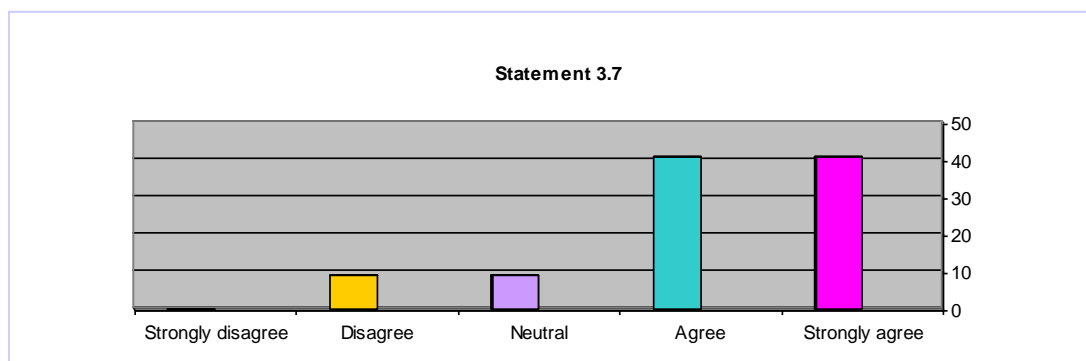


As was often repeated often during these interviews, church has become too much of a social club, the members not knowing their function as Christians.

3.7 The Meaning of Success- **Agree + Strongly Agree = 82%**

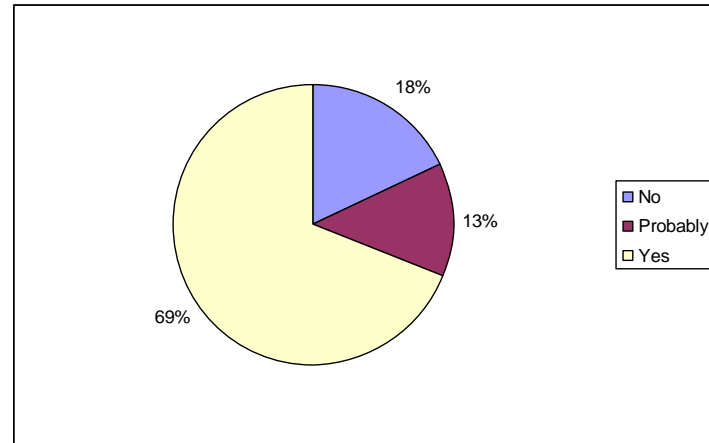
There was almost total agreement that faithfulness to God's call is paramount, but there was also a strong feeling that this should lead to an increase, with success assessed by both numbers and faithfulness.

The concept of numbers as statistics was rejected but the problem in institutional church is that numbers are the determinant as to whether or not a church stays open.

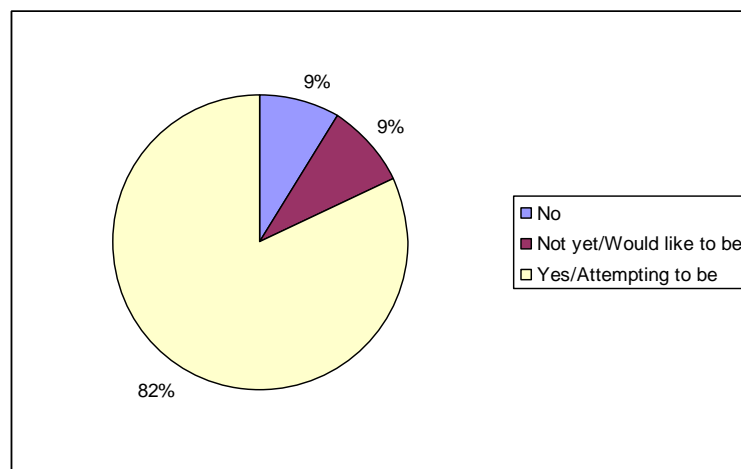


FURTHER QUESTIONS

- 4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?



- 4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?



Many respondents described their situation as attempting to be a missional leader in a straitjacket, constrained by the demands of an inherited system. One described running between spinning plates like a juggler with more and more time spent on maintenance. But there was some confidence that God has not given up on the Methodist Church if it recovers its founding missional heart.

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

All but two (91%) chose up to five statements they wished to revisit, half indicating leadership as their primary interest. Many added that the whole questionnaire had been of significant interest and were glad to have been reminded of the principles.

FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF SELECTED COMMENTS

	% of Respondents
Difficulties/frustrations with the Methodist system	54%
Congregations are change averse, do not understand what they are there for and are more social club than disciple-community	50%
Methodism puts mission on the back burner and focuses more on maintenance	40%

These themes emerged, unprompted, from respondents of all age groups with length of time in ministry from six months to 39 years, so it would seem that age and experience were not factors. This applied to all three themes.

Similarly no pattern emerged in which age/length of ministry related to positive or negative responses, nor did any respondents consistently disagree with the statements.

MINISTERS' GIFTS

Ministers' primary gifts were:

Teacher 59% (14% also gave Teacher as their secondary gift) **Total = 73%**

Pastor 41% (6% also gave Pastor as their secondary gift and 5% as their third) **Total = 52%**

Prophet 5% (27% also gave Prophet as their secondary gift) **Total = 32%**

Evangelist 14% (another 14% gave Evangelist as their secondary gift) **Total = 28%**

Apostle 18% (5% also gave Apostle as their third gift) **Total = 23%**

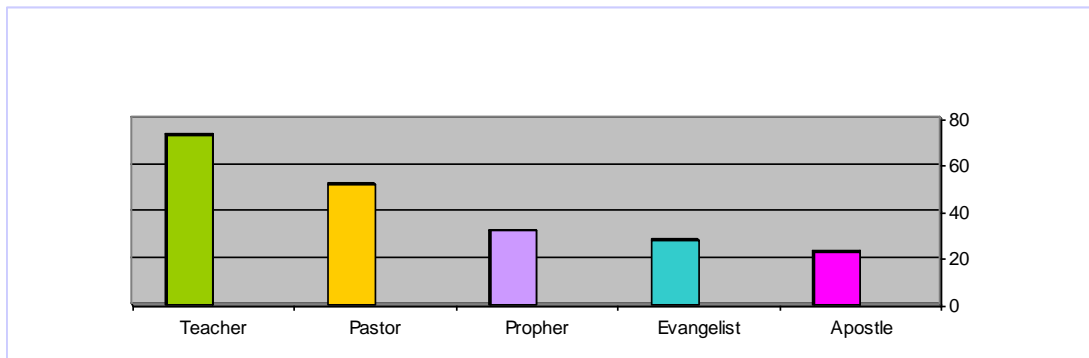


Table 1 – Questionnaire Results (Page 1 of 2)

Statement	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
1.1 The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society.	0	0	9	64	27
1.2 Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church.	0	5	9	59	27
1.3 Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21 st century Western culture.	0	5	9	36	50
2.1 Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (<i>missio Dei</i>). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension.	0	5	5	32	58
2.2 Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the Church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment.	0	9	14	41	36
2.3 Mission is not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the Church. The Church is missionary by its very nature; therefore mission is not something the Church <i>does</i> , but what it actually <i>is</i> .	0	0	0	45	55
2.4 The Church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself and its own growth – Church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission.	0	5	5	41	49
3.1 Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement rather than an attractional institution, building or fellowship.	0	14	14	50	22
3.2 The church as a contrast community vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by the world's values, and discerns where God requires its nonconformity to the surrounding, dominant culture.	0	9	14	50	27
3.3 Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native,' moving into the neighbourhood alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context.	0	0	5	37	58

Statement (continued)	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
3.4 A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.	0	5	5	54	36
3.5 A church leader's primary role is to foster the gifts of the saints for works of service in the world: absolute priority is given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple.	9	9	14	23	45
3.6 Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives.	0	0	0	36	64
3.7 Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling.	0	9	9	41	41

Further Questions	No %	Pretty much / Probably %	Yes %
4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?	18	13	69
	No %	Not yet / Would like to be %	Yes / Attempting to be %
4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?	9	9	82

Chapter Five

CULTURAL CONTEXT AND THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Although 91% of the ministers agreed that the church has to some extent become marginalized, there remained more of an underlying optimism than can generally be found in missional literature. Citing the work of ministries such as Street Pastors, Christians Against Poverty, Redeeming our Communities, and the fact that the general population continue to express a high degree of proprietorial 'ownership' of their local church, ministers' overall consideration for the future was positive.

Nevertheless there was general agreement that the world no longer looks to the church for a moral compass in matters of life and faith. This accords with missional thinkers such as Frost & Hirsch,¹³¹ Barrett *et al.*,¹³² Gibbs & Coffey,¹³³ Roxburgh & Romanuk,¹³⁴ who all concur that the church does not enjoy the influence it once did. Many respondents, though not exactly complacent, did not appear unduly concerned – or did not know how to begin – to address how the church could once more have a transforming influence on society from a marginal position. This underlying optimism could be of concern as it is possible that the need for the church to learn to speak from the margins will not be addressed unless it is faced.

¹³¹ 2003, p 151

¹³² 2004, p x

¹³³ 2001, p 17ff

¹³⁴ 2006, p 7

With regard to reaching younger generations, some respondents suggested that the Methodist Church has contributed to its own marginalization through poor presentation, lack of confidence, and especially its inability and unwillingness to present the gospel in suitable ways. There was 86% agreement that younger generations are not interested in most forms of inherited church. This non-engagement by younger generations may be a postmodern mindset issue, as described by Grenz,¹³⁵ or simply that young people find inherited church irrelevant, as suggested by Roxburgh & Romanuk.¹³⁶ In either case, it would benefit the Methodist Church to further investigate ways to reach young people with the gospel as it became clear from many responses that, given the opportunity to hear the gospel - often for the first time - young people have proved to be both open and responsive.

When it came to consideration of whether the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in the coming years, there was an agreement of 86%. Although the maxim remains true that the only constant is change, for many people change is intimidating and best avoided where possible. This is especially true in a church situation in which change can be very destructive if not handled well. Therein lies the challenge and the quandary, as many ministers appeared reluctant to embrace the necessity for change as proposed by many writers including Roxburgh, Guder, Hirsch and Murray.¹³⁷ Ministers' responses ranged widely between caution and risk - from not pandering to the latest fad but keeping the wisdom and experience of the last 2,000 years, to 'change and transformation should be a given in the church.'

¹³⁵ 1996, esp. pp 1-10

¹³⁶ 2006, p 9

¹³⁷ 2006, p 29; 1998, p 77ff; 2010, p 6; 2004, p 149, respectively.

Those who advocated change suggested this needs be in the way disciples are developed, the church's terminology, and its perception of what Christians ought to be in the world. There was therefore a general feeling for the need for change but quite a disparity in opinions as to the issue(s) needing to be addressed.

It is the church's perception of what it ought to be in the world which Newbigin and Barrett address by proposing that the church must adopt a missionary stance and revolutionise its structures and systems accordingly.¹³⁸

Respondents, however, appeared to be unsure of the type of change required and it was the tweaking of Sunday worship to which the majority's thoughts turned.¹³⁹ Their responses indicated that their aim was to help people connect with *church* as we know it, and that mission could be accomplished if Sunday mornings could be made more accessible. Even with modifications made for the benefit of the outsider, this approach continues to keep the focus inwards. There appears to be a lack of awareness that the unchurched person will not be thinking about coming over the threshold of church on a Sunday morning simply because, for example, the music is more to their liking than previously.

A strong theme that emerged was that the key is for churches to remain faithful to the gospel whilst moving with the times, though one perceptive comment was that if the church were indeed faithful to the gospel, it would *de facto* be missional and transformational. There was some talk of the need to

¹³⁸ Newbigin, 1995, p 2; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p 127.

¹³⁹ Metaphorically this could be the equivalent of moving the deckchairs on the Titanic; it will sink anyway. This phrase was used as the theme for Spring Harvest some years ago.

change structures, rituals, venues and timing, but few references to changing in other ways, for example inside-out thinking, missional small groups, listening for mission, whole-life discipleship, or the church as an authentic community – the congregation as the hermeneutic of the gospel.¹⁴⁰

Given that the church's task in mission is to change society, to impact the world¹⁴¹ through living as true disciples, the general tenor of responses leads to the suggestion that ministers are not fully cognizant of how marginalized the church has become and how vital the task is to reassess its place and recover its voice in postmodern society. There appeared a general lack of awareness for the need of a risky and radical re-calibration of the church's practices and patterns in line with its own early history, as suggested by many writers.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Newbigin, 1989, pp 141ff and 222ff

¹⁴¹ From the Verbatim 'Changing the Mind of our Culture,' p 49

¹⁴² Newbigin, 1995, pp 16-17; Murray, 2004, p 149; Hirsch, 2006, pp 16, 50; Bosch, 1991, p 50.

Chapter Six

MISSION AS *MISSIO DEI*

Expecting a stronger leaning towards evangelism, it was a surprise to find that 90% agreed or strongly agreed with statement 2.1, mission as being the holistic purposes of God, as stated by Bosch,¹⁴³ McKinzie,¹⁴⁴ Newbigin,¹⁴⁵ and many others,¹⁴⁶ with only two ministers favouring evangelism as the paramount focus in mission. Respondent #1 indicated that this was a new or relatively unexplored concept but, by their lack of elaboration, it appeared that this applied on some level to a number of others also. Of those who did comment, however, Respondents 4, 5 and 12 suggested that the church has forgotten God's missional purposes and lost its way, being nowhere near this ideal. This loss of missional purpose within the Methodist Church was an oft-repeated theme over the course of the investigation and speaks to the need to prioritize mission, recovering both a reawakened understanding and practice.

Although the focus of this statement concerned the meaning of mission, many respondents' thoughts went immediately to Wesley's model of making and then growing disciples. The link between mission as *missio Dei* and the making of disciples was unclear but, as Methodist ministers, perhaps they were thinking of the Methodist Church's current strapline, 'A discipleship movement shaped for mission.' The missional statement did appear to tap into an underlying concern for the future of the Methodist Church and its

¹⁴³ 1991, pp 10, 399ff & 412ff.

¹⁴⁴ 2010

¹⁴⁵ 1995, pp 108 & 139

¹⁴⁶ For example, Hirsch, 2006, p 51; Gibbs & Bolger, 2006, p 62; Guder, 1998, p 5

practices, including a desire to recover once again its founding missional zeal.¹⁴⁷

Any such attempt, however, should be done with discernment as even Wesley's original pattern clearly did not stand the test of time, as witnessed by the inward-looking institution it became over the past century or so. Despite its original discipleship culture, evidently Methodists did not sustain the understanding that a disciple is by definition one who makes disciples.¹⁴⁸ One respondent commented, 'If the Methodist Church isn't careful there will just be ex-chapels as a monument to the faith.'

That there were few additional comments concerning mission as the holistic purposes of God, along with the link between *missio Dei* and discipleship, may indicate that in fact there is an ambivalence or lack of clarity concerning the purpose of mission – which is not the regeneration of the Methodist Church, extraordinary and visionary as John Wesley's discipling methods were, but the wider picture of mediating God's kingdom *shalom* on earth. The ensuing statements drew out further insights on this issue.

When considering statement 2.2 concerning whence the impulse and power of mission originates, the use of the word 'activity' in the statement, along with

¹⁴⁷ As described in Snyder, 1980, John Wesley's pattern was one of proclaiming the gospel to all and sundry, then gathering those who responded into various types of small groups for the process of discipling. At the start of the Methodist movement all were expected to be part of an accountable 'class' or smaller 'band', in order to be eligible for a membership ticket allowing entry to gatherings and love feasts. In this context the annual Covenant Service was a promise to which members were accountable to their fellow group members during the following year. Nowadays members make the promise but have no accountability structure to exhort them to live their faith seriously in their everyday lives, nor does the membership ticket hold the same meaning. The bar to membership has been lowered and the expectation of discipleship watered down.

¹⁴⁸ <http://newfaithcommunities.files.wordpress.com>

the lack of any mention of the church's part, caused some hesitancy in the respondents. 'Activity' may have been misleading and the hesitancy lessened had the word 'work' been used instead, i.e. 'Mission is primarily the work of God rather than of the church.' This may explain the lower agreement of 77%. On the other hand, the responses could well indicate an understanding that in fact the activity of the church represents a significant contribution. The missional understanding, according to Newbigin,¹⁴⁹ Bosch¹⁵⁰ and MacIlvaine,¹⁵¹ is that the church's role is to discern where God is working and to come alongside him in the work he is already doing: the church does not precede or predict God, but presents itself in weakness. None of the respondents expressed such an understanding in so many words, but equally there was no specific question that elicited the respondents' belief concerning the degree of the church's contribution as compared with God's.

There was, however, general agreement that mission is God's initiative along with an acknowledgement that the church, understanding itself as co-creator or partner with God, can sometimes overreach its remit and take too strong a lead with its own agenda. But nevertheless the respondents continued to talk of 'doing, work, activity, hands and feet,' with little direct mention of the need for the church to be radically dependent on the Holy Spirit's power and leading as stressed by Newbigin and Guder.¹⁵² It is suggested, therefore, that some work may be required to clarify the distinction between God's activity

¹⁴⁹ 1995, p 30

¹⁵⁰ 1991, p 49

¹⁵¹ 2010 (b), p 103

¹⁵² Newbigin, 1995, p 130; Guder, 1998, p 4ff.

and that of the church, and for a deeper appreciation of the church's total reliance on the power of God's Spirit.

A further aspect of *missio Dei* was expressed in statement 2.3, that the church's very nature is missionary, her origin deriving from the missionary nature of God, rather than mission being one of various ministries, as posited by David Wesley.¹⁵³ In contrast to the previous statement, this statement elicited 100% agreement (45% agreeing and 55% strongly agreeing). This concurs with missional thinking as expressed by many, particularly Bosch,¹⁵⁴ Kirk¹⁵⁵ and Donovan.¹⁵⁶ Three ministers quoted Emil Brunner's memorable maxim, 'The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning,'¹⁵⁷ indicating their understanding of the concept.

Tangentially, a number linked this concept to Jesus' command to 'go and make disciples,'¹⁵⁸ Respondent #16 commenting that the imperative is not go, but as you go, make disciples, 'making disciples' being the ultimate goal, contingent on 'going.' It was the latter, going, in which a number of respondents suggested the Methodist Church may have failed and forgotten its missional role; it was suggested that it has become instead a social club, maintaining those who are already there. This was another frequently repeated theme during the interviews and reflects the accurate observation in

¹⁵³ In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 21

¹⁵⁴ 1991, p 372

¹⁵⁵ 2000, p 30

¹⁵⁶ 2001, p 82

¹⁵⁷ See footnote 53, p 13 of the Literature Review

¹⁵⁸ Matthew 28:19

*Treasure in Clay Jars*¹⁵⁹ that it is quite possible to be Bible-centred and yet not missional, the church being full of converts who do not intend to become disciples.

The fourth statement in the *missio Dei* section concerned the role of the church and where the focus of intent should lie, namely being sent by God in his service,¹⁶⁰ not having its own self-serving agenda. As Newbigin pointed out, the church is sent by God the Trinity, just as the Father sent Jesus.¹⁶¹ Ninety per cent of respondents were in agreement with this principle but there was also perceived to be a wide discrepancy between the ideal and actual practice. It was suggested that the difficulties lie in the church being too focussed on numbers, or congregations being far too emotionally and financially invested in their buildings. A small number of the ministers who agreed opined that the role of the church is jointly that of the gathered, believing community *and* the servant of God's mission. This dual understanding is not to be denied, but a stumbling block would appear to be the possibility of prioritizing the former at the expense of the latter, thereby placing too little an emphasis on mission.

Of the two who did not agree, Respondent #9 suggested that the church's role should be to focus on spiritual maturity from which mission would inevitably flow, and Respondent #11 that the body of the church is the starting point of mission. Indeed, the idea that spiritual maturity/authentic discipleship always leads to mission was mentioned a number of times by respondents during the

¹⁵⁹ Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p 60

¹⁶⁰ Bosch, 1991, p 390

¹⁶¹ 1989, p 48

investigation. Unfortunately this is either a seductive ideal that is self-evidently not borne out by experience, as there are very many who would call themselves disciples and yet do not live out a missional lifestyle; or it is that the church has lost the art of disciple-making. The answer may well lie in the latter.

Although this statement concerning the church existing to serve the mission of God did not mention 'kingdom,' the idea of seeking the kingdom rather than church was an important aspect that was reflected in some responses.

Respondent #20 most insightfully drew attention to the biblical principle that the church often tries to get growth and numbers by other means (its own agenda) but it is only by seeking first the kingdom of God that all things will be added.¹⁶² This speaks to the point within the *missio Dei* concept that the church's mission and agenda does not have a life of its own: as Bosch¹⁶³ and Roxburgh¹⁶⁴ point out, church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. The church's role, as Newbigin explained so picturesquely and confirmed by many others, is to act as sign, instrument and foretaste of God's kingdom rule and reign.¹⁶⁵

It was evident by their responses that ministers generally understand the meaning and purpose of church, as expressed by the concept of *missio Dei*, in the same way as the missional movement. However it was also clear that, in many cases, the reality of their ministry painted a more church-centred

¹⁶² Matthew 6:33

¹⁶³ 1991, p 370

¹⁶⁴ 2011, p 44

¹⁶⁵ Newbigin, 1995, pp 110,139,150; Hirsch, 2006, p 51; Gibbs & Bolger, 2006, p 62; Guder, 1998, p 5.

picture. Although these concepts were agreed in theory, they were unable to fully lay hold of them and translate them wholeheartedly into practice.

Chapter Seven

DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF THE MISSIONAL CHURCH

As would be expected, there are many practices within a missional church that are shared with more traditional, inherited church, for example reliance on the Holy Spirit and on prayer, authentic worship, and, perhaps, dwelling in the narrative of the Scriptures. Other missional practices also, such as hospitality, studying the Scriptures together, the priesthood of all believers, and loving one another, are to be found in historic expressions. For this study, therefore, the aim of which was to investigate the understanding of distinguishably missional concepts amongst ministers of an inherited church, seven¹⁶⁶ important marks of a missional church which could be stated without further explanation were selected for inclusion in the questionnaire. Unlike the statements in the first two sections, these referred to church practice and therefore probed the respondents' own understanding and practice of missional leadership.

The first statement concerned the church's self understanding. It is stated by such writers as Guder and Hirsch that the missional church understands itself as a called and sent people, with the intentionally taught and sustained value, embraced by the members, of an outward-facing centrifugal movement rather than an attractional centripetal institution.¹⁶⁷ Working from within an inherited structure this is difficult to achieve, as the congregation must learn to

¹⁶⁶ Statements 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 relating specifically to Missional Leadership are discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁶⁷ Guder, 1998, pp 4 & 11; Hirsch, 2006, pp 53 & 142; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 12

revolutionise their focus from the building to what God is going in their community.¹⁶⁸ The challenge this presents to leaders was reflected in the ministers' responses.

This statement received the second lowest in agreement ranking of the questionnaire (72%). The main difficulty, expressed by about 50% of respondents, was that although the majority of churches may understand in theory that they are sent out, in reality they want 'bums on seats.' Regret was expressed that most churches fail in reality to be outward-facing. Most considered Methodist churches to be 'come and see,' although one suggested that Methodism almost grooms itself to be unattractive. None commented on the importance of all the church members grasping the understanding of being a sent-out movement if they were ever going to succeed at being missional, as stressed by Hirsch in *The Forgotten Ways*.¹⁶⁹

Respondent #17 opined that the struggle to change direction is a big area of discontent amongst ministers – 'you start with a passion for mission and find yourself keeping rules and doing what has always been done – you are put into a mould.' Change is felt to be resisted not only by the members but also by the institution. Respondent #15 suggested that the pressure to maintain the building was a problem and a burden.

Two intertwined challenges to the missional statement became evident. The first was that the two aspects should not be mutually exclusive: church should

¹⁶⁸ David Wesley in Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 19

¹⁶⁹ 2006, p 251ff.

be *both* invitational to the package of worship plus pastoral concern plus spiritual maturity/discipleship *and* missional. The second was the belief, as in previous statements, that the building up of the body automatically results in mission. This pattern was described as: ‘get people into church, make disciples, then go,’ but evidence suggests that this pattern falls down at the going stage. It would surely be more effective if the church followed Jesus’ example of the seventy-two¹⁷⁰ as a whole-life model, being sent out, returning for more teaching and apprenticeship before going out again.

Some ministers had the problem of elderly congregations who only understand church as attractional and pastoral (which may indeed be God’s plan in that context), or who turn up their noses at getting involved with ‘tax collectors and sinners’¹⁷¹ (in the form of, say, a local youth club perceived to be of a lower class). ‘The church people don’t understand it’s their ministry to go out and see their community as a mission field,’ said one.

During the course of these interviews many ministers rather frustratedly reported that their church was more of a social club for those who are deemed acceptable and who look forward to a comfortable risk-free slide into heaven than the biblical understanding of a disciple-community.

¹⁷⁰ Luke 10 verses 1-12, commencing ‘After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.’ English Standard Version.

¹⁷¹ Mark 2 verse 16-17, ‘And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”’ English Standard Version.

Picking up the first of the above challenges expressed by respondents, that the church should be both/and – the gathered, worshiping, discipling community and missional, it is of course vital for its life and witness that a church regularly gathers in worship and fellowship. Peterson puts it this way: ‘the church goes out among the world to draw and invite the world to worship God and to become part of the body of Christ.’¹⁷² Indeed, Jesus invited his first disciples to ‘come and see,’¹⁷³ and evangelists often cite the example of Andrew inviting and bringing his brother Simon to come to meet Jesus.¹⁷⁴ It would appear that some respondents confused attractional (its ethos), as used in the statement, with attractive (its style and welcome) which of course the church community and its gatherings should always be.¹⁷⁵ It is in fact suggested that the opposing stances sometimes cited in missional literature of ‘go and be’ versus ‘come and see’ is a false one as they are not mutually exclusive.

Nevertheless, whilst the fellowship and teaching of the church is not in question, the institution of church is not in itself the goal and it is important, though challenging, to distinguish between such an invitation to come to Jesus and the concept of the church as attractional. It is to Jesus that believers have their allegiance; the church can become self-important and self-centred when the two are conflated.

¹⁷² Peterson, B.D. In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 118

¹⁷³ John 1:39

¹⁷⁴ John 1: 40-42

¹⁷⁵ Noble T.A, In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 83ff, suggests that when we ‘go’ out as a missional movement, we do so in order to say ‘come.’ It is the call to come back to God the Father through Jesus the Son, underlining the importance of the gathering of the saints in worship as one holy, catholic and apostolic church. Worship and mission are therefore interdependent.

The second statement in the 'distinguishing marks' section concerned the church being, as a phrase used by Bosch,¹⁷⁶ 'in the world but not of it, a contrast community.' The word 'compromise' in the statement created some hesitancy as a number of respondents felt that the church should in fact be less unbending and express itself more relevantly to those outside. This was not, however, the focus of the statement which concerned the church's nonconformity to the wider, dominant culture. The question sought to elicit opinions as to whether and how the church community's life could bear witness to an alternative value system, adopting a contrasting lifestyle, for example in terms of consumerism, individualism, class, power and celebrity.

Misunderstanding amongst respondents as to the statement's focus suggests a lack of awareness of the missional movement's principle here. The writings of Lesslie Newbigin and others are clear that a missional church vigilantly examines, through study and prayer, how it is being shaped and compromised by the beliefs and behaviour of the world, then repents, and asks God to convert and transform it.¹⁷⁷ Importantly, the church's intention is to remain sensitive to, yet challenging of, the surrounding, dominant culture in areas where behaviour and attitudes conflict with those of scripture.¹⁷⁸

The main hesitance in response, which might explain the lower percentage agreement of 77%, concerned the need for the church to stay within society and not become an alien culture. Along with an acknowledgement that unhealthy compromise has weakened the church in the past, significant

¹⁷⁶ 1991, p 386

¹⁷⁷ Newbigin, especially 1986, p 124ff; Guder, 1998, p 120

¹⁷⁸ Bosch, 1991, p 11; Barrett *et al.*, 2004, p xiii; Guder, 1998, pp 14 & 119

concern was expressed that compromise might mean the church developing an exclusive, holier-than-thou stance, excluding itself from society. Ironically, that is exactly how many congregations had previously been described. No respondent volunteered a comment on how they were attempting to address this statement in practice.

It is notable that, as on other occasions, respondents' use of the word 'church' often appeared to be synonymous with Sunday morning worship.

The third issue (3.3) concerned contextualisation – shaping the gospel to make it comprehensible and accessible within every culture. The term 'goes native' was used here to express the idea of becoming indigenous within the local community, a crucial practice for the missional church as described by Guder, Frost & Hirsch.¹⁷⁹

Respondents were of one accord on this subject with 95% agreement. They commented in two ways, either positively, confirming that the church should be incarnational and contextual, or negatively, describing various ways it currently fails to be so.

For the former, comments included 'living alongside, not doing-to;' making the gospel relevant with 'a Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other;' the need to follow Jesus' example – touching the leper even though it made him unclean, coming to us and becoming like us in order to save us, the lost.

¹⁷⁹ Guder, 1998, on many occasions including pp 12, 18, 79 etc.; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 81ff.

Many of these comments showed a clear understanding of the incarnational principle, though it was not clear whether many appreciated the radicalness of a practical response. As Frost & Hirsch wryly comment,¹⁸⁰ being contextual does not mean simply changing the style of Sunday morning music or ripping out the pews; it is a physical moving out of the building and into the neighbourhood, following Jesus' example.¹⁸¹

In aiming to achieve the latter it was clear that some ministers' frustrations ran very close to the surface. Comments included 'generally the church is rubbish at this – some are uncomfortable even in a pub;' and 'by and large Methodism is too nervous and apprehensive – we have retreated behind walls and expect people to conform to the church's largely middle-class culture and style.' The most disturbing example was of a parent and child ministry needing to be kept completely separate from the church congregation who have proved positively harmful, spurning the families because of their clothes and the children's behaviour. This is the antithesis of Jesus touching the leper.¹⁸² As Selvidge pointedly and challengingly states, 'The message is enculturated as its messengers give up the rights to insist on their own cultural maps.'¹⁸³ Frost & Hirsch concur in stating that the church must '[live] out the gospel *within* its cultural context rather than perpetuating an institutional commitment *apart* from its cultural context.'¹⁸⁴ It seems clear that some Methodist congregations require teaching in order to understand the meaning of contextual, incarnational living.

¹⁸⁰ 2003, p 85

¹⁸¹ Roxburgh, 2011, p 115ff; Gibbs & Bolger, 2006, p 50; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 27

¹⁸² Matthew chapter 8 verse 3

¹⁸³ In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 129

¹⁸⁴ 2003, p ix

Love explains it thus: 'Missional congregations learn to ask, "How in the name of the Triune God do we belong to these people?"'¹⁸⁵ Although this concept received a high level of agreement amongst respondents, as previously, none volunteered a comment on how such practices were being attempted in their own contexts. This leads to the suggestion that ministers may lack the skills or the courage to attempt implementation, or that they do not fully comprehend the radical change and long-term commitment this missionary engagement represents.

The subsequent three statements in the questionnaire concerning leadership are discussed in the next chapter. The final statement to be discussed in this chapter, therefore, is 3.7: the meaning of success, in which the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness.

This principle is perhaps not as obviously associated with missional concepts as the other statements, but was selected by Barrett *et al.* in their study of a number of churches who are attempting to be missionally faithful.¹⁸⁶ In fact it proved to stimulate some interesting reflections on the ministers' part.

There is an important principle here about whether there can be a genuine distinction between numbers and authenticity. Newbigin has pointed out that although in the Acts of the Apostles there is a 'lively interest in numerical growth,' in the rest of the New Testament the emphasis falls on the faithfulness and integrity of the disciples. He goes on to say that 'there is

¹⁸⁵ Love, 2010

¹⁸⁶ 2004, p xii

nowhere any suggestion that the salvation of the world depends upon the growth of the church.¹⁸⁷

There was almost total agreement amongst ministers that faithfulness to God's call is paramount, though not always easily discernible. But there was also a strong feeling that this should lead to an increase, which may explain the slightly lower than average percentage agreement of 82%.

Whereas the concept of numbers as statistics was flatly rejected ('it's not about the October count – anything but that!' from Respondent #6), there was some insistence that as people matter to God, so the number of true disciples being added into the kingdom is also vitally important. Many therefore considered that success should be assessed by both numbers and faithfulness.

Caution should be exercised here, however, as Respondent #3 gave an example of radical faithfulness to God's clear calling to a ministry ('Zac's Place'¹⁸⁸) which may never be numerically large. The problem in institutional church is that numbers are generally the determinant as to whether or not a church stays open.¹⁸⁹

There was much agreement that it is God who makes the increase and that it is the church's call simply to be faithful. Strategies employed simply to grow

¹⁸⁷ Newbigin, 1995, p 124-6

¹⁸⁸ A drop-in centre for those on the margins of society where they can be supported in Jesus' name

¹⁸⁹ In the case of the Methodist Church, it is apparently the local Church Council who have the casting vote, so it is clear how problematic it becomes to close a church building.

in numbers are to be rejected. Respondent #16 summed up the discussion well: 'Numbers are very, very, very important, but they are not all important; faithfulness and discipleship must come first.'

Chapter Eight

MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

As their results proved particularly noteworthy, the three statements relating directly to missional leadership have been selected for discrete discussion in this chapter.

The fourth statement in Section 3 of the questionnaire was that a missional church is led by a team with all the APEPT gifts (statement 3.4). This is a widely agreed principle within the missional movement, rooted in Ephesians 4:11,¹⁹⁰ and promoted in many publications including, for example, Hirsch¹⁹¹ and Robinson & Smith,¹⁹² the top three key practices of a missional leader being ‘team,’ APEPT fivefold ministry, and equipping the people.¹⁹³ However, the results of this project suggest that many Methodist ministers, at least in south west Devon, appear either not to have the opportunity or do not intentionally seek to create team leadership or to include the fivefold APEPT gifts which are essential for missional effectiveness.

When asked directly if they have intentionally sought to develop a leadership team with these gifts, around 50% of the respondents answered yes, although not all of these agreed that that such a team would necessarily be APEPT-shaped. Respondent #1 felt strongly that any team should be allowed to

¹⁹⁰ The principle of equipping the whole body for ministry according to this pattern is also taught in 1 Corinthians 12. Ephesians 1-4, 1 Peter and elsewhere.

¹⁹¹ 2006, p 158ff.

¹⁹² 2003, p 128

¹⁹³ In conversation with Martin Robinson

develop organically rather than strategically. Although 90% of ministers were in agreement with APEPT team leadership, even these presented as wishful thinking and belied their actual practice, their comments sometimes showing a mixed, rather ambivalent picture.

Some ministers believed there should be a leader-of-leaders, but team leadership was seen as the ideal by most. Indeed many expressed a strong desire to be part of a leadership team but in practice were alone at the top. In contrast, as Robinson & Smith note, 'there is no passage in the New Testament where leadership, in any dimension, is ever dealt with in singularity.'¹⁹⁴ They cite Jesus' own command against hierarchical leadership, 'Not so among you.'¹⁹⁵

It was in response to this statement that considerable frustration with the Methodist system became evident in half (54%) of the participants. There appears to be tension between the Circuit principle and the churches being 'congregational,' between money and mission; and constraints because of the established structure. For example, historic practices such as the requirement for Stewards to fulfil certain functions militates against leaders' ability to create a leadership team with the particular APEPT gifts in place. And in addition, the hierarchical system means that both the Methodist Church and the congregation expect one person, the minister, to be the mission leader, and the congregation have therefore become disenfranchised from using their gifts. Because of this, one respondent felt that he was

¹⁹⁴ 2003, p 143

¹⁹⁵ 2003, p 140 – Matthew 20 verse 26: 'It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant.'

constantly fire-fighting, managing crises, instead of providing the teaching and discipling he would wish.

This situation is not improved by the fact that Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists have largely been overlooked or weeded out in Christendom's model of leadership¹⁹⁶ in favour of Pastors and Teachers. This was borne out by the present study, 52% of participating ministers having Pastor as one of their gifts and 73% Teacher.

From ministers' responses, it would appear that the Methodist Church proves the missional movement's case. Without the full APEPT gift mix, missional leadership is fatally compromised and the church loses its missional impetus. Could this be at the heart of Methodism's decline, providing another proof of Alan Hirsch's proposition that apostolic leadership is critical for effective mission?¹⁹⁷ As discipleship is ultimately a leadership issue, it is suggested that the Methodist Church's current focus on becoming a discipleship movement shaped for mission could be doomed to failure unless it is preceded by a corrective of its leadership practices.¹⁹⁸

Statement 3.5 referred to the leader's main function. In light of the previous statement concerning 'team,' this would perhaps have been better written as

¹⁹⁶ Cited in missional literature, for example Robinson & Smith, 2003, p 131

¹⁹⁷ 2006, pp 151ff

¹⁹⁸ It is possible that John Wesley had all five gifts, the only gift not being clearly evident in hindsight being Pastor. Yet if he failed to realise the need for all the gifts in leadership it would perhaps explain the missing link between the movement he founded and the church it has since become. In *The Radical Wesley* (1996, p156) Howard Snyder comments that the fivefold ministries' function is to equip the whole body for ministry, and then asks, 'What would have happened had Wesley seen his preachers and other helpers in this more fully biblical way?'

the leaders' main function, drawing attention to the plurality of leadership. Many respondents also picked up on the word 'gifts,' whereas the intended main thrust of the question was on equipping the people for their missionary role by bringing them to maturity as fully fledged disciples. This investigation indicated that an important disparity may exist between this concept and statement 3.6, the members' function. However it is acknowledged that responses may not have been the same had the statement been worded differently.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, equipping the people for mission is one of the vital key practices for missional leaders. For example, Greene & Robinson and Gibbs & Coffey state that a leader's primary role in developing missional living is through fostering the people's God-given gifts, forming, resourcing and mobilising them to be whole-life disciples.¹⁹⁹ All these aspects are important. David Wesley suggests it is the business of the church to 'train missionaries to go and to live out the gospel in their spheres of influence,'²⁰⁰ and Newbigin's wording is, 'equipping all the membership ... to understand and fulfil their several roles in this mission through their faithfulness in their daily work [as] ... active followers of Jesus.'²⁰¹

Response to this concept of equipping as a top priority for ministers, however, was very divided, receiving the only Strongly Disagree votes of the whole survey (9%), with 9% Disagreeing and 14% Neutral. It therefore received the lowest percentage agreement (68%), of which 45% Strongly Agreed. This

¹⁹⁹ Greene & Robinson, 2008, pp 198ff; Gibbs & Coffey, 2001, p 74

²⁰⁰ In Schwanz & Coleson (Eds.), 2011, p 23

²⁰¹ 1989, p 238

attitude could be counterproductive when seen alongside their expectation of members' faithful discipleship as described in 3.6.

Disagreement was based on opinions such as 'it is arrogant and stupid' to focus on such a defined goal – the leader must instead be faithful to the gospel and listen for direction in each situation. Others appeared to equate the meaning of discipleship with the use of gifts. Still others drew attention to the many other functions a minister is required to fulfil, and that their people all have individual needs which cannot be addressed in such a black and white statement. One respondent was concerned that a minister should have more of an oversight, not engaging in the details of the 'heavy shepherding' of individuals. This is of course where the *sola pastora* model fails, as it is indeed impossible for one minister to focus on discipling/equipping when other issues, especially pastoral and Sunday mornings, often have to take precedence.

There appeared to be a lack of clarity concerning the meaning of discipleship in the responses but it is acknowledged that respondents were not asked for their opinion on this question directly. The drawing out and deployment of gifts, the development of a personal relationship with Jesus and faith-building all appeared to be central thoughts, but it was unclear at times whether this was in order to serve the world or the church. None described discipleship as following Jesus out into the world.

There would appear to be some discrepancy between Jesus' teaching on discipleship and the emphasis placed on the use of gifts by many respondents. Jesus hardly mentions gifts; and the Twelve, sent out early in their apprenticeship, were not excused going out on the road because of incompatible or as yet undiscerned giftings!²⁰² Jesus invites us to follow him – and for what reason? In order to fish for people, making and growing more disciples – his is a transformational agenda in every sense. His teaching majors on being and doing - character and lifestyle - encompassing all the factors mentioned above: fostering the people's God-given gifts but also forming, resourcing and mobilising.²⁰³

In marked contrast to the previous conflicting responses, the subsequent statement – each member living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their lives – was embraced without hesitation by all the ministers with 100% agreement (36% agreeing and 64% strongly agreeing). This statement mirrored the wording used by Roxburgh & Romanuk and Guder.²⁰⁴ Importantly also, there is as stated in Newbigin, Frost & Hirsch, no division in the disciple's life between the sacred and the secular: all of life is understood to be sacred when placed in relationship to the living God.²⁰⁵

Ministers' responses were either that 'it sums up brilliantly where we should be' or conversely, 'there is a chasm between this and actual practice.' There was wholesale agreement that it must be the church's (the saints') goal to

²⁰² It is acknowledged that Jesus had not yet ascended and therefore his gifts had not been poured out as the spoils of victory, but he nevertheless continues to apprentice his disciples in this way.

²⁰³ See especially Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7

²⁰⁴ Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006, p 13; Guder, 1998, pp 7 & 9

²⁰⁵ Newbigin, 1986, pp 99 & 143; Frost & Hirsch, 2003, p 126.

witness in both word and deed in every area of life as wholehearted disciples. But comments suggested that many in the church 'do not know what it means to be Christian.' Some members apparently believe that their only role in mission is to welcome people when they enter the building!

This response was richly ironic in light of the fact that ministers themselves apparently do not – for whatever reason – prioritize the equipping of the people for missional and obedient living. Hence the people are not being taught what a disciple is or how to be one, despite there being a high proportion of teaching gifts amongst leaders. Inevitably the result is that, instead of the congregation understanding their role as missionaries in the world, many ministers described their church as a social club for the benefit of those already on the inside.

These remarks, along with those of the previous point, suggest that if Methodism desires to focus on discipleship shaped for mission, not only does Jesus' pattern of discipleship need to be revisited in order to achieve greater clarity of meaning and practice, but this then should be disseminated more effectively to ministers and to the people.

Final questions on leadership

In order to further investigate the issue of leadership, ministers were asked three additional, previously unseen questions at the conclusion of each interview.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*

This question was posed with the expectation that many of the statements on the questionnaire would either be relatively new or would serve to enlighten ministers' understanding of the meaning of 'missional.' This proved not to be the case. Nevertheless, although 68% said they understood the concept of missional church as described in the questionnaire - and perhaps this should be taken at face value - it remained unclear whether 'missional church' was largely taken to mean 'a church which is missionally-oriented in intent,' rather than in the way it is understood within the missional movement. A number, for example, related the concept directly to more accessible, alternative worship, and others to the Pioneer/MSM course,²⁰⁶ neither of which represent the full scope of what it means to be missional.

On reflection a clearer finding may have been elicited had the question 'How do you understand the concept of missional church?' been asked prior to the questionnaire. The validity of responses to this question, therefore, remains uncertain.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?*

Often greeted with a wry chuckle, this question elicited candid and rich reflections. Eighty-two percent of ministers described themselves as missional leaders; two (9%) expressed a desire to become so, and two (9%) said no. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the three primary

²⁰⁶ From the researcher's experience, Pioneer/MSM (Mission-shaped Ministry) focuses on fresh expressions of church, whereas missional thinking focuses on mission – an important distinction. Perhaps the phrase should be altered to 'Fresh Expressions of Mission' to foster a clearly missional understanding.

features of a missional leader are team, APEPT and equipping, and it is perhaps according to these practices that such a judgement should be made. It was also what ministers left unsaid and a lack of familiarity with certain concepts, that indicated there may be a discrepancy between their understanding of missional leadership and that understood by the missional movement. For example, no respondent stated they were actively engaged in turning the congregation's understanding inside out from centripetal to centrifugal, very few mentioned studying any missional literature or gave examples of missional practices.

Without exception, however, all the participating ministers desired to be faithful to the missional nature of the church. They expressed a great heart for mission which was in many cases being squeezed and thwarted by the demands of the inherited system. A number described being a missional leader in a straitjacket, constrained by the system, 'caught up in the mud' as Respondent #15 put it, of managing an institution.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*

Over 50% were particularly interested in revisiting the subject of leadership. It was encouraging that six (27%) expressed appreciation of the clarity of the statements and would consider working through them with their leadership and/or in a house group, as well as having heightened their interest in the missional movement. This reaction could suggest confirmation of the ambiguous answers to the previous questions in this section.

Chapter Nine

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"An idea starts to be interesting when you get scared of taking it to its logical conclusion."

Nassim Nicholas Taleb

'The Bed of Procrustes: Philosophical and Practical Aphorisms'

The aim of this research was to investigate the understanding of missional concepts amongst ministers of south west Devon's Methodist churches, in an attempt to ascertain their level of awareness and interest. With such a limited sample firm evidence could not be sought, but the findings reveal suggestions which could be validated through further research.

I Missional principles and practices are a universal ideal for the Christian church. Contrary to the researcher's expectations, the participants of this investigation, ranging from those who had been in ministry for 40+ years to those who were probationers, and all speaking from within an inherited church tradition, understood and concurred to a very large extent with the concepts. Ninety-one percent also expressed an interest in investigating some or all of the concepts further. This would appear to suggest that missional principles and practices are universal for the church. They represent the authentic outworking of following Christ, recognisable by all those who are familiar with biblical teaching, regardless of whether or not they are actively 'missional.'²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ This conclusion is supported by the example given by Frost of Pastor Hang – see footnote 4 on p 6 of the Introduction.

That said, whilst ministers generally understood missional concepts as an ideal, it also appeared in this study that, in most cases and for various reasons, the reality of their ministry was not balanced in favour of mission or missional practice. It is suggested that some ministers do not see the need, or lack the resources, for risky and radical change. One significant hurdle appears to be the rigid, change-averse congregation, but also many ministers' focus was on connecting people primarily with *church* (often the Sunday service) rather than becoming a missional movement *out* to the least, last and lost.

The clear presentation of distinctive missional principles, even in this modest way, appeared to serve as an effective mechanism to heighten awareness and rekindle a zeal for mission amongst many ministers. Thus it is suggested that this could offer a model for promoting the understanding of missional principles and practices amongst churches in general.

Recommendations

- (i) Leaders should study both the understanding and practice of the missional movement, and then courageously teach these to their congregation.
- (ii) Leaders should give up the attempt to find the perfect Sunday service in order to connect people to church, but instead connect people to a community of disciples and thereby to Jesus.

II The term ‘missional’ may be understood by some simply to mean ‘mission-minded in intent,’ rather than in the particular way it is understood by the missional movement. This may represent a stumbling block to further investigation on the leader’s part, in the belief that they are already missional. This was borne out by the high percentage who agreed with the theory and described themselves as missional, yet did not display clear missional practices in their ministry. It was, however, beyond the remit of this particular study to prove this case one way or the other.

III Methodist ministers are passionate about mission but many are constrained and frustrated in practice by the institutional structure and historic practices of the Church. With some confidence that God has not given up on the Methodist Church (if it recovers its founding missional heart),²⁰⁸ it is suggested that a number of organisational aspects require radical re-thinking. These could include the tensions between the Circuit principle and churches being ‘congregational,’ money and mission, and the Stewardship structure. Such constraints favour maintenance and militate against mission. Respondent #21 commented, for example, that the Circuit system works well in revival but cannot cope with decline. Respondent #20 suggested that the layers of bureaucracy are so thick that it will take strong

²⁰⁸ Ironically of course, the Methodist Church started life as a movement which sought to inject passion, direction and purpose into the spiritual lives of those in the established Church. <http://www.methodist.org.uk> When Haley & Francis (2006) sought ministers’ opinions of Methodist practice in Britain a decade ago, there was amongst the 23 themes no direct mention of mission, team leadership, or APEPT. Instead the focus was on church growth (see for example pages 59, 62, 178). This way of thinking may still exist at the heart of contemporary British Methodism. Haley & Francis’s conclusion on p 248, however, confirms Conclusion III: ‘Methodist ministers are far from convinced that the system within which they operate incentivizes church growth...the model of the circuit plan militates against implementing the very changes that local churches need in order for the potential for growth to be released.’

measures to alter. Given such circumstances, it is clear why it is so difficult for inherited churches and their leaders to make the transition from traditional to missional.

Recommendations

- (i) A thoughtful reorganisation of churches in Circuits and of other historic practices that currently prevent freedom and/or effectiveness in mission.
- (ii) Clear the path for communication to travel more freely throughout the whole church down to the grass roots.

IV A significant number of south west Methodist churches are more social club than disciple-community. Due to other duties and preferences, many ministers give insufficient priority to equipping members as whole-life missionaries, yet desire this from their congregants. Many congregations do not understand or practise Christian discipleship,²⁰⁹ due in part to a lack of clarity on its meaning and teaching. Hence many churches have become religious clubs rather than resource centres for mission. If the Methodist Church continues as it is at present, Respondent #17 suggested, it may have to die and rise again but meanwhile it is hospicecare.²¹⁰

Recommendations

- (i) Leaders' priorities are recalibrated towards equipping for mission.

²⁰⁹ Discipleship is here defined by the writer as 'Apprenticeship to the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose of making more disciples whose passion is mediating the kingdom of God in society.'

²¹⁰ Haley & Francis, 2006, p 49-50 discuss 'The Church could die.' It appears that little has changed as they say, 'In local churches and circuits there is often an emphasis on keeping the doors of the local churches open and keeping the circuit going.'

- (ii) The Methodist Church promotes a clearer understanding of discipleship and its practice.
- (iii) The bar and expectations of membership are raised.

V Team leadership with the fivefold APEPT ministry gifts necessary for effective mission is lacking in the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church needs as a matter of urgency to engage with missional principles, starting with leadership issues. It should dispense with the unbiblical hierarchical model and intentionally create teams that harness the Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist gifts that are often missing. Pastor/Teachers alone do not make effective missional leaders. If the Circuit system were to be reorganised, local ministers could be free to create a leadership team across present boundaries. A leader-of-leaders, perhaps in the style of an Abbot,²¹¹ could be sought to act as a wise servant-leader of a local team.

Recommendation

- (i) APEPT leadership teams are sought across current boundaries as a matter of urgency.

²¹¹ Roxburgh, 2005, p 158ff.

Weaknesses and further research

Weaknesses

Location and demographics

This investigation was limited in scope, having only 22 participants and contained within a radius of approximately 40 miles in south west Devon. The research was conducted with leaders within one Methodist District representing congregations in a city (Plymouth), mid-size and small towns (Newton Abbot, Tavistock and Totnes for example), and numerous villages. It was not possible to ascertain or investigate the significance of the demographics of each congregation, whether by age or ethnic heritage. Apart from Plymouth, south west Devon does not have a migrant population of any significant proportions and local congregations may therefore be more insular and resistant to change than most, thereby affecting the current findings.

Ministers' time

It would have been helpful have sought an indication of what percentage of their time respondents gave to their various responsibilities in order to assist any future discussion of changes to the church system and recalibrate towards mission.

Further research

To investigate:

- in greater depth leaders' understanding of what it means to be 'missional,' particularly linking understanding with practice.
- ministers' thoughts and recommendations on creating more missionally facilitative systems within the Methodist Church.
- whether findings differ when conducted in another part of the country, in a more urban or culturally diverse area, or within a particular sector of society.

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APPENDIX 1

Lists of missional indicators

Two lists of characteristics of a missional church are shown below. The first is from *Treasure in Clay Jars*²¹² which gives working congregational examples of different features of a missional church as first proposed in Guder's *Missional Church*.²¹³

- 1 Proclaims the gospel
- 2 Is a community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus.
- 3 [Accepts the Bible as] normative in this church's life.
- 4 Understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord.
- 5 Seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all its members.
- 6 Is known by how its members behave toward one another.
- 7 Practises reconciliation.
- 8 Teaches and encourages its members to hold themselves accountable to one another in love.
- 9 Practises hospitality.
- 10 Accepts worship as the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving God's presence and God's promised future.
- 11 Possesses a vital public witness.
- 12 Recognizes that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God.

²¹² Adapted in Schwanz & Coleson, 2011, p 142, from Lois Y. Barrett, ed., 2004, pp 159-72.

²¹³ 1998, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*

The second example of a list of what a missional church is and is not is from the Friends of Missional website.²¹⁴ As an overview of what constitutes a missional church, it is one of the most accurate and comprehensive descriptions.

Description of the Missional Church

1. The missional church is a collection of missional believers acting in concert together in fulfillment of the *missio dei*.¹
2. The missional church is one where people are exploring and rediscovering what it means to be Jesus' sent people as their identity and vocation.
3. The missional church is faith communities willing and ready to be Christ's people in their own situation and place.
4. The missional church knows that they must be a cross-cultural missionary (contextual) people and adopt a missionary stance in relation to their community.
5. The missional church will be engaged with the culture (in the world) without being absorbed by the culture (not of the world). They will become intentionally indigenous.
6. The missional church understands that God is already present in the culture where it finds itself. Therefore, the missional church doesn't view its purpose as bringing God into the culture or taking individuals out of the culture to a sacred space.
7. The missional church is about more than just being contextual, it is also about the nature of the church and how it relates to God.
8. The missional church is about being -- being conformed to the image of God.
9. The missional church will seek to plant all types of missional communities.
10. The missional church is evangelistic and faithfully proclaims the gospel through word *and* deed. Words alone are not sufficient; how the gospel is embodied in our community and service is as important as what we say.
11. The missional church understands the power of the gospel and does not lose confidence in it.
12. The missional church recognizes that it does not hold a place of honor in its host community and that its missional imperative compels it to move out from itself into that host community as salt and light.²
13. The missional church will align all their activities around the *missio dei* -- the mission of God.
14. The missional church seeks to put the good of their neighbor over their own.
15. The missional church will give integrity, morality, good character and conduct, compassion, love and a resurrection life filled with hope preeminence to give credence to their reasoned verbal witness.
16. The missional church practices hospitality by welcoming the stranger into the midst of the community.
17. The missional church will always be in a dynamic tension or paradox between missional individuals and community. We cannot sustain being missional on our own, but if we are not being missional individually we cannot sustain being mission-shaped corporately.³

²¹⁴ www.friendsofmissional.org

18. The missional church will see themselves as representatives of Jesus and will do nothing to dishonor his name.
19. The missional church will be totally reliant on God in all it does. It will move beyond superficial faith to a life of supernatural living.
20. The missional church will be desperately dependent on prayer.
21. The missional church gathered will be for the purpose of worship, encouragement, supplemental teaching, training, and to seek God's presence and to be realigned with God's missionary purpose.
22. The missional church is orthodox in its view of the gospel and scripture, but culturally relevant in its methods and practice so that it can engage the world view of the hearers.
23. The missional church will feed deeply on the scriptures throughout the week.
24. The missional church will be a community where all members are involved in learning "the way of Jesus." Spiritual development is an expectation.
25. The missional church will help people discover and develop their spiritual gifts and will rely on gifted people for ministry instead of talented people.
26. The missional church is a healing community where people carry each other's burdens and help restore gently.
27. The missional church will require that its leaders be missiologists.

What the Missional Church is Not

- The missional church is not a dispenser of religious goods and services or a place where people come for their weekly spiritual fix.
- The missional church is not a place where mature Christians come to be fed and have their needs met.
- The missional church is not a place where "professionals" are hired to do all the work of the church.
- The missional church is not a place where the "professionals" teach the children and youth about God to the exclusion of parental responsibility.
- The missional church is not a church with a "good missions program." The people are the missions program and includes going to "Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- The missional church is not about a new strategy for evangelism.
- The missional church is not missional **just because** it is contemporary, young, hip, postmodern-sensitive, seeker-sensitive or even traditional.
- The missional church is not about big programs and organizations to accomplish God's missionary purpose. This does not imply no program or organization, but that they will not drive mission. They will be used in support of people on mission.
- The missional church is not involved in political **party** activism, either on the right or left. As Brian McLaren wrote, we need "purple peoplehood" — people who don't want to be defined as red or blue, but have elements of both.

APPENDIX 2

Initial request for participation and Questionnaire

The Firs
Bowden Hill
Yealmpton
Plymouth PL8 2JX
01752 880552 / 07874 929104
lynchaston@btinternet.com

November 2012

Dear Colleague

I am writing to you in the hope that you might be able to give a little of your time to assist me in gathering data for a research project to fulfil an MA in Missional Leadership. I am asking for approximately one hour in which to go through a questionnaire together.

You may like to know that I have been a member of the Yealmpton Methodist Church for many years.

The questionnaire will not be ready for a few weeks, but I thought it would be wise to get dates in diaries in good time.

An outline of my research topic is attached. Although the project is still very much in its infancy it will give you a rough idea of the issues to be covered. I hope very much that this will be of interest to you.

I will contact you by phone within the next week or so to arrange a convenient meeting date. I'd be happy to make a date by email if you'd prefer, in which case please contact me as above. Alternatively, please let me know if you would prefer not to participate.

Thank you so much and I look forward to our meeting.

With every blessing,

Lyn Chaston (Mrs)

The understanding of 'missional' concepts amongst Methodist Church leaders in the South West

The aim of the proposed research is to investigate the understanding of missional church concepts amongst leaders of the Methodist churches in South West Devon.

In order to find the answer to this question, leaders' views will be sought through a semi-structured interview using a questionnaire, covering such issues as:

- Confidence, or lack thereof, of the future of the church in 21st century Western culture
- What constitutes mission
- The purposes of God, the role of the church, and the work of the Holy Spirit in mission
- The role of a church leader in mission

Research Project in Partial Fulfilment of an

MA in Missional Leadership

Springdale College: Together in Mission /

York St John University

**The understanding of 'missional' concepts amongst
Methodist Church leaders in the South West**

Lyn Chaston

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. I hope you will find it interesting.

A questionnaire is attached. ***Please feel free to complete any or all of it prior to our meeting if you wish.*** When we meet I will go through the questionnaire with you. You are invited to offer further comments at any stage in the process which, with your permission, I will make a note of in writing.

Your responses will be kept confidential. The questionnaires will be recorded numerically and kept separate from names and biographical details.

These statements encapsulate my own understanding of the belief and practice of the missional movement on each numbered point. *Firstly*, please respond by agreeing or disagreeing, thereby indicating how closely your own belief and understanding of each topic accords with the statement. And *secondly*, would you also tick the diamond if the statement represents a concept or practice that is relatively new or unexplored by you as yet.

I really appreciate your taking part in this; thank you very much indeed for your time and interest!

Section 1: Cultural Reality Check – Where We Are Now

THERE ARE TWO STEPS for each statement:

i) Please tick ONE box on the agree/disagree scale for each statement. These statements encapsulate the researcher's understanding of the belief and practice of the missional movement on each numbered point. You are invited to respond by agreeing or disagreeing, thereby indicating how closely your own belief and understanding of each topic accords with the statement.

ii) IF the statement represents a concept or practice that is relatively new or unexplored by you until now, please ALSO tick the diamond ◇.

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ ***This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.***

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ ***This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.***

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21st century Western culture.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ ***This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.***

Section 2: The Big Picture of Mission, God and Church

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (*missio Dei*). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the Church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

2.3 The Nature of the Church

Mission is not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the Church. The Church is missionary by its very nature; therefore mission is not something the Church *does*, but what it actually *is*.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

The Church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself and its own growth – Church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

Section 3 - Distinguishing Marks of the Missional Church

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement rather than an attractational institution, building or fellowship.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept and practice is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It

The church as a contrast community vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by the world's values, and discerns where God requires its nonconformity to the surrounding, dominant culture.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept and practice is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context

Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native,' moving into the neighbourhood alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept and practice is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

3.4 Leading the Church

A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ *This concept and practice is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

A church leader's primary role is to foster the gifts of the saints for works of service in the world: absolute priority is given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ ***This concept and practice is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.***

3.6 The Members' Function

Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ ***This concept and practice is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.***

3.7 The Meaning of Success

Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

◇ ***This concept and practice is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.***

**And to conclude:
Biographical details***

Age: ☐ Under 30 ☐ 30s ☐ 40s ☐ 50s ☐ 60+

Age when entering ministry: ☐ Under 30 ☐ 30s ☐ 40s ☐ 50s

Approximate number of years as a Church Minister:

Number of years in Present Post:

How many more years would you hope to continue in your Present Post:

Number of churches of which you are Minister:

Approximate membership of each church:
Church 1 2 3 4 5

** These details are not essential but may prove useful when analysing results, if you feel able to give them.*

**FURTHER UNSEEN QUESTIONS (not included the questionnaire itself)
ASKED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE INTERVIEW**

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

APPENDIX 3

Transcription of comments in response to the questionnaire Personal details removed for publication.

R = respondent. *Writer's annotations are in italic.* The remainder are in the words of the respondents.

#1 PILOT

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society. ✓ agree

Society is becoming increasingly secularized – it is trendy to be atheist
Islam puts people off religion – extremist and violent – people lump all religions together + Israel/Palestine

R sees it most of all in getting to see and speak in school – there is a great barrier to overcome.

General opinion is that people of religion are nutters. We must convince people that we are normal.

However, people want to connect with the Christian story/church especially at Christmas – they still want to 'own' Christmas events.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church. ✓ agree

Young people are not interested in anything defined as organised religion – they want to be free to express spirituality to reflect their individuality

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21st century Western culture. ✓ agree

The church does not need a complete reshaping but must remain faithful to the gospel

The structure and ritualistic aspect must change

We need to throw people a bone to help people to connect with church, eg singing mistletoe and wine at Christmas

Contemporary charismatic churches that grow have thrown off the shackles of ritualistic behaviour

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (missio Dei). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension. ✓ neutral

✓ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

Mission to me is taking the Word out and sharing the Good News.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment. ✓ strongly agree

So many do mission in their own strength. There is no failure for God – it is his timing.

2.3 The Nature of the Church

The church is missionary by its very nature; it is not something the church does, but what it actually is. Mission is therefore not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the church. ✓ agree

Not content with keeping the message inside the church but wants to take it out.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

The church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself – church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. ✓ agree

As an ideal, I agree in theory – this is what Church is meant to be.

Churches often exist for their own good

A full church shouldn't be the goal – not bums on seats = “mechanistic”

Some people just go out and declare and proclaim the gospel to people, whether they listen or not, and go home saying they did well.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement (Go-and-Be) rather than an attractional institution, building or fellowship (Come-and-See). ✓ neutral

Should this be phrased 'Each local church should understand itself ...'

Have responded *neutral* because I believe the church must be both. Great believer in come and see + go and be. 'Come along' is a wonderful way to share our faith.

The goal is a place to which we are happy to invite friends. If they are invited, they become Christian and you can build more churches.

R frequently used the phrase 'get to church' – eg get people to church, etc.

I have been doing this for years e.g. a tent mission which is go and be

You go and be in order to be able to come to church because we need to be in fellowship

3.2 The Church In the World, Not Of It

The church community intentionally and vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by its surrounding culture but rather believes the Bible and lives by it. ✓ neutral

Again, should this be phrased 'Should the church community ...'

R wouldn't want the church to be compromised but it is inevitable it is influenced by society, and should be so that it is not completely alien. We must make church accessible, otherwise people struggle to understand it. For example, sexuality: we should welcome everyone, regardless of sexuality (though the church isn't very good at this) and when people are converted they will be convicted of a biblical way to live. In other words, we must understand the culture but apply biblical principles to the culture.

3.3 Reaching Those As Yet Without Faith

Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native' alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context. ✓ strongly agree

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. 'I am all things to all men'. But generally the church is rubbish at this and some are very uncomfortable in an alien environment, eg a pub.

3.4 Leading the Church

A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. ✓ strongly agree

Strongly agree with this in principle but not strategically, i.e. not a formal team. This is aspirational because it is scriptural. It should happen naturally/spiritually/ organically – people will be raised up, not nailed by committee. It's the Lord's work! I have identified people in the congregation with these gifts but have not been intentional in including them in the leadership team.

The Lord has gifted me primarily as Teacher, and secondarily as Evangelist.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

A church leader's primary role is to prepare all God's people for works of service in the world: absolute priority is therefore given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple. ✓ strongly disagree

You can't nail down a church leader's role like that – everyone is very diverse. A leader's role is to lead, teach, encourage, enable; wait on the Lord to ensure it's what He wants to do. It's very arrogant and stupid to do what we think should be done. Should be spiritually led – organic.

3.6 The Members' Function

Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives. ✓ strongly agree

Practically, many don't know it or haven't accepted the challenge but I agree strongly that this should be the aspiration, so that others' lives are illuminated, thereby making more disciples.

3.7 The Meaning of Success

Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling. ✓ neutral

Discernment is an odd thing – many times you have to step out in faith in order to discern whether it is right.

Numbers are a fair indicator in today's society, although sometimes you can have a church full but they are not believers. Nowadays it would be an indicator you're doing something right. God is pruning his church, people are leaving if they aren't true Christians.

Today people respond in terms of works of service.

I think success should be assessed by both – numbers and faithfulness.

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

Not familiar with the movement but familiar with mission!

Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Interesting ... I'd like to but am not being at the moment. I've been teaching, leading worship, and doing in-church stuff. I haven't been discussing mission initiatives in the community. My school work has opened up potential. I'd like to try to bring together the community work and the church work.

4.4 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

Nothing was completely new and feel I have a handle on it, especially the need to be culturally relevant e.g. in music.

Have found it interesting though, and am now more motivated to learn more through Martin Robinson's visit to Yealmpton.

SUMMARY

R has an organic, Spirit-led approach to leadership, allowing the Spirit to do the leading rather than making any mechanistic plans.

R's concept of mission and therefore church is that the members go out with the good news in order to draw them into the church.

The concept of 'being' (go and be) was not well developed or articulated. But very keen and engaged in making the gospel accessible by vernacular language including in songs.

There was no mention of the bringing of justice, mercy or care of creation as part of mission.

R was intrigued by the statements and exhibited a much heightened interest in learning more about missional church concepts at the end of the interview than previously.

#2 PILOT

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society. ✓ agree/agree strongly

It can depend on where you are, e.g. church in London is very strong. However for society in general I agree.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church. ✓ agree

My experience is that most say they are atheist but if they get an opportunity to really hear the gospel they love it. They are hungry for the message.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21st century Western culture. ✓ agree

Depends on what you mean by change. There must be some absolutes and church should not mirror society. But it needs to get rid of excess baggage.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (missio Dei). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension. ✓ agree with a question mark

I'm an evangelist but there's more to it than preaching the gospel. The Church needs to see mission as a whole. The trouble is, it's easier to talk and do social issues than evangelism.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment. ✓ neutral

It's God's harvest. People are saved through God's work yet the church is called to go. It is more God's activity but the church has a part.

2.3 The Nature of the Church

The church is missionary by its very nature; it is not something the church does, but what it actually is. Mission is therefore not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the church. ✓ agree

Mission is not a bolt-on extra.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

The church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself – church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. ✓ agree

The Church is not bricks and mortar.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement (Go-and-Be) rather than an attractional institution, building or fellowship (Come-and-See). ✓ agree

A lot more churches are come-and-see and buy in a missionary. Should be go and be. I think of 'be' to mean the congregation living out a Christian life with integrity, helping no matter what the cost, whether in the church or not.

3.2 The Church In the World, Not Of It

The church community intentionally and vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by its surrounding culture but rather believes the Bible and lives by it. ✓ agree

Exactly R's position. Sometimes culture tends to cloud out the bible. People question whether scripture is the word of God; it needs to be applied to raising children etc.

3.3 Reaching Those As Yet Without Faith

Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native' alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context. ✓ strongly agree

For example, when we were abroad we had a policy not to drink alcohol but had to ask for a special dispensation because it was a barrier to the gospel. If we didn't drink, we weren't invited back! We must adapt depending on the culture we're working in.

3.4 Leading the Church

A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. ✓ strongly agree

The problem is, a minister is not all singing, all dancing; a team is needed but many try to do it all themselves and end their ministry quite sad. In ministry, I try to put a team together intentionally. My gifts are primarily evangelist, secondarily prophet and teacher.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

A church leader's primary role is to prepare all God's people for works of service in the world: absolute priority is therefore given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple. ✓ neutral

Our job is to get people to move forward spiritually. However spiritual abuse can occur in attempting this statement where a minister feels responsible for every individual – 'heavy shepherding.' The minister becomes too much in the weeds (down amongst everyone) rather than having a bigger picture, an oversight. Here's where the team is needed in order not to be oppressive.

3.6 The Members' Function

Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives.

✓ agree

Again, congregations aren't perfect – some will take this on board, some will always be pew-sitters – but this is the goal. Grace is needed if some don't 'perform.'

3.7 The Meaning of Success

Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling. ✓ agree

Although we want to see many coming to Christ, sometimes a small group can be better.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*

Yes, aware of the missional movement.

4.5 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?*

Absolutely.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
I put a question mark against The Meaning of Mission – this always needs thinking about and revisiting.

SUMMARY

R had enjoyed the questionnaire and was comfortable with all the statements.

#3 PILOT

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society. ✓ strongly agree

The church is becoming marginalized but I'm not sure whether this applies to faith in Jesus.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church. ✓ agree

20-somethings have a residual spirituality because they are the children of the boomer generation, even if it's only eco-spirituality. It's the next generation that are the problem.

TV programmes have changed in the last 10 years – now lots of vampires, angels, etc. which assume another dimension.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21st century Western culture. ✓ strongly agree

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (missio Dei). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension. ✓ strongly agree

Go and engage with people until you find the person of peace.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment. ✓ strongly agree

2.3 The Nature of the Church

The church is missionary by its very nature; it is not something the church does, but what it actually is. Mission is therefore not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the church. ✓ strongly agree

Can't remove mission from the essential quality of the church; otherwise it is not church, like a fruit cake without fruit.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

The church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself – church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. ✓ strongly agree

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement (Go-and-Be) rather than an attractional institution, building or fellowship (Come-and-See). ✓ neutral

You can be attractional and still be a disciple-making church – you come, belong and become a disciple, and then you go. It can still work if it's about discipling.

Because I do think there is a place in post-Christendom society for attractional models but it should not be the primary model ... for a while longer – a bit of me still wonders because we are entering a generation who know so little, they come with no or less baggage. The missional model should be primary but it's almost impossible to combine the two.

3.2 The Church In the World, Not Of It

The church community intentionally and vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by its surrounding culture but rather believes the Bible and lives by it. ✓ agree

But not out of it either. We should adopt a radical lifestyle like John the Baptist.

3.3 Reaching Those As Yet Without Faith

Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native' alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context. ✓ strongly agree

I question using the word 'reaching' here as it smacks of doing-to. This is about living the life alongside.

Church of the poor, not for the poor. With, not to.

Especially in a city we need to become not a church for the poor but of the poor. Churches can't do everything for the city; they should learn to network and refer to specialist bodies. Currently every church tries to do every ministry!

3.4 Leading the Church

A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. ✓ strongly agree

A team is really important – I had a team of 8 in my previous church. They must be helped to consider themselves as actually part of leadership and their gifts valued.

My primary gift is Apostle.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

A church leader's primary role is to prepare all God's people for works of service in the world: absolute priority is therefore given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple. ✓ strongly agree

But that rubs against missional church because where do you put the weight of emphasis – yes, it is works of service in the world.

3.6 The Members' Function

Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives. ✓ strongly agree

Obediently = sacrificially – not putting their own needs first.

3.7 The Meaning of Success

Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling. ✓ strongly agree

I'm glad you put 'success' in the heading but then referred to church health. If it's God's vision, we are only asked to be the labourers in the vineyard. Some churches are called to live out their discipleship in a particular way. See Zac's place on U-tube: some are never going to have large numbers but they are led by God, convinced and convicted that this is God's path for them.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*

Yes

Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Yes, hope so.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*

Leadership: I am interested in the outcome of this research.

It is a real issue because re. models of ministry – different for particular context. There are some churches who need leading, and others complain – they want to be fed with a spoon. There are other ministers who engage just enough with all their churches so that they each feel they can take responsibility for themselves.

We've spent far too long preparing Pastor/Teachers; we don't give any focus on Apostles and Prophets.

SUMMARY

R is very familiar with the missional movement and Fresh Expressions.

R was still working out the attractional vs centrifugal model.

#4 PILOT

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society. ✓ agree

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church. . ✓ agree

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21st century Western culture. ✓ strongly agree

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (missio Dei). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension. ✓ strongly agree

The church has forgotten this; we've lost our way. It's 99% about where is God leading us. God has always called people to mission. The Holy Spirit calls us to people and places where God is already.

I came into the ministry through *missio Dei* – reaching outcasts well and truly outside the church.

Missio Dei is to me: working with the Holy Spirit to go where we need to be.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment. ✓ strongly agree

2.3 The Nature of the Church

The church is missionary by its very nature; it is not something the church does, but what it actually is. Mission is therefore not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the church. ✓ strongly agree

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

The church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself – church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. ✓ strongly agree

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement (Go-and-Be) rather than an attractional institution, building or fellowship (Come-and-See). ✓ disagree
but then agree ??

In my experience the majority are come-and-see. They may understand they are sent out but in reality they still want bums on seats. They might think they are but in fact are looking inward.

[NB This R agreed in theory but considered most churches failed in practice, therefore 'disagreed.' The aim of the question should be made clearer.]

3.2 The Church In the World, Not Of It

The church community intentionally and vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by its surrounding culture but rather believes the Bible and lives by it. ✓ disagree-neutral

Can't put every church in one pot – each church is different

There are huge changes in culture - churches not realising that they are becoming surrounded with immigrants bringing their own culture to our doorstep. Unless we are compromised, we won't rise to the challenge [of making meaningful engagement] but will stay in our own bubble. We have been culturally overtaken. We are allowing ourselves to be compromised.

[NB This R showed a different take on 'culture', taking it to mean foreign cultures rather than the wider culture of individualism, materialism etc. This actually responds to the next question.]

3.3 Reaching Those As Yet Without Faith

Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native' alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context. ✓ agree

But not those churches who ignore the neighbourhood and look inward.

3.4 Leading the Church

A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. ✓ disagree

Because the church often needs a newly-appointed leader to gather a team after recognising gifts. Often it is the new broom who recognises what is needed.

Always be on the lookout for where the Holy Spirit is working.

[NB R felt strongly that a leader-of-leaders is needed to make the church function aright.]

Gifts: Prophet and Pastor equally.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

A church leader's primary role is to prepare all God's people for works of service in the world: absolute priority is therefore given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple. ✓ neutral

The leader's role is to prioritise and to put effort into each member's priority, depending on their current situation and circumstances, eg in hospital etc. Leaders need to encourage members to initiate (be self motivated to respond to needs)

It is not black and white like this: not everyone can be mobilised eg 80-yr-olds can't usually go out on a mission. I see people/members in many areas of life – primary role should be that they are looked at individually. New Christians can often be keen but naive.

Following the Spirit's lead is not evident in many churches: Father and Son, yes, but Holy Spirit, no.

[This response indicated that this R's thinking was about 'missions' out from the church rather than the church being the missionary.]

3.6 The Members' Function

Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives.

✓ agree

[R's immediate reaction was to relate this to Methodist Membership:]

Meaning of Membership is the commitment to daily prayer and time – unless their personal life with Christ is whole, they are not going to do it.

3.7 The Meaning of Success

Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling.

✓ agree/disagree

As a minister I agree but as a church leader I disagree, based on what applies within churches. Stewards assess health by bums on seats – it's part of the equation as to whether the church closes. Rather than extending the Kingdom.

I try not to get hung up on numbers but even in ministerial meetings we brag or moan about how well we're doing or otherwise.

[NB Preoccupation with numbers because of the structure being held in place. This prevents the freedom of, say, Zac's place.]

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?
Yes – have done Pioneer.

4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader? Yes.

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

SUMMARY

R has a specific understanding of missio Dei which is that the church is totally led by and follows the Holy Spirit's leading.

R's approach is to listen to the Holy Spirit's leading for each church. R has in the past been prepared to create a serious conflict over music and tradition vs Spirit-led, alternative worship, which R feels is a prophetic role.

FROM THIS POINT, STATEMENTS 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 WERE AMENDED FOLLOWING THE PILOT STUDIES.

#5

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

The church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society. ✓ agree

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

Younger generations, though interested in spirituality, are not interested in most forms of inherited church. ✓ agree

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

Whilst remaining faithful to the gospel, the church needs to change its ways if it is to prevail in 21st century Western culture. ✓ agree

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

Mission represents the holistic purposes of God (missio Dei). This means the healing and restoration of all creation and the drawing of all people back to himself, of which evangelism is but one dimension. ✓ agree

This reminded me that churches here are nowhere near this yet.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

Mission is primarily the activity of God rather than of the church. It is His initiative, power and accomplishment. ✓ agree

2.3 The Nature of the Church

Mission is not one function among others of equal validity in the life of the church. The church is missionary by its very nature; therefore mission is not something the church does, but what it actually is. ✓ agree

I remember J C Hoekendijk's book 'The Church Inside Out.'

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

The church exists to serve the mission of God, not for itself and its own growth – church is neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. ✓ agree

We are currently stuck with the pattern of: more converts – pay the bills – in order to do the church in the way we are, i.e. dysfunctionally.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

Each local church understands itself and organizes its life as an outward-facing, incarnational, sent out movement rather than an attractional institution, building or fellowship. ✓ agree

I agree with the statement but it doesn't describe the local church in its present form and therefore not in practice.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It

The church as a contrast community vigilantly seeks not to be compromised by the world's values, and discerns where God requires its nonconformity to the surrounding, dominant culture. ✓ agree

Again, in principle.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context

Whilst remaining faithful to the Word of God, the church 'goes native,' moving into the neighbourhood alongside the people with whom they are sharing the Good News so that it makes sense in that context. ✓ agree

Agree with the statement, but not as it is in the local church.

If these statements were true of the local church it would be relevant; as it is, the church is irrelevant.

3.4 Leading the Church

A missionally effective church is led by a team demonstrating the gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. ✓ agree

I was originally a Pastor/Teacher but it is difficult to demonstrate in the British context. The British church doesn't quite understand what the role of the minister is in the life of the church, nor even do ministers! This is about leadership and maybe this is the issue – no one in British society is allowed to be a leader – everything has to be agreed by all.

NB In other cultures, R said, people are far more inclined than in Britain to say 'yes' rather than 'no' to a church leader's suggestion.

R has given up trying to save the world – he would have burned out and given up ministry by now.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

A church leader's primary role is to foster the gifts of the saints for works of service in the world: absolute priority is therefore given to forming and mobilising each member as a fully devoted disciple. ✓ strongly agree [an exceptional response, says he]

This was R's previous role – to work with the leaders to equip and enable their leadership. As people were empowered and set free to use their ministry gifts in the life of the church it made a positive difference.

3.6 The Members' Function

Each member knows it is their responsibility to witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by living obediently and missionally in every aspect of their daily lives.

✓ agree

Agree in theory, but it doesn't happen in practice.

Humanity is very self-absorbed – the church needs to be converted to discipleship, dying to self. People do not know what it means to be Christian.

3.7 The Meaning of Success

Having discerned God's specific missional vocation for the entire church and for each of its members, the health of the church is assessed not in terms of numbers but by faithfulness to such calling. ✓ agree

There is a certain degree of inevitability of growth if people behave like this. Wherever R has seen missional leadership and engagement on the part of the local church, numerical growth does follow. But it's not a strategy to get more numbers and equip people for the wrong purpose [the institutional, inherited church model]. Perhaps that's where it goes pearshaped.

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

Yes

Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Yes, but ... difficulty in finding a way to give expression to doing. Perhaps changing the mindset of a few people and beginning from there. This appointment has some potential for this.

He has led a leadership team who met regularly for prayer and accountability and developed their own Wesley-class-like accountability structure within the group [like Inspire, L3D etc.], on the understanding that leadership stems from life with God. R recommends David Lowes Watson's 'Covenant Discipleship.'

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

The statements gave me opportunity to reflect again and reminded me of my fundamental belief and purpose to be a bit more intentional – to try to implement missional thinking again.

SUMMARY

R appeared a rather frustrated missional leader but has had to be realistic, held back by the cultural understanding of church – all about 'my' needs, eg going to heaven when we die, and 'church' as pews, music etc., not about true discipleship. Given the right encouragement it appeared he, with a team, could move the church towards being missional.

#6

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

With reservation – I would say ‘pockets’ of the church are still thriving and relevant.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ agree

I would also add that if these younger generations came into an inherited church, I don’t think the church would want them. The younger ones would want to do it differently – they would bring kids, noise, maybe a different time for the worship service. This represents a fundamental misunderstanding of what the church is for. Most of the inherited congregation think it is for their funeral; they just want to keep the church doors open.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today’s World

✓ strongly agree [R said this was an exceptional response for him]

Though I don’t like the word ‘prevail.’ We are not in a war with a winner or loser and should not give that impression.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ agree – strongly agree

Evangelism is only a part of the mission: we are to *make* and *grow* disciples. The first part is going out and sharing the Gospel, and the second part is growing everyone afterwards.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ disagree

Disagree because I believe the inspiration and motivation is His, but the activity is ours, inspired and given by our calling – it is we who need to get out and do it.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ agree – strongly agree

It’s not what you do but what you are. [NB Did R understand the question???

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ strongly agree

3.1 The Church’s Self-Understanding ✓ agree

It needs to be this but struggling to make it happen.
R gave the example of a Café church which had been started but, apart from the café owner, only a few Christians attend.
Must be rooted in community.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ disagree

Agree that it needs to be nonconformist and stand out but compromise may be necessary. Sometimes compromise is good.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

Intentionally gathering a team. 1 pastor, 2 try to be prophet, 3 possibly apostle.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ disagree

Disagree with the wording: emphasis should be on 'enable and empower the people to use their God-given gifts in His service.'

R gave an example of people coming out of the woodwork at the Christmas service to use their gifts. *R equated discipleship with the use of gifts.*

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ agree

They should know, but not in practice.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ strongly agree

It's not about the October count – anything but that!

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

I think I understood, but not exactly as phrased here. About 'being' + outward and being sent – Yes.

4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Would like to think I am: my model of leadership is walk the talk, model the way. You can only lead in the general direction. Inherited church is not at all missional – it has opportunities but is scared to take them.

I think of it as making disciples = building the kingdom; and growing what we already have.

The members of the inherited church put the money in, and this supports missional initiatives.

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

How do we actually make a stand as a contrast community? We have a local dilemma – big business vs. small retail shops. Does the church take a stand for either side?

SUMMARY

It felt as if R had some grasp of missional principles but was reluctant to grasp the nettle because of pastoral responsibilities to the old faithfuls who support the church in service and financially.

I was unsure if R really understood the idea of the church turned inside out.

#7

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

But who is doing the marginalizing? Belief is more difficult in a scientific age – science appears to disprove religion.

I remember the phrase, “People have managed to live without us [the church].” They don’t look to church for a moral compass, eg gay marriage. Church as a central place and authority in society is definitely no longer defensible.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ strongly agree

This is to do with ‘institutional’ church. There is a quest for meaning and purpose but don’t want anything focussed on buildings. It’s difficult for younger generations to commit to certain times – life is very flexible for them.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today’s World ✓ agree - strongly agree

Which bit of the gospel are you being faithful to? You could see gay marriage, for example, from both sides: the Bible says No, or the gospel talks about acceptance.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ strongly agree

Evangelism is one dimension. Mission is sending out.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ agree

We often forget that. In practical terms we lose sight of this and think of it as what we should be doing.

This is a good subject to bring to house group.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ agree

We often forget this too.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ strongly agree

We worry too much about numbers – keeping the show on the road.

3.1 The Church’s Self-Understanding ✓ disagree

OK for some churches to be more attractational, say for the elderly retired congregation. We must discern God’s role for each church and its mission and what being a missional church means for each one. An attractational model might be right in some contexts.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It

✓ neutral - agree

This goes back to what is faithfulness to the gospel, eg gay marriage again. In principle I agree but how does it work out in practice?

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context

✓ agree

3.4 Leading the Church

✓ agree

I've never been in a missionally effective church. Always believed that leadership is a team with different gifts. I intentionally have a team but informally within the Circuit. Discernment must be collaborative. If I was part of a team in each church I would be forever in meetings with them, so it's not practical. *[NB This seemed to show that R was not thinking in terms of equipping and empowering his team to take responsibility for themselves.]*

I would say that I am a pastor. That said, in the current Circuit system we have to be jacks of all trades, and I think I am fairly good at that!

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

✓ neutral - agree

Discipleship, yes – it's about developing spirituality and growing. But it's also about discernment about the opportunity for mission.

3.6 The Members' Function

✓ strongly agree

Often forget this re. every aspect, including family, being a husband, father etc.

3.7 The Meaning of Success

✓ agree

We are called to be faithful, not successful. It is a very organic process: we must allow ourselves and others to try and fail.

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

Pretty much, but good to hear it again.

4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Constraint as I look after a number of inherited churches. R then mentioned an alternative worship service which has attracted Christians seeking maturity from a variety of backgrounds. He is very supportive and encouraging. *[This appeared to be a Fresh Expressions connection in his mind, rather than a missional leader in the way described.]*

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

All healthy reminders, but especially want to revisit 2.2 and 2.3, the concepts of mission being God's work, which we so often lose sight of.

SUMMARY

R has done the Pioneer course (Fresh Expressions, now MSM) and tended to think this way rather than missional per se. As others, R clearly understood the concepts but had not experienced or thought through the implications of inside-out thinking. Again, there was much constraint because of the inherited straitjacket.

#8

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

Political correctness has marginalized the church – compared to the USA where they expect people to be Christian, we start on the back foot and can't mention it.

There are now 2-3 generations who have no socialization of church, from 0-7 yrs, which is not happening in schools or in the home.

People still want church to be here for their hatch, match and despatch but many are unaware of its significance.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ agree

Not just institutional church, but institutions. Individualism means resistance to membership of anything, but they come in times of trouble.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ strongly agree

You have to preach the gospel or don't bother to preach! If people come, they want to hear the message. But I do lots of Q&A, 15 mins max – people these days aren't used to being lectured to for 35 mins. We use different media and make it participative but it must be the gospel. We've got to move with the times.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ strongly agree

We're co-creators with God. He gives us the planet and our resources and we're responsible for the great commission and taking care of the world. We're in the world and must get involved in the problems and in that process make disciples. We must be in and live in the real world.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ disagree

He made us co-creators. We must work with the Holy Spirit – he indwells us and we must do the work in the power of the Spirit.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ strongly agree

We're here to be a missional church – go and make disciples – get out there! But wait for the Holy Spirit – don't do it in your own strength. Any project should start with prayer to try to discern if it's the will of God.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ agree

Church is the body of Christ. We shouldn't be into numbers. The starting point is not us but true disciples should have a meaningful relationship with Christ.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ neutral

Yes we have to be outward looking because we are missional, but it's also about the fellowship. The problem is you must be in a ministerial fellowship in order to be cared for and loved. We need to look after those we already have. It's horses for courses – it depends on the context as to what is right for them.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ strongly agree

Do not be conformed, Rom 12:1. Don't try to fit in with the world, and stick by what you say. Stand up for what you believe in, don't conform all the time.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

Absolutely – don't worry if you live in an area with mostly old people, that's who you're missioning to. Share with them and their lives, speak to where they are, otherwise they'll find it irrelevant. The Gospel has to relate to what's happening in the world – preach with a Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. That's where questions and answers during the message is good as it engages people in what's happening now.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

Yes, we cannot minister alone – but the team includes every person in the church.

There are times to be consultative and times to lead. I'm always looking for gifts for successional planning – looking for and discerning one another's gifts applies to all the church.

My gifts are pastor and leader.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

Leader must look for and develop the gifts.

I want Christ to live in them, not just be his followers.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

I tell them it's their responsibility to be a missionary, and to be all these gifts.

Every person should be a committed Christian. But some who call themselves Christian can be the biggest ad or the biggest turnoff. What they say and do matters.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ strongly agree

It's difficult to discern mission sometimes – sometimes it doesn't work but it's not failure, we just need to go in a different direction.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes, absolutely.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?*

Yes, but it's a part of what we do. It's mission and ministry, even mission/ministry/ resources (= people, money, development, succession planning), but everyone is responsible.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
Context particularly – being with people where they are, making the gospel relevant – Bible + newspaper, but not conforming.

SUMMARY

R impressed me with his definite stance and his clear leadership qualities. Although his approach is church-building-centred, his fellowship is growing. I think this is because he is clear about every-believer-ministry, the importance of everyday witness, his collaborative style, and the relevance of his teaching. Also he only has one church and can offer continuity and pastoral oversight.

#9

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

I think most people would have to agree – apparently Halloween is now more popular than Easter in our secularized society.

I think that the church is apologetic and defensive about what we offer – we've lost our confidence – we're marginalizing ourselves.

Sunday is now sports and family day.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ strongly agree

Spot on – this is where we're at spiritually across the board, not just younger people. They're finding their own means outside church.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ agree

There's a balance – we need to remain faithful – can't lose the gospel – but must have confidence in the gospel but change our ways.

Church people tend to think church is for them – eg complaints about baptisms which got in the way of the regular Sunday service.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ disagree

I think evangelism is the main thing: that is the purpose of the church. We've become far too comfortable. Evangelism is the primary role, our main thrust.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ agree

I agree primarily, but it's a partnership: the Holy Spirit, but we have a part to play.

✓ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ strongly agree

It should be but in reality it is quite different. If we're brave enough to look at the Methodist Church, it's maintenance rather than mission because it concentrates on maintenance of those already there and puts mission on the back burner.

I get a lot of flack from my family for not choosing modern music, but it must be done well and received well or it would defeat the object.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ disagree

Church should be all about spiritual maturity: if we concentrated on ourselves, teaching and learning, everything else would flow: mission would happen if we spent time growing.

The Methodist Church is a friendly, sociable club but it doesn't challenge people to go deeper. Eg the Covenant Service – how many do take it on board?

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ agree [but originally disagreed – some confusion here]

The Methodist Church should cease to be if it's not missional.
We should be confident to invite people to Come and See – Methodism almost grooms itself to not be attractive.
I see church as the NT church – with an emphasis on worship and spiritual maturity and growth. Out of that you will break out automatically.
Emphasis on building the church up and people are then drawn to it. The church has a really important part to play.
[R didn't answer the question but clearly thinks that growing disciples will automatically result in mission, even if they don't understand the church as an inside-out movement. This concept did not appear to be one he had really come across previously.]

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ strongly agree

Couldn't argue with that – church history shows unhealthy compromise has weakened the church. It's like Father Christmas – kids find out he is not real and then think the same of the Christmas message.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

Has to be the way – moving from an era of Billy Graham crusades, which has gone. Now we get alongside on a 1-2-1 basis and the way we live will draw people. Plus using social media.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

Very much a team – ideally I would be looking out for these gifts in people.
Trying to get across that it's not just the minister who does pastoral care – still a very hierarchical model. We must equip and release people. I see pockets of encouragement – can see how confidence has grown amongst the people, e.g. engagement in the sermon, recently someone answered back.
Ministers are expected to be all five of these gifts.
Part of the difficulty in the Methodist Church is we survive in the Circuit principle but the churches are congregational (R #8 also said this). There is a tension between the money and the mission.
I am a Pastor but find it very difficult to find the time to visit people as I'm expected to do everything.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

Yes, fully devoted disciples – teaching people to grow in their relationship, and out of that maturity, gifts will blossom. We don't challenge enough. We need to do more releasing and equipping.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

That sums up brilliantly where we should be but the established church thinks differently.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ neutral

Apart from exceptional circumstances the norm should be healthy big church: the church is the nucleus which then goes out. Worship collectively and go out.

In the Methodist Church there are pockets of small groups who are tired and discouraged – no good to themselves or anyone else. Churches should look to be successful in numbers.

I'm encouraged by a new ecumenical partnership in which churches are not bothered where an event is held, but it's for the Kingdom. This is a great improvement from when I started in ministry.

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

Yes.

4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Yes, a missional leader in a straitjacket – constrained by the system I'm in. God has still got hold of the Methodist Church and we are being challenged to become more missional. Beginning to think how we do church. The Holy Spirit is going to move us – we can't continue as we are.

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

All held interest, but 3.4 especially – leading the church. It's really about looking at the structures – the established church isn't working and most people know that. It is meeting the needs of past generations but it is not reaching this generation. We have to change the system. Easy for ministers to moan about the people but we've got to change as well.

SUMMARY

R has a missional heart but did not appear familiar with missional concepts. Very stuck with the institutional, inherited Methodist Church, and as R is not a dynamic leader but more of a pastor, he is struggling with the mission orientation.

#10

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

✓ neutral

Conventional thinking would say it is become more and more marginal but I'm not so sure. There's something on Radio 4's Today programme to do with the church regularly – it is being talked about. When I'm visiting in the hospital people are glad the church is there – they all say there has to be a different perspective.

Society wants the benefit but not the obligations and duties; there is no effort or commitment. They want what the church provides – they are consumers.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

✓ disagree

Gut reaction – this is too sweeping a statement. Many Scouts are interested in serving and in morality. I do know a 9-yr-old boy who is interested in church ... but perhaps he is an unusual specimen!

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

✓ disagree

Disagree mainly because I think my great criticism of the church is that it panders to the latest fad, eg café church, messy church, thinking this may be the salvation of the church – these are the flavour of the month. New buzzwords and acronyms which then go out of style again. No. We have to be consistent and bring the gospel in ways people can understand: keep doing the things which may not be in favour at present but the church has been doing it for 2,000 years and it's still here. 'Keep the rumour of God alive.' Just be faithful.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

✓ agree

✓ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.*

Becoming more aware over the past 2-3 years through Martyn Atkins [President of the Methodist Conference].

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

✓ agree

It is God who moves everything – we respond to the Spirit's prompting.

2.3 The Nature of the Church

✓ agree

If the church is not about mission, I'm not sure what it is about – just a social club.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

✓ agree

What we tend to do, which is why we get so upset when a church has to close – it is the church of God and we are just moving things around to help the mission of God. It can become idolatrous – we invest too much in the buildings. If the Methodist Church isn't careful there will be ex-chapels as a monument to the faith.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ agree

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ agree

I like to think the church is not conforming to the values of the world.

✓ *This concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now*

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ neutral

Neutral mainly because I feel by and large – the context within Methodism – we are so nervous and apprehensive.

Don't like 'going native' – it sounds like the next trendy thing. We need to go back to doing very simple things: the church should be in the schools, pubs, reclaiming places which once were a central part of our environment. Since the war we have retreated behind the walls. There is a need for us to be a holy people in the community – involved in everything local. 'Going native' is part of it, but it's not either/or.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

I want to build a team that is broadly evangelical – everyone must sing from the same hymn sheet as overall leadership.

I was trained to maintain the tradition, to 'run the church', not to fulfil the great commission, which was quite wrong.

My gifts are Teacher & Apostle (1), Prophet (2) and Pastor (3).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly disagree

Not sure if this is the church leader's priority role: the leader's priority is to be faithful to the gospel. Everything is a product of being faithful.

Absolute priority for me is to enable them to grow in faith and, as a result, these things will happen. It's part of it, but not all.

The language is new but probably the practice isn't. You can't ask a minister to be in the community and be available pastorally to everyone as well.

Someone else in the church needs to pick up the pastoral side.

[NB Here R showed that he isn't thinking along the lines of the minister creating and training a leadership team. It's more each one doing their own thing in terms of giftings.]

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ agree

This just goes to show how far removed from that we are – going back to the John Wesley classes. That sense of responsibility, which was what the class system was all about – being held to account for your actions and having oversight of one another. But it's not what's happening on the ground.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ agree

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

Probably not, no. I have been looking at each church as being a missional community – the responsibility lies with the individual church.

4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Yes, I hope so. Not following college but now we're in such a pretty pickle. The Methodist Church (and the Anglican) needs to find its missional heart or God will go elsewhere.

Part of me is highly traditional, but the way the church speaks and offers itself is farcical: we don't conduct ourselves in ways people can understand, eg the debate over women bishops etc. It's not my job to grade the sin – with regard to homosexuality, which is worse: homosexuality or bigotry?

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

As we engage with the secular world, 3.2 – being a countercultural community – has to be the cutting edge of where we are. We need to offer a valuable critique of society and stand against the received wisdom of the age. Where there is a subversive voice the Methodist Church authorities want to clamp down, but the subversive voice is prophetic and it's what Jesus did. The heart of the missional church is a complete and utter reliance on the authenticity of the gospel and the sheer power of the sacrament of Holy Communion to transform everything. Wesley called it, 'transforming ordinance' – there has been a loss of focus on this. We need to rediscover the NT church.

SUMMARY

R is quite conflicted between his traditional approach and his desire to return to Wesley-like mission and accountability. He agreed with many of the missional statements but is, like many others, of the opinion that faithfulness automatically leads to mission. Unfortunately, within an inherited institutional church, this is self-evidently not the case or we would not need the missional movement to give the church a prod.

#11

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

Have to agree but not sure whose fault it is – we've become so apathetic in our way of church. It's our own fault people think we're irrelevant. *[Here, is R mainly talking about church as Sunday worship and perhaps house groups?]*

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ strongly agree

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ agree

Not sure how to respond because if we were faithful to the gospel, the church would be what it's supposed to be – missional, reaching out, transformational, full of love, accepting. We need to go back to the gospel.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ strongly agree

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ agree

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ agree

If the church has been created by God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, yes it is missional by nature.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ neutral

I agree that the church exists to serve the mission of God, but this statement is controversial. I think the body of the church is the starting point of mission. God uses Christ's church to be missional.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ agree

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ agree

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ agree

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

Yes, but from my point of view it's complicated. A missional church may organise itself this way but the Methodist Church says one person leads the church into mission; the people themselves are not the case in Methodism. I try to recognise gifts and foster their gifts to come forward. My gifts are Apostle/Leader/Teacher (1), and Pastor (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

Not sure if this is the church leader's priority or not, but definitely within my ethos is to mobilise people in their own gifting as much as possible.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ agree

People are so scared to witness verbally – they'll do jumble sales and other service, but won't speak, so others don't actually know they are Christian.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ agree

All members of the church should be faithful to their calling; forget numbers. Just get on with it. It's my job to speak and teach about Jesus and it's the Holy Spirit's job to convict. If it's the right time for people to come to faith they will.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?*

Yes, these are what I strive for.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
It seems to me that the freer churches can move faster with changes but the Methodist Church was born in mission. The Methodist Church is being renewed in mission because of the way it speaks the gospel into this culture/this century. It can only change by getting back into its missional heart and getting rid of apathy. God used Wesley for societal transformation – this is where the Methodist Church is moving.

SUMMARY

R is very confident in the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit but feels constrained within the Methodist institution. However, like many others, he is keen on the original missional heart of the Methodist movement and is optimistic that God has his hands on the Methodist church.

#12

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

✓ neutral - agree

Depends on the PC brigade getting their way, the fundamental atheists like Stephen Dawkins – they are trying to marginalise the church. Other faiths are very supportive of Christian principles. Generally people are starting to appreciate the church more.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

✓ neutral - agree

The church in general is unwelcoming to the young and change-averse, but there is still a link to inherited church. In a youth club they will ask for answers and are interested if the relational link is made.

If we got it right, the young would come back. What I mean is not be old-fashioned and change averse. There is a horror of changing Sunday mornings.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

✓ strongly agree

The culture has changed but the church hasn't. Changing to new forms of worship, even singing more modern songs, goes down like a lead balloon.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

✓ strongly agree

But ... I think of the 4 callings of the Methodist Church: worship / learning and caring / service / evangelism, which a church member promises. If we get the first aspects right, we will then be able to fulfil evangelism.

R's aim appeared to get people to church services but added: Church doesn't understand what they are there for.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

✓ neutral

I had difficulty with this one. God is working through the church: we are the hands, feet and heart of God in the world. It's his glory, not ours, but it is a partnership.

2.3 The Nature of the Church

✓ strongly agree

It should be – is this an area where we've failed?

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

✓ strongly agree

Many in the pews won't see it that way. There are some who cannot see beyond a building, eg when it comes to having to close a building and merge.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

✓ strongly agree

But this is not where we are – people can't get beyond 'building'.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It

✓ agree

I have a problem with this particular area, having read Stanley Hauerwas's *Resident Aliens*. We must not be out of the world but not conform to society's ways, still within that society. For example, the Lottery – the church needs to discern what it should do.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context

✓ strongly agree

I am an advocate of following what Jesus said – he sets the example. What did Jesus do? He came out of his church and talked to people where they were – he would touch a leper, making himself unclean according to the laws. We can be judgemental if we're not careful.

3.4 Leading the Church

✓ strongly agree

This is the ideal. Probably the gifts needed are more than those and it could well be just an individual leader using all 5 gifts – someone who is a very clear leader.

I can honestly say I don't see these gifts in my people. I make myself aware of the gift that's missing and fill that space.
My gifts are joint Teacher and Leader.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function

✓ disagree

Primary role is the journey with people, helping them towards discipleship. To build up their faith so they are confident in their own faith.

[R disagreed but in fact his answer showed that he is in broad agreement.]

3.6 The Members' Function

✓ strongly agree

They can be told and encouraged but many are not at this point. We must get the people ready.

3.7 The Meaning of Success

✓ strongly agree

The difficulty here is: what is that calling? Faithfulness to a call, yes, if we can discern what God's calling is. It is difficult to assess. But it's not statistics – it should be quality not quantity.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*

Probably, but I'm not one for titles. None of the aspects were new to me.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?*

No – not the label anyway. Some of what I do is missional but some is not directly missional.

4.6 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

Many people need to have pre-mission teaching – they are insular, inward-looking. We must teach until people 'get it' for themselves. They must realise that all relationships need to be sweet. The Covenant Service shows a need for 24/7 x 365 days commitment, not putting on Sunday best and then hanging it up in the wardrobe when they get home on Sundays. The church is not a social club or for making ourselves feel good. Very keen on following Jesus's teaching, doing everything through the lens of Jesus, enabling people to have a strong faith.

SUMMARY

R hasn't an overtly mission-oriented approach and doesn't call himself missional, but mission would result if his approach was followed.

#13

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

We are becoming marginalised by the small voice of scientists who say faith should not be part of our lives. But on the other hand we are making inroads meeting the needs of people, eg Street Pastors, CAP, Fresh Expressions, etc.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ agree

Many of them don't know what church is, not the youngest. But there are a number of 14-15yr olds who have stayed with us – they've found it's a place they belong to something. It's relational. There is a big interest in spirituality.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ strongly agree

If it's not working, let's fix it! I love change. When I say 'it' I mean developing discipleship ... who then make new disciples ... develop their discipleship etc. We should be God's mission in the world; no wonder the place is dying.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ strongly agree

I came across Bosch's Transforming Mission in College.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ strongly agree

But we do have a part to play – being the activity of God isn't an excuse for doing nothing: we use gifts he gives.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ strongly agree

As in Emil Brunner's 'Church exists in mission as fire exists in burning.'

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ strongly agree

God is the heart and goal of mission.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ strongly agree

Must get rid of the come-to-us mentality.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ strongly agree

Consumerism, money, celebrity, play too much a part of the life of the church. If they don't like it, they go elsewhere rather than staying with the community. Some people are so wedded to institutional church. But church must be different, eg no class system, no power plays.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

Absolutely true – churches planted in the community for the community and looking like the community, for example I have experienced a church in another country which was clearly from that culture. We're not very good at it.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ strongly agree

We gather a team and try to do the 5-fold ministry but it's difficult to discern gifts sometimes. It would be great to see churches recognising their need to have APEs. Why spend all our time just training Pastors? My gifts are joint Apostle (1) and Preacher (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

It's Ephesians 4, taking the Bible seriously.
Primary role also is to be an example and to mentor people.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

There is no other way that people outside will believe unless we live it out.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ strongly agree

If you feel you're being prevented from moving in the right direction, ask what's stopping you? Very often it's our own fear / mental processes.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?* Yes.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
What got me thinking again was developing APEPT.

SUMMARY

This R was a very keen missional leader, quite unafraid of change. Having come across Bosch and missional thinking in college, he also brought clear leadership to the role.

#14

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

The church is criticised, ridiculed, patronized – but people want church to be there in times of need, so it is appreciated and valued, respected at times. It's quite healthy not to be in a power position. What do people see as 'the church'?

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ agree

They have no experience, are uninformed, unaware. They have to be given some information before they take an interest – they engage once they've heard something about it, eg in schools etc.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ agree

In the identity of the church, change is a given. If we don't change we are not transforming ourselves and we're called to be changed into the likeness of Christ – from glory to glory. Change in the way we work will be part of the agenda.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ strongly agree

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ strongly agree

God's grace is at work in us to work his mission.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ strongly agree

R quoted Emil Brunner's church/mission fire/burning phrase.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ strongly agree

We start with God.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ agree

The church orders its ways to create authentic life – by your love for one another you will be known as my disciples: community. Do we need buildings? Actually we need social space, to make it easy to invite people to meet the Lord.

The difficulty with this statement is that it's not just one model – there are times when we invite people to come and see.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ agree

Simplicity of lifestyle – live simply so that others may simply live. In our culture we have a fear – of the future, what's the world coming to. We need to be a community of hope.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

But how many people live in the neighbourhood; the world is all social media these days. It is network, concentric circles life, not necessarily where people live. How do we 'do' neighbourhood in this culture?

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ strongly agree

We have differing gifts and skills. Also, some people can have the giftings but we must have authentic Christian character. We must show love, give help, service, time over the long haul, etc., not just teaching. I tend to see people less about gifts.

I'm a bit of a jack of all trades.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ agree

Presenting people mature in Christ – but this is not just the leader's role.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ agree

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?* Yes.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you? ---*

SUMMARY

R thought they were familiar with all the concepts but had not heard of 'missional church' and asked what they would find if they Googled it. Thought they were a missional leader but it was not clear that they were being intentional about any of the concepts.

#15

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ strongly agree

We must speak out from our position; we are back in exile, in the desert.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ agree

But we have a group of young people who have found their identity within our church.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ strongly agree

Trying to get away from inherited church and find a new way of doing it – we need to unwrap church to people. Eg do we have to meet on a Sunday – can't it be midweek? I'd like to close the church, open a restaurant and do hospitality mission – being church in a completely different way. Weekend church is a leftover from the industrial revolution work ethic – work Mon-Fri, relax Sat-Sun.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ strongly agree

When I came into the church, evangelism was it – now it's changed: evangelism and social justice have come together. Exploring the Bible as a narrative, God sets out his plan for the world in Genesis, eg Gen 12 in which Abraham is used by God as an instrument to bless the whole world, including creation.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ strongly agree

A lot of people are seeing it's the activity of God but it's a bit awkward because it's almost spiritualising the church. But as long as the activity flows outward. The church has previously controlled the agenda. It helps us to get into relationship with other faith groups.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ agree

Good, powerful expression – we are the mission. We're not an institution but a group of people.

✓ **this concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.**

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ strongly agree

I can understand why it is being postured – we are debating the future. We are holding on to the church building. People think of it as 'my church', even if they don't go; they still want it there for when they need it.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ strongly agree

I agree but the people of the church have an ownership attitude, not incarnational. There is a ministry in town for the homeless as a stopping off place – this is incarnational. I want my church to see all the people in the

town as members of the church's extended community. Currently the church people don't understand it's their ministry.

In a previous church, the local council estate ran a youth club but the church didn't get involved – it was a case of class division.

We need to get people in stages out of institutional thinking. There's such a pressure to maintain the building – it's a problem and a burden.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ agree

In mission we should be part of the community but sometimes we get caught up with the values of society. We must take a stand.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ agree

[NB R first responded to this question as if it were talking about ethnic culture, like if there were immigrants to come alongside.]

In another country where I first ministered, Methodism was the biggest church and decisions were made at the grass roots, not top down. That mattered to the indigenous people who became Stewards etc. It was an opportunity to improve one's status in life, eg becoming a local preacher.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

This doesn't seem to be strong in the UK. We need to look at the stewardship of everything. We are frightened to talk about money here, whereas elsewhere people are challenged to give money to help others.
My gifts: Pastor (1) and Teacher (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ agree

Agree in principle but what hinders us here is we have an elderly congregation tied up with looking after family. If we boil down to love God and love each other – visiting and encouraging the people to visit one another. This is the nature of my people – my primary role is pastoring and enabling people in this role.
When I trained, it was how to operate the church.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ agree

A lot of people try to live it but others wouldn't; they focus just on Sundays.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ strongly agree

When I first went into ministry, numbers were it, but then we learned about being incarnational, like Christ.

4.1 Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?

Yes. Missional is highlighting the responsibility of the church to go out.

4.2 Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?

Yes. Always trying to get the people to think of getting out into the community.

I came over to the UK as a missionary to this declining church but you get caught up in the mud of people/church set in their ways and you find yourself managing an institution.

4.3 Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?

Oh, yes! I'm going to keep this. Particularly 2.3 – love that! Such a positive statement.

R made a note of Emil Brunner's fire quote.

SUMMARY

R was obviously a pastor with a great missional heart. He is looking forward to retirement when he can focus on his passion for mission (something of an indictment of the present situation).

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

✓ strongly agree

My impression is that this is the right answer; but whether it ever had the influence we think it did or is it an urban myth. Is it the church institutionally or in terms of its people? When the Methodist Church had 1m members, the Conference made national TV; when it had ½ m members it made local TV; now I don't think it makes either. The establishment – they had a much greater interest; but the rest ... ?

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

✓ agree

I think it's a myth that young people are not interested in traditional things: pop culture and its many sub-cultures has given young people a particular sphere but I feel there are large segments of our society who think if it's old it must be rubbish but there are great swathes of young people who like classical art, music, and who could be interested in classical Christianity were it done well. The traditional Methodist service, done well, in fact can engage with people of all ages. We need continuity, quality and a community of care; our services and service need to be good. I don't think inherited church is finished; it needs sorting – the dross from the good.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

✓ agree

But in many contexts, it is 'improve' rather than 'change' its ways, eg a good service with traditional hymns and a really caring congregation. Blended worship [*R talking about Sunday mornings here*] 3-4 hymns, 2-3 worship songs, is it keeping everyone equally unhappy? We don't say the creed any more, nor sing the creed in our hymns. We need to keep some absolutes, eg divinity of Christ.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

✓ agree

It's a very complicated statement to agree or disagree: I do believe the mission of the church is wider than head-counting evangelism, but the call to take up the cross is paramount.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

✓ agree

My only reservation – is it God's activity through the church? I don't agree, though, with the maxim 'the only hands and feet are ours' – no, we cooperate with God.

2.3 The Nature of the Church

✓ agree

I suppose that's true. I think the church is Christ's body in the world and ought to be incarnational. Christ = crucifixion; the church wants resurrection. We should explore a community as the cross and resurrection. Essence of the church is mission – the disciples were sent. The gospel imperative in Mt 28 is not 'go'; it is as you go, make disciples.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ agree

My ministry is to raise the spiritual temperature to go out. Some drift away because it's too fervent for them. In John 6, Jesus starts with 5,000 plus women and children, and ends up with only a few. Sometimes being faithful means people will leave.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ agree

One of the interesting things about churches is a lot of people are looking for the church to be more like the world. Ought our church life be like the world or different?

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ strongly agree

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ agree

One of the great problems in Britain is that we think of the church as middle class. We are not all graduates, educated professionals – some are unemployed, single parents.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

I don't think there are Apostles today and unsure if there are Prophets today. Apostolic and prophetic ministry – yes, but apostles ended in the NT as they saw Jesus face to face – see Acts 2. I agree on the whole but have lots of reservations. The role of the Methodist Minister is described in the book 'The Evangelistic Pastorate' – we were all originally evangelists. My gifts: Evangelist & Teacher (1) and Pastor (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ agree

Because I remember this – I used to believe that being the minister was like being the football manager – not exactly on the pitch but coaching and correcting. Now I think we need to score a goal or two also.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ agree

But numbers are important. I would say very, very, very important ... but not all important. I could fill the church with bingo numbers, but discipleship is more important than numbers, but 5 disciples are more important than 4. Remember 3,000 were added to their number.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Probably not.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?*

Gosh, I would like to be, but I run between lots of planes and plates like a juggler. With a number of pastorates there are more and more precarious

plates and more and more time on maintenance. What's needed is a thoughtful reorganisation of churches in Circuits, plus education and expectation of members. Why do people go on doing things, like marches for witness, when such things have no impact whatsoever for the Kingdom?

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
All were interesting. I think it would be 2.4 – the church exists to serve the mission of God. This is not the perceived activity of the church people – for them it is not mission.

SUMMARY

R has strong opinions – interesting that he found the statements thought-provoking.

#17

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ strongly agree

In terms of theology and practice.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ strongly agree

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ strongly agree

Depends what you mean by gospel – our theology is out of date and needs to be challenged, eg women bishops, the gay debate. Church is not prepared to ask challenging questions about the gospel. Is it good news for today?

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ strongly agree

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ disagree and agree

We join in with God's lead – Christianity practised more outside the church than inside: we've got our heads in the sand.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ agree

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ agree

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ strongly agree

Sadly it doesn't. It sees itself as a club for its own members. There are big areas of discontent amongst ministers – start with a passion for mission and find yourself keeping rules, do what has always been done. Change is resisted by the institution and the members: they've got expectations. We are put into a mould and a norm.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ strongly agree

Sadly the church isn't a contrast community and makes its own rules to suit itself rather than discerning God's will: it's what is comfortable. Whereas the disciples left everything to follow.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

The church congregation judge some hard-to-reach families because they don't dress right and the children are noisy – the existing church is actively harmful to our ministry to these families and they need to be kept separate.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

I agree but the church doesn't do it. I'd love to get a team but we are dominated by structures and historical practices. We have to have Stewards and pastoral visitors and put people in roles they're not suited for - little discerning of people's gifts. Historically the church has been so minister-led,

the people have been disenfranchised from using their gifts. It has been power – patriarchal.
My gifts: Evangelist including caring (1) and joint Prophet, Pastor & Teacher (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

Too clergy/minister-led, which hampers work and stops people growing and going.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

But they don't. It's too much of a social club. People don't come to be built up to go out and live. They need to realise it's not just for existing members.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ strongly agree

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?* Yes.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
Very keen on contextualisation and incarnational and of the gospel as good news.

The Methodist Church is a letdown because it's supposed to be non-conformist! I think the answer is death and resurrection of the Methodist Church – meanwhile it's hospicecare.

SUMMARY

Very with-it missionally, and frustrated with the institutional system.

#18

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

✓ agree

Church is obviously not the centre as it used to be, but society wants a church there for specific things, even the non-religious. Weddings are increasing; baptisms decreasing.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

✓ strongly agree

Young people are searching but haven't found what they're searching for: some of our young people left for a happy-clappy church and then 18 months later they were back as it had no depth. I don't think inherited church is meeting that need.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

✓ neutral

In the next 2 generations there will be parallel lines [*R was thinking about Sunday worship*] – perhaps they will come together and form a new church. At the moment we still need the traditional inherited church with other, new things alongside.

Don't do things just to attract people. We must get away from the idea that church is Sunday worship. But the church people think alternative forms are a waste of time if new people then don't come to proper 'church', eg our messy church which includes 20-30 people. But the church people don't get it that it doesn't have to feed into church to be 'church.'

My idea of church is everything the people do right through the week, of which Sunday worship is an important part.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

✓ strongly agree

I particularly like the last bit because evangelism gets my back up. Church is about mission, not one narrow aspect. Everything the church is doing is mission.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

✓ strongly agree

It makes sense that everything the church does is in the power of God.

Prevenient grace – what God is doing before we get there.

✓ **this concept is relatively new or unexplored by me until now.**

2.3 The Nature of the Church

✓ strongly agree

Because mission is the church, it is the life of the church: evangelism is a function. Go and make disciples - the whole picture.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

✓ strongly agree

Church is about what it is doing on behalf of God and Kingdom.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ disagree

Because I don't think every church should necessarily do that. For some it may be that we are here and you come to us. It's about being a worshipping community rather than a missional one. It depends on what God says they should be. Here we have a lot of elderly, and they understand church as being attractional and ministering to them. The Methodist Church here is ministering to the elderly.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ neutral

There are 2 strands. I don't think the church members do this. But 'vigilantly seeks' – this is a difficult concept. What you can get is [non-church] people saying I wouldn't go to that church, they're too holy. We must be very careful how we do it, walk a narrow line not to get too insular.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ agree

But I certainly think we are.

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ neutral

I don't think it necessarily does need to be led by a team. There must be a leader, leading a team who may not be part of the actual church leadership team. The gifts of the church must be used but they aren't necessarily on the leadership team.

My gifts: Joint Pastor and Teacher (1).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ agree

It is to prepare and encourage the people. For me an apostle is a teacher: you come in as a disciple and leave as an apostle. At first you are learning, then you are giving.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ agree

I don't think the church has got anywhere near to that level; church members say it's the minister's job or someone else's job, not theirs. They believe their responsibility is to welcome people coming in; that's their function.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ agree

This might be the ideal but to get there we must teach the people. It's not about numbers but being faithful.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?*

Ha, ha, no. I see myself as encouraging mission and engaged in mission – I see myself more as a manager and worship leader.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
2.2, 2.3, 3.5 and 3.6.

SUMMARY

Another frustrated mission heart looking forward to being able to do what he wants in God's service, not what the institutional church expects him to do.

#19

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

✓ agree

'Liminality'. Increasingly society does struggle with Christian belief, but there are doors opening now that perhaps were stiff before, eg schools. 10-20 years ago schools were a closed door but now are open. They recognise that the church has something to offer.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

✓ strongly agree

I think there is a great perception of traditionalism going on: I probably prefer the term 'transmodernity' rather than postmodernity. There is a mistrust of institutions. There is greater tribal, networking amongst young people both inside and outside the church.

Looking at the emerging church, there is not much respect for inherited church. There is a risk that if we ignore the last 2,000 years of inherited church, we lose a lot of experience and wisdom.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

✓ strongly agree

Changing practices is about recognising that you can't just have one door on a Sunday morning for people to walk through. Some need to have a number of doors in order to arrive on Sunday morning.

One of the most fundamental structures for mission is described in Lawrence Singlehurst's *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping*.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

✓ agree

Evangelism and social justice are complementary. But I strongly identify with evangelism as mission; other activities are enablers for mission. Evangelism is a longer plank but we equally should be out there: we emphasise the doing but don't emphasise the theology. It is dependence and discernment vs desperation!

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

✓ agree

Yes, the missio Dei is God's initiative. There is an element in which ministers are taught to pray as if it's all God's work and work as if it's all ours. I don't overegg my participation in it but it is my responsibility to do those things. Sometimes we major too heavily on doing, whether it's God's initiative or not.

2.3 The Nature of the Church

✓ strongly agree

This reminds me of Martyn Atkins's 'Discipleship movement shaped for Mission.'

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ agree

The church isn't just there to serve the mission of God. It is the gathered community of the people of God. Whilst we are mission within the dispersed community, we still gather as the people of God together. There is a form and a shape in addition to being a missional organisation.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ disagree

I would want to do both. I think they are complementary – a more inclusive definition.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ agree

There are Christian issues at the moment, not necessarily within the Methodist Church as examples. Women bishops, the gay debate: are we allowed to be countercultural or are we only allowed to be what the world believes? We are called to be countercultural; ironically this may push us to the margins.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ strongly agree

With one caveat: we should also be using other gifts in leadership; this list is not exhaustive. I consciously try to gather such a team – it's the only form of sustainable church. I build a team who can do things I cannot. My gifts: Teacher (1), Evangelist & Pastor (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ agree

As far as it goes, I agree but again that concentrates on the individual and there's something to be said in addition: a church leader is responsible not just for a group of individuals but a group of individuals.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

My only reservation is that there is a chasm between this and so many churches' practice. This is what we should be doing – the difficulty is convincing the people it's what we should do. We are coming from Christendom when attendance was all.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ disagree

I'm disagreeing because if we are doing God's will, I would argue that we should see people responding to the gospel and we should anticipate a growth in numbers. I think we'd hope that if we are faithful and we are evangelising and people are responding, there should be growth. But it's not necessarily where the gospel is leading – it's about being obedient and faithful above all else.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?* Yes.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
The ones that encourage me to consider again are 3.4 and 3.5 – leading a church and the leader's main function – being more prepared to state what the role of a leader should be and what it is not.

SUMMARY

Reflective and engaged in missional thinking.

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

✓ strongly agree

In an area with lots of young families the united Anglican/Methodist membership is 30 elderly people and ne'er the twain shall meet in terms of every aspect of life. The church people think they can't do anything.

People are stuck – generally if I'm trying to lead a group or teaching about something, they can't take anything new. Their thinking is set in 30-40 years' worth of concrete; it's set and difficult to remove. Many people are set, especially in their 60s-70s.

We get TV propaganda pumped into our living rooms 24/7 and still people refuse to listen, and we [the church, teaching the gospel] only have one hour a week. I am hopeful but it's all the work of the Holy Spirit.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

✓ agree

Looking at inherited church, it is exactly that – inherited from a previous age. Trying to bring young people from this age into the church is like fitting a square into a circle. There are things about inherited church that are very productive that the young people would receive but they are few and far between in general. The good is crowded out by the way we do church – both Sunday mornings and our theology. Our faith must meet and be active in the routine of everyday life. It must be experiential, knowing God. No one can pass a Sunday a.m. 'religion' to the youth – you can only pass on an active, everyday faith.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

✓ strongly agree

One doesn't have to be prescriptive as to what has to change; we must be open to the Holy Spirit and God's leading in each place. God will not say it's all one way – some could be A way, some B, some Y. We must be open and obedient.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

✓ strongly agree

Holistic, yes. As a body of Christ we come in line with God's mission, the missio Dei. It will be different in some areas of the world than in others. Simply, for me, it is becoming more like Jesus. That's God's call to the church as a corporate entity and as individuals. It is the whole of our lives.

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

✓ strongly agree

This statement is tricky though – the caveat is that it could easily be misunderstood. It is totally God's initiative; however we are God's hands and feet. If we are totally God's, like the Covenant service promise, God's mission becomes our mission.

2.3 The Nature of the Church

✓ strongly agree

Absolutely: being more like Jesus. It is who we are in every area of our lives whether at football game, pub, church.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

✓ strongly agree

I believe that as the church serves the mission of God, those other things are a by-product of service: numbers, growth etc. Those who try to save their life will lose it; we get life in all its fullness in Him. Without Him we will lose; turn to me and all things will be added to you. The church often skips to the end product without first serving and focussing on Him.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding

✓ strongly agree

My thing is discipleship – that's the gap I see. In discipleship you are called, apprenticed, sent out, come back and continue apprenticeship and faith grows. It is holistic, not just 1 hr a day but wherever you are. Church has been too much about Sunday mornings, an aside. You don't walk with the light of Christ as an aside.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It

✓ agree

Although this is easily misunderstood. The church 50-70 years ago had a 'contrast community' attitude but it was a negative, conforming to church culture and excluding others. People have a susceptibility to think we are right and you must come to us and be like us. No, Christ came to us.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context

✓ strongly agree

He came into our context and we were unlike him and lost; he became like us so that we could become and experience what God is like. Christ within us – there are no no-go areas for God's Spirit.

3.4 Leading the Church

✓ strongly agree

Where did you get that question? It doesn't sound very Methodist! I do agree – it's the NT model, but not within British Methodism; I don't see any of that. There are many ex-teachers in ministry but what's missing is teaching! It is missing week by week in the church – getting deeper, into the roots, and challenging people, practical in-depth meat, nourishing, aiming for change. What we have is not transformational. I have to operate as a peripatetic preacher/evangelist but don't have a chance to do much in-depth teaching. Instead I'm 'firefighting' – crisis management. What I see mostly is pastoral and evangelist/preacher. It's opposite to what we need, which is discipleship. The system of the Methodist Church is fighting against progress. Wesley drew from many sources but the Methodist Church has stuck with Wesley; it has not continued to draw from many sources. I believe Wesley today wouldn't do what the Methodist Church is doing today. I believe Martyn Atkins would want to change but the layers of bureaucracy are too thick – it very

rarely gets to the grass roots in the same form and not much happens. It will take strong measures to make it happen. The ground rules must be changed. My gifts: Teacher (1), Evangelist, Prophet & Pastor (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

I believe the witness comes through an intimacy with the Lord. We mustn't try to be a witness without the intimacy. Rivers of living water will affect every area of life. Our focus must equally be on intimacy and witness.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ strongly agree

Absolutely: Mt 8:33, seek first the Kingdom of God. Success is whatever Christ has called you to do.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?* Definitely.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
Striking the balance between witness and intimacy, 3.6. We don't wait on God and not move but we believe and go out in faith. We must know and trust God. Trust and intimacy is key.

SUMMARY

Frustrated with the set-in-stone wrong understanding of what faith/church is amongst elderly, rural congregation. Very keen in discipleship/intimacy with Christ from which mission flows.

#21

1.1 Church in Relation to Society

✓ strongly agree

Self evident in a post-Christian society. The strong influence the Christian faith used to have in society is reflected in legislation. Although it is interesting that there are people from a secular background who acknowledge the debt society owes to the church.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church

✓ agree

I am a little hesitant for a number of reasons: it depends on how the church manifests itself. Many young people don't touch base with the heritage of the church. The younger generation don't like the church but it is dangerous to grasp at other spiritualities without the church.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World

✓ neutral

It's interesting that one of the growth points in the church of England are the cathedrals. So there is a kind of love/hate relationship with the church. People connect deeply with a wonderful choir singing Evensong.

I'm not into the 'one new thing' in the church. Humans long for stability in a changing world. I need to know if I'm going to church on a Sunday morning what I'm getting. There are times when you need a bulwark.

[This referred to a story about a person who had a very stressful week and just wanted to go to church and receive. How does this fit with missional ways?]

2.1 The Meaning of Mission

✓ strongly agree

2.2 The Impulse of Mission

✓ agree

Although I would want to say that God is constantly looking for people to be enlisted in this movement. There is a danger of fatalistic Calvinism in that – Wm Carey wanted to go on the mission field but he was told 'When God has in mind to save the heathen he will do it without your help or mine.'

2.3 The Nature of the Church

✓ strongly agree

Absolutely right. R quoted Emil Brunner's 'fire/burning'.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church

✓ agree

But at the same time I don't want to undervalue the church. I have to say I do have difficulty with the concept of people being Christians and not belonging. So in a sense it is the goal – I want people to become part of the church. So mission does involve incorporation into the body of Christ. We have changed from believe, belong, behave – which comes first? Now we include people in the life of the church and they discover faith, so it's more belong, believe, behave.

[R missed the point here.]

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ agree

It is a bit of both – sent out and attracting. One has to do with the culture of the church (its self understanding) but in terms of physical things, buildings/institutions that work well are really important. We wouldn't want to meet in a dirty old place. There is a fine line, a balance.

I have tried to create a missional culture here so that people think in terms of how would this impact those outside vs does it make me happy. However, if I say *how have the people come?*, specific evangelistic efforts have had a very small impact. In a city situation, with this building and reputation, people just come. But why? God brings them. Churches who are open and welcoming.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It

✓ strongly agree

I am aware that we can bundle things in a kind of cultural package but for other people the things we bundle together might not necessarily be together, eg I might have a clear understanding of what a Christian culture should be like vs the culture of the society in which it is set – different values, including simplicity of lifestyle, respect for the planet, love of justice, avoiding Primark (exploiting children). I personally may include in that package aspects of sexuality along with those justice issues, but for many people, especially younger ones, they don't sit together even though they are strong Christians. So what does this concept mean in practice? I have to admit there are some keen Christians who argue against my position on the gay debate, on the grounds of social justice.

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ agree

But that doesn't negate the sense of the gathered community being attractive. In practice what matters is that folk feel people care about them. The church's ministry down the years has been focussed in demonstrating the care of Christ through the care of people. There are many ways we can serve – some can be going out and some coming into the building.

[Again, R didn't appear to really get the statement in the way it was meant.]

3.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

I agree but I recognise that in the business of denominational Christianity and particularly Methodism, we are a long way from that.

I have tried to build a team meeting regularly to pray, and play to our strengths so that we're gifted for our responsibilities and ministries. In contrast to previous appointments where I have been the one and had to be all or be voted out. The system is wrong. The Circuit system is great when you have a revival; it was created to facilitate revival. It can't cope with decline.

When Wesley preached and attracted people, he bound them together parallel with the church. The preachers were the itinerant evangelists; their route was the circuit. Preachers strengthen the congregation but are local; and the pastoral care divided between people in the class. It was a system

for pastoring and teaching people through the classes, then there were local preachers in the vicinity and itinerant preachers. At the top was the apostle, John Wesley.

But when revival passes and we enter a state of decline, the idea of a local church having its own minister is alien, so our system is a connexional system, not a congregational system. The connexional system depends on the life and vitality of the church being assisted by lay people but if they're not on fire it falls apart.

People want to change the system with legislation, research – but you do it by loving them. You must earn the right to be heard. They need to know you care.

The move is for larger Circuits to benefit admin, not mission. It is put through on a missional ticket but it's actually just functional.

My gifts: Teacher (1), Evangelist, Prophet & Pastor (2).

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

It's just how? When the rubber hits the road, how do we actually do that? What does discipleship mean? The way we define discipleship determines how, eg for me it is encouraging and fostering a personal relationship with Christ. For someone else this might not be the priority – it might be social justice. Complementarity – as in Streams of Living Water.

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

Although we all need help around what it means to live obediently. The Methodist Church is quite good in the guidance it offers on some of the big questions. I admire the Catholic church for having the courage of their convictions.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ disagree

All my ministry I have fought against decline. Numbers matter because people matter; otherwise it's failure. It is about bums on seats otherwise we're going down the pan. You have to measure success by numbers. We do an injustice to say it's either numbers or faithfulness. I'm not interested in numbers without faithfulness but I want both.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?*
Yes.

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?* Yes.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
3.7 – faithfulness, success and numerical growth. A church growth maxim transformed my ministry – a church will not grow numerically unless it grows spiritually. We are not just getting people to come.

SUMMARY

R was nostalgic for the days of excess when people flocked on Sundays to hear expository preaching. As most of the other respondents, he thinks of himself as a missional leader when what he means is that he cares about winning souls for Christ.

#22

1.1 Church in Relation to Society ✓ agree

Because of people's attitude to church in society – the humanists etc. who are antagonistic.

1.2 Interest in Inherited Church ✓ neutral

I don't think young people are always interested in spirituality.

1.3 Responding to the Unpredictable Change of Today's World ✓ strongly agree

The main ways we need to change are our terminology and perception of what we ought to be in the world; also our conformity – church people think we have to get people to church on Sunday for it to count. They want to tell people (families) what to do, to do it our way or no way.

2.1 The Meaning of Mission ✓ agree

[R had only vaguely heard of Missio Dei but agreed with the statement.]

2.2 The Impulse of Mission ✓ agree

I agree but don't know why! God supplies the opportunities and we have to be perceptive enough to do something about it.

2.3 The Nature of the Church ✓ strongly agree

Terminology can be a problem – people have to understand 'mission'.

2.4 The Role and Focus of the Church ✓ strongly agree

I'm not into bums on seats. What I want my congregation to do is to discover God and find their own place – they can come to church or not *[but they're in the Kingdom – this was not stated but clearly intended.]*

I remember and encourage this way of thinking: you may be a link at the beginning of the chain or at the end but don't be the missing link.

3.1 The Church's Self-Understanding ✓ agree

I agree but the church doesn't understand itself that way.

3.2 Being the Church In the World but Not Of It ✓ agree

3.3 Sharing the Gospel with People in their Context ✓ strongly agree

I do go native! I'd far rather be out and about developing relationships with people Monday to Saturday than in church on Sunday. The congregation do this naturally without realising it but as soon as you mention mission or evangelism they back off in fear.

.4 Leading the Church ✓ agree

It's a new concept to me to consider intentionally having these particular giftings around me as a team but I do try to get a team around me, but not these gifts in particular. Maybe I'm not astute enough to recognise these gifts in people but I encourage people to use the gifts they have. It has taken me years to change people's attitudes to use their gifts. They can be very slow to change.
My gifts: Equally Pastor/Teacher.

3.5 The Leader's Main Function ✓ strongly agree

3.6 The Members' Function ✓ strongly agree

It's not my job; it's theirs. Preach Christ by deeds and use words if you have to.

3.7 The Meaning of Success ✓ strongly agree

The spiritual context of the church is where people are in their faith - enriching people's spiritual experience and what they are doing as part of God's plan, encouraging their gifts etc.

4.1 *Prior to this research study, did you understand the concept of 'missional church' in the way it has been described in these statements?* No!

4.2 *Would you describe yourself as a missional leader?* Yes.

4.3 *Did any of the missional statements hold particular interest for you?*
All actually.

SUMMARY

R encapsulated the majority of respondents: unfamiliar with the missional movement but very familiar and focussed on mission as an ideal, glad to be reminded of the principles, and interested in the forthcoming Martin Robinson seminar. He found the statements unintelligible at first but was clearly on board with all the concepts.

R has an organic, outward approach to his ministry, showing leadership and vision.

APPENDIX 4

THE MINISTERS AND THEIR CHURCHES

The twenty-two who took part, three women and nineteen men, represented all but two of the serving ministers with pastoral charge of the churches in six south west Devon circuits. Five were Circuit Superintendents and one a probationer in his first post. Their profiles are as follows:

Ministers' age and number of years in circuit ministry

Current age

In their 40s = 4 (18%) 50s = 12 (55%) 60s = 6 (27%)

Age when entering circuit ministry

Under 30 = 7 (32%) 30s = 8 (36%) 40s = 4 (18%) 50s = 3 (14%)

Number of years in ministry

0-5 = 4 (18%) 6-10 = 4 (18%) 11-20 = 6 (27%) 21-30 = 5 (23%)

Over 30 years = 3 (14%)

Summary: The majority were in their 50s, having entered ministry when they were under 40. Their number of years' service ranged fairly evenly from six months to 39 years.

Number and membership of churches

Five ministers (23%) had pastoral charge of one church, with memberships of 40, 100, 140, 350 and 352.

Five (23%) had 2 churches, with memberships up to 170. Two of these churches had 10-20 members.

Six (27%) had 3 churches, with memberships up to 240. These generally fell into a pattern of one larger congregation (75-240) and two significantly smaller congregations of 10-40.

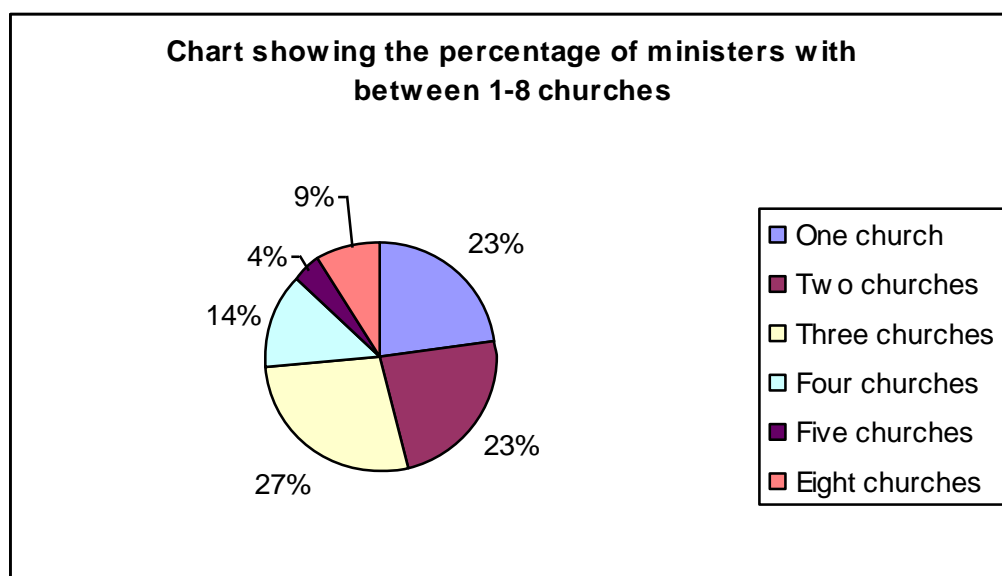
Three (14%) had 4 churches, the largest congregation being 80 and the smallest with just four members.

One (4%) had 5 churches, three of which had 40-80 members and two 3-10 members.

Two (9%) had 8 churches. The membership within one group of eight saw a maximum congregation of 50 with three congregations of 4-8 members.

The average membership of this group was 17.

The second group of 8's 'mother' church had 200 members, with the rest between 6 and 50.



Summary: The majority (73%) had pastoral charge of between 1-3 churches.

Eleven ministers (50%) had churches with 100+ members, and 13 (60%) had one or more churches with 30 or fewer.

Of those with four or more churches, one third of those churches had a membership of between 3-10.

The average number of members for which each minister had pastoral charge was 166.