

**Reconciliation
Redemption
Renewal**

Study leave Report
May to August 2003
Exploring

What about the other 90%
Reflections on interfacing with secular people

Leaders School of Ministry
Ministry Reflection

Mediation Skills Institute
A model for healing and reconciliation in the church

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Introduction.

When confronted with the possibility of taking an extended time out from the parish and ministry one is overwhelmed with the many possibilities that the world has to offer. Out of these many possibilities four clear themes emerged. All came out of our passion and heart for God's Kingdom and the call he has placed on our life.

The best summary of what and why we took the journey we did is found in our application to the Leaders School of Ministry at TACF. They asked: What are some of your reasons for wanting to attend this school? (Please include spiritual and ministry goals.)

My answer:

I really want to grow in my love for God and my ability to serve him. In 1997 we deeply valued the week we stay in Toronto and attended a number of events at TACF and felt that we would love to come back and sit with you and learn more of the grace of God as he has made it known to you.

After 28 years of ministry and 12 years in my current position I feel the need to reflect again on God's call on my life. I also believe that we are at a cross roads in ministry and therefore look forward to some time of reflection and renewal. This is my primary reason for attending the school.

My goal for the 3 month study leave in UK, Toronto and Chicago is:

1: to look at ways in which some churches are effectively reaching the non-churched community. For this we will be looking at some models in the United Kingdom

2. Spend some time in ministry reflection and renewal – at TACF ministry school

3. to undertake mediation training at the Mediation Skills Institute for Church leaders in Glen Ellyn Chicago USA.

My heart is to be in the best place possible for God to use me in ministry. For this to happen I need to know the constant renewing of the Spirit and to keep my thinking and ministry skills sharp. I believe God has given me a deep longing to reach the unchurched community, those who the church has thus far failed to reach. In my own country the Gospel is not touching something like 90% in any way and the church has little credible presence in the secular community. This is of great concern to me.

This Report

What follows is a summary of this journey and some tentative conclusions. Each section focuses on the three points above. Some have been written by me and some by Kaye or both of us. We have not attempted to put everything down as it happened nor have we included everything that we learned or challenged by. We simply wanted to put the information in a form that we can use in developing the ministry call on our lives. The primary author(s) is named on the top right hand of the page.

We pray that it will be of assistance to others in their own journey into the call of God and to fulfil the ministry he has given them.

For the meantime a detailed travel log may be found on our Webb site <http://richard.churchonthehill.org.nz> along with pictures.

An outline of our tour

I do not intend to give all the detail of our trip, as it was a mix of holiday and study leave. In this report we will highlight those parts of the trip that relate directly to our study, however here is our full itinerary for the 12 weeks.

17 May Leave NZ for LA and onto **Orlando, Florida** to spend a week with extended family Heather and Robb Elmatti

25 May fly to UK

David and Margaret Goodgame London

30-31 Kaye attends a Ladies Conference in Horsham

3-5 June Broadstairs – Harvest New Anglican Church - An emerging Church.

Reconciliation Redemption & Renewal

5 June Stuart Allen (Kaye's Brother) Subiton, Surrey
6 June Rosalind & Don Lindskog (Richard's cousins) Buckinghamshire
7 -9 June Stuart Allen

9 Swindon
10-13 Wrexham Wales
13-15 Market Drayton Clive and Jacki Dyer (Richard's cousins)

15-19 Sheffield. Visit
George Lings at the Sheffield Centre Church Army
St Thomas' Sheffield
The Net – Huddersfield - an emerging church - Anglican
Wakefield Baptist Church

19-21 Lake District

21-24 Edinburgh
St Cuthbert's – Oasis and the Raven Community

24-28 The Netherlands Eindhoven
Francis & Barbara Noordanus,

28 – Toronto Canada
1-25 July Leaders School of Ministry
28 July – 1 August "Releasers of Life" Conference TACF

4-9 August Chicago and Mediation Training
Lombard Mennonite Peace Centre

11 fly home to New Zealand

12 Back in Nelson

Thanks

I want to thank the many people who have assisted us in this journey. The people of Holy Trinity, they are a faithful people who I love deeply and value their trust. We have journeyed together for some time and I have learnt a lot along the way. Thank you for being yourselves and for the way you faithfully fulfil the great range of ministries and tasks that helps the church to run.

I especially want to thank Cheryl Brumwell our parish administrator whose service and skill has meant that I have been able to leave the parish in good hands. To the wardens John McNaughton and David Rae – who had some challenges to deal with and saw them through. To my colleagues in ministry Archdeacon Owen Kimberley, Archdeacon Malcolm Welch, Canon Jim Dyer and Philip Greenwood, I am indebted to your service and love.

To Bishop Derek Eaton and the diocesan team for their support and encouragement and to St Johns College Trust board whose grant has been greatly appreciated and made the difference in being able to do the things we did.

To all those who hosted us and ministered to us on our travels – we have been blessed beyond measure and have been made rich by knowing and meeting you, we look forward to having you in our home.

A big thanks to Kaye who is my life best friend, companion and wife for your love, there is no one else I would want as a travelling mate and navigator, we have done much together and it has been made all the more wonderful for having you with me.

Finally and above all thanks to God for his faithfulness and love.

Richard Dyer
August 2003

What about the other 90%

My story: Assumptions and Reflections.

Evangelism has been the driving force of my life and interest and I have always been deeply aware of those who are heading for a Christ-less eternity. With this in mind I offered myself to The Church Army in New Zealand – A society that promoted and trained people to do the work of Evangelism. Two years in Australia in 1973-74 were to prove foundational in my interest and search to reach people for the cause of Christ. I specialised in social welfare work and did practical training in both parish ministry and the Sydney City Mission. Upon returning to New Zealand I worked for the Christchurch City Mission among street kids. After that I served on the staff of an Auckland suburban parish of Avondale and became involved in industrial chaplaincy. This was to serve as a springboard to be invited to establish such a ministry on the waterfront in Lyttleton, however this did not eventuate so I returned to the Christchurch City Mission.

In 1983 I entered further training at St John's College Auckland. While there I prepared a major piece of work on the development of the work ethic. In 1984 I joined the Staff of All Saints in Nelson, from 1987 was vicar of Reefton and the Grey Valley and 12 years ago joined the staff of Holy Trinity Richmond with the expressed task of readdressing the age imbalance and to build a younger congregation. When I became Vicar in 1992 I continued this mandate.

Two things continued to motivate me. **Grow the church and Reach the community.** I saw that both could be achieved in the principles of church growth. While I clearly valued and encouraged the application of church growth principles, I did become disillusioned with the result. We had a better church with some healthy disciples, but it didn't work like the text books said it would and my underlying passion began to gnaw away. Being a vicar – while necessary, was not meeting the demanding call that God had placed on my life 30 years before.

Clearly there needed to be another way of doing church – or evangelism that would speak to the many who were either not interested in coming to church or had left it because they didn't like what was going on.

In September 2001 I wrote the following to my bishop

I have long struggled with the model of parish ministry that ministers to the saints but has little impact on those heading for a Christless eternity. How do we evangelise New Zealand? This is a real question and one that we have not answered. It has become an increasing challenge to me, especially as a result of my involvement with YWAM over the last 2 years.

Last November while lecturing at the YWAM base in Auckland I had opportunity to sit with Bill Henwood – The YWAM DTS director and Peter Lloyd (CA National Director) and we wrestled with this question. Doing little more than to put it on the table – no answers. Ever since it has acted like a burr under the saddle

A more recent opportunity to speak to the local BCNZ on evangelism and attend the CA conference at Taupo and be part of the team that lead a men's camp in Mid Canterbury where I was a speaker, has kept the issue alive. I am convinced and resolved that we must urgently find a path into this issue. I am also convinced that it lies outside of the box of evangelistic tools, methods and church that have so far been employed. As I have said more than once from the pulpit, what we have been doing is plainly not working. Not because it is wrong, and I do not believe that what we do on a Sunday is wrong. But it is not enough.

I have been further challenged by our current Alpha group – the smallest I have ever had four people including myself. Only one of them goes to church and two of them have an active faith and one is searching – but they are asking questions that will not sit comfortably with the institutional church. Monthly I spend a couple of hours with an atheist, as a friend and as someone who keeps me real and my heart pumping for the lost.

To find the answer to this urgent question, 'How do we evangelise NZ', has to be found. It has to be found for the vast numbers of people destined to hell. It has to be found for the cause of the kingdom of God. And it has to be credible.

... As do others who have a similar passion. I see it in the diocesan vision but fail to see the pathway into it, and nor will we until we can see beyond ourselves, our structure, our worship and all that has been important

and significant to church life and growth of the past 20 or more years. As good as all these things are they are not enough.

It is for all the above that I am considering what, where and when I should do further study. ... I have been searching out 'out of the box' ministries – who else is really wrestling with this question and have found some answers.

... I fear that the church has neither the resources, nor the money nor the willingness to give the time to discover the breakthrough that is needed. I don't know. What I do know is, that these days it certainly takes a lot longer to move someone from 'no faith' to 'accepting Jesus as their Lord and saviour'.

... I just want to start the discussion. I need to find others who are prepared to think outside the conventional box. Not to find gimmicks but God's answer to an urgent question.

One thing became very clear to me at the outset. For 730,000 New Zealanders the way church was done was OK. The problem is not that the church isn't working and for many working well – the problem is it is not enough. Everything that I have read and concluded has confirmed this. If there is any criticism of the church it is that it has not taken into account the need to release people and funds to do church differently. Therefore what follows is not a critique of the church and what it needs to do but rather a journey and pursuit of how some of us can do some things differently. It is also the longing – desire – dream that the church will have the courage and the will to release some of its resources to really penetrate the society at large in ways it has not done so before.

A new way of thinking

1. We are not out to bring people to church but to enter their spiritual journey and travel with them.

I fear that much of our evangelistic attempts have been more about getting people into our church rather than introducing them to the Lord of life.

"Is that so wrong?" we may ask, "Isn't it true that once they are part of the church then they will become part of the kingdom of God?" That, I think, is a mistake and has allowed for some very weak Christian faith communities. It was with interest that I found the following:

The Alban Institute (A well respected Church consultancy group who have worked here in NZ) published results of a mainline church similar to ours. The title is "Why Some Churches Don't Grow." Here is what the study says:

The Lutheran Church, like most mainline denominations, works under a broad unwritten assumption that the conversion to personal faith in Jesus Christ has already occurred in people's lives elsewhere and that church growth merely involves assimilating these "already converted" into the ongoing life of the congregation. Lutheran clergy are trained as nurturers of the faith, rather than as catalysts in any process of spiritual transformation in the lives of individuals. As a denomination, the Lutheran Church is unprepared and ill-equipped to reach out to non-Christians and engage them in a transformational process that leads to an active faith in Jesus Christ.

And finally, the study says this:

The twelve congregations in our study were much more intent on maintaining their corporate life than they were on offering transformative experiences for either visitors or long-term members.

What the Alban Institute study indicates is that most churches are far more concerned about counting the fish already on the shore than in casting the net over uncaught fish still in the sea.

This has got to challenge us.

When asked recently how we evangelise the non churched I was interested to hear the person go on to talk about church and realised that for them, getting them into church was the goal. This is a mistake. For too long we have worked for the self interest of the church rather than for the Kingdom.

This requires us to rethink what our mission is and what its end result should be.

I was astonished recently when I found that I had made such a shift. To sit with the unchurched without the agenda of getting them to "my" church or any church was both liberating and empowering. My concern was for them. I found I attended to their journey and faith struggle with a new keenness and honesty. On the other hand it set up an enormous conflict. How can I maintain loyalty to the church I am a member of and lead, while willingly minister to people who were neither its members – nor as far as I was concerned – likely to become members.

2. Not about relevance

Relevance is about changing things so that the non-church will want to come to us. They don't and won't. I think we have worked very hard – and necessarily - to make the church relevant. The down side to this has been that we have not seen the growth prophesied but I do believe that we have kept people better and made them feel at home. But being relevant to the church is very different to being relevant to the world.

3. It is about connection

It is about us moving away from our monuments and systems and being vulnerable – being prepared to journey with people and not knowing or worrying how long it will take or what it will look like when we get there. *It is about being friends with no strings attached* and friends for life; even if they don't become Christians or never attend church the way we think they should. This approach asks more questions than gives answers, but as I hear it the questions are more about the survival of the church than life and community transformation.

One of the biggest and most persistent questions is:

“What does this mean for our understanding of church?”

In an attempt to answer this question I was faced with the work of Kevin Ward and Allan Jamieson. Both these men have written extensively out of the New Zealand context. They challenged me, frustrated me and then I became frustrated by the church I knew and the church that I needed to know. The following lengthy extract from a paper written by Kevin Ward: “Christendom, clericalism, church and context”. Finding categories of connexion in a culture without a Christian memory. Implications for New Zealand research”, I found particularly helpful (The whole paper is well worth reading and considering).

Kevin writes:

I think there are three key areas of challenge with which the church in countries like New Zealand and Australia, need to grapple: the shadow of Christendom; the stranglehold of clericalism; and the idolatry of church. Let's look at each of these in turn.

1. The Shadow of Christendom.

The forms of church life that exist today have been shaped and formed by existing for eighteen hundred years in what has been known as Christendom, a period where western culture and society was shaped by a Christian understanding, with the church a significant player in determining the values and culture of that society. While that state began to break down in the nineteenth century, it still continued to at least be given lip service until the second half of this century. What has emerged in the west since the end of the war, and particularly since the "cultural revolution" of the sixties,^[42] is a society whose values and culture are no longer shaped by a Christian understanding. The church meanwhile has continued to maintain forms, values, language and rituals that come out of that framework. These are intensely meaningful and helpful to those brought up within that church (or Christendom) culture, and it is their concerns that largely shape what churches do. However they are meaningless (when they can actually be understood) and irrelevant to the vast majority of those brought up in post sixties western culture. Hence the diminishing involvement in churches, as we have seen, amongst Baby Boomers and even more so among Gen Xers. Most of the attempts to renew, or build new kinds of churches, are still largely determined by the inherited forms and patterns of the past. A case in point that illustrates this is the huge emphasis still placed on coming to worship on Sunday as the primary point of commitment for Christians. Sunday as a special day for worship was a product of Christendom. In the post Christendom culture in which we live it is just another day of the week for increasing numbers of, particularly young, New Zealanders, and for many attending a church service is not possible with work, family or sporting commitments. Yet for so many churches it is still the only real option offered.

Or take what happens in services. Shaped by our Christendom heritage the main fare is worship in the form of corporate singing and listening to a 30 or 40 minute monologue, with no opportunity to interact. Where else in our society do we attempt to create a sense of belonging and community in this way? Where else do these forms of communication happen? I think the experience of Alpha illustrates this. Both in Britain and in New Zealand this seems to have had some success in getting people to think and talk about Christianity, and often to come to some kind of faith commitment (although I suspect the vast majority of those are not too distantly removed from the church^[43]); What I found in talking with people in Britain though was a growing concern that very few of the vast numbers going through Alpha seemed to be ending up in a local church. On asking that question of those involved in running courses in New Zealand I have invariably found the same response. My hunch is that people are coming into a context where they can share a meal together, meet and discuss in an open non-judgemental way with a group of equals their life and spiritual concerns, where their story is respected and they find people who care about them as persons. In other words it provides a way of belonging with which they can connect. Then they are told, sorry this is just the introduction, the real thing happens on Sunday at 10am or 7pm. After a few weeks of attendance they drift off never to be sighted again, thinking "this is not what I understood Christianity was all about and is just irrelevant to my life and needs".

We need to see new forms of church developed that are not shaped by the values and forms of Christendom but by a genuinely mission encounter between the gospel and culture of 21st century New Zealand. My belief is that these cannot be developed by those of us who have lived in the church for thirty or twenty or maybe even ten years (and so are already shaped by the inherited culture) but must be developed by those who have been brought up in the context of that culture and who have come to faith out of it. In other words we need to change from a patronising "come" mentality - this is what we have developed to meet your needs - to a "go" mentality, where we seek to sow the seed of the gospel in the lives of communities of people outside of established churches and see what new forms and shapes that new life creates. This of course raises all kinds of issues of authority and control and so brings us to the second point.

2. The stranglehold of clericalism.

Fundamental to Christendom is the distinction between clergy and the laity. "A professionalised cast of Christians, with its own hierarchical gradations, is separated from other Christians by various forms of ordination and induction."^[44] While the markers of this separation may have changed, from 'priest' to 'senior pastor,' from 'Roman tunic' to 'blue suit and white shoes' and from 'confessional' to 'corner office,' it is still kept firmly in place. Everyone knows who calls the shots and who gets the money. As we have seen one of the core value changes of the sixties, was a deep-seated anti-institutionalism. Roof, writing about this in a religious context, notes in his long-term research that "Boomers in great numbers questioned religious authority when they were growing up and have remained somewhat distrustful of institutions even as they had aged."^[45] While many contemporary churches endeavour to disguise any signs of hierarchy and talk a language of tolerance and "permission giving," to outsiders they appear dominated by hierarchies and deeply concerned over issues of control. In most churches whether something is allowed to happen or not, whether it is some new venture by young people, or a new ministry that someone wants to begin, permission has to be sought from the appropriate authority before it can begin - usually in the end the "man" at the top. In a culture which encourages you to do your own thing and follow your own dream people bristle at this kind of control over what often seem to be fairly minor things. "Who can tell me who can meet in my home or what we do there?" "Why shouldn't a group of us be able to meet together to worship the way we want to when we want to?" Often people suspect the real issue is that the leaders are afraid of losing control of what people think or do. One of the values that has become central in our culture is that people resent being told what to do by others and want to have a say in decision making. Most innovative and growing companies achieve this by devolving a lot of decision making down to small groups and teams. In most churches, however, there is still a small and central decision making body dominated by the minister, staff, vestry or elders. Feeling they have no say in what is happening increasing numbers of thinking church goers are drifting off, while, given the postmodern suspicion of control, few are attracted in to an organisation that smacks of this kind of culture of control.

Another area of great suspicion is in regard to money. It is a regular and seemingly increasing preoccupation of most churches, inevitable given the declining levels of giving among Christians and the increasingly expensive costs of running a church and supporting a ministry. Partly this is also a consequence of the current emphasis on the importance of seeking to grow large churches with modern facilities and technology, and increasingly dependent on the contribution of full and part time paid staff. If church leaders appear to be preoccupied with questions of status, control and money, they will inevitably find a growing reaction among many people. A suspicion that the church is out to get your money ranks high on people's

negative perceptions of church. In a culture where church was central to the social order, and priest or minister performed many important social and cultural functions for society as a whole, a privileged professional class could be warmly regarded but in today's climate they can so often be seen as seeking to maintain or grow the institution for their own benefit. As we look for new forms of church life, so we need to look for new forms of ministry that are non hierarchical, inclusive and open, which will loosen controls in church life and free up resources to be used in helping people rather than supporting and meeting the needs of the institution. Indeed it is sobering to note, on the one hand, the continuing decline of institutional forms of religion, and on the other hand the rapid spread and growth of the relatively uncontrolled, eclectic, loosely networked forms of spirituality in the alternative religious movements, that can be loosely defined as "New Age".

3. The idolatry of church.

I recently talked with someone who had just begun as the pastor of a church. He had spent his first period of time meeting with people in the church and asking them how they viewed the church at the moment. What he heard repeatedly went something like this: "I am just absolutely flat out and stressed out at the moment. My job is taking about 50 hours a week, my wife is working a fairly pressured job and the demands of the children both in their education and leisure activities just seems to increase all the time. And all I ever hear from the church is they want more. We should be supporting their programs more. They want to start off a new ministry and need people to run it. We need to be giving more." That perspective is not unique to that church. It is a refrain I hear repeatedly from people who are married, with significant work and family commitments. I believe that one of the problems we face today is that the local church has become an idol. This is a consequence of the church growth and church management approaches which have interpreted the gospel in terms of what happens to the church. It becomes the focus and centre of attention. A church leader in Canada^[46] told me "We keep asking the wrong question. We keep asking what is the right form for the church. We should be asking what does it mean to be an authentic follower of Jesus today - and the church should take its form out of that." It seems that so often today our preoccupation is with the church as an institution instead of living out the gospel. We become focused on keeping the institution going, on making it bigger and better, on what is happening at church, inside the institution. It becomes idolatrous, and in the end any idol takes from life rather than gives life. Research on church leavers indicates that has been the experience of many,^[47] and those looking on from the outside say I don't want to have any part of that.

The gospel is not primarily about building churches, it is about living in the world with a spirituality shaped by gospel values. The local church exists in two modes: gathered and scattered. It is gathered when we meet together to worship corporately, to encourage and disciple each other so that when we are scattered in the world we can authentically live as Christians and so bear witness to the gospel. Jesus is primary, the church is secondary. The problem is we have made the church in its gathered form all pervasive and forgotten that it loses its rationale if it is not primarily resourcing its members for their life when it is scattered. When this happens people say, as they are in increasing numbers, it is simply irrelevant to my life. What is desperately needed is a whole change of perspective about "church" as an institution (in other words when it is gathered) that actually puts it in its right perspective. Rather than the church in this sense demanding that people serve it, it should be seeking to serve people by resourcing them so that they can live as authentic followers of Jesus in the world, at work, at home, in education or in leisure and so point others to him. Dietrich Bonhoeffer described Jesus as "the man for others," the one who was willing to give away his own life that others may live. The church that goes by his name is called to follow his pattern and give away its own life that others may live.

For the church to be the church in New Zealand and Australia in the twenty first century I believe these are three of the major issues with which we need to wrestle. What will the church be like when it manages to break free of the shadow it has inherited from its form in Christendom, when it is no longer dominated by the control of the clergy and when rather than demanding that its members serve it, it in fact seeks to serve them so can live their lives in the world as Christ intended. Peter Brierley, the key researcher on the church in Britain, and a deeply committed church person, said to me in an interview that "I believe we are entering a time of churchless Christianity." What he meant was not that Christianity will no longer exist in communal forms, it inevitably must if it is to survive let alone thrive, but that the forms of Christian community that it will take, the way belonging is expressed, will bear little resemblance to "church" as we have known it. I don't know what exactly it will look like, but I do believe it will be vastly different from the form of even the most innovative of those churches regarded as contemporary. Roof who we saw earlier claims that the absence of Boomers and Gen Xers from churches is less a protest of religion in the deepest sense than a response to institutional styles that are unfamiliar or at odds with their life experience, suggests that three key parameters will be that it "privileges open discussion, shared experiences and attention to spiritual development."^[48] Those qualities will be a good place to begin because the way ahead will not be pointed to by some great

guru pointing the way ahead from inside the institution, but rather a collective sharing of insights of all who claim to belong.

One final helpful sociological insight comes from looking at the nature of "sets." Sets refer to the way we group categories of people or things together. In examining this mathematicians speak about a variety of different types of sets, and one helpful distinction is that between 'bounded' or 'closed' sets on the one hand and 'fuzzy' or 'open' sets on the other.^[42] A closed set has a clear boundary, and things either belong inside the set or are outside it. Open sets on the other hand have no sharp boundary and categories flow into one another. In western society after the Reformation the church has often functioned as a closed set. It was clear who was in and who was out, there were a variety of boundary markers, and for someone to come into the set they had to come through these, often defined in terms of belief and the various rites associated with it. The usual institutional factors of hierarchy, control and sanction came into play. This model is most marked in the conservative, evangelical and Pentecostal stream. In an open set the focus is not on the boundary: who is inside and who is outside. Rather the nature of the set is determined by a focus on the centre, which holds the set together. In the case of the church this is obviously Jesus Christ. Thus the concern is not on who is in and who is out (institutional concerns), but rather whether people are moving toward the centre, Christ (gospel concerns). If conversion is regarded as a process, and belonging needs to be experienced before believing happens (and hopefully eventually behaving results), then it is obvious this model of church needs to be that which is embraced. The church is then an open community of people who are seeking to help each other in their journey with Jesus. To do this they then need to 'privilege open discussion, shared experiences and attention to spiritual development.'

Foot notes:

^[42] Historian Arthur Marwick examines the sixties in 4 different western countries, and puts forward 16 factors which indicate the changes that took place merit the description "cultural revolution." A. Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford: OUP, 1998)

^[43] The coordinator of Alpha for one of New Zealand's largest churches, told me they recently did a survey of backgrounds of people coming into the course. Everyone of them had had a "religious experience" as a child.

^[44] Alan Kreider, *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom* (Pennsylvania; Trinity Press International 1999) 95.

^[45] Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)

^[46] His church largely made up of Gen Xers had grown from 120 to 2000 in the past 6 years.

^[47] See A. Jamieson *Churchless Faith* Wellington: Philip Garside Publishing, 2000.

^[48] Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace* 189.

^[49] Most of the material here is derived from P. Hiebert *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 107-136.

Study Leave: The search.

In order to make sense out of all this I decided that I would give some time to look in detail and at models of "the emerging church" and evangelism that is truly reaching the secular society. I had been warned that I might be disappointed when talking with people who listened to my struggle and laid out my thesis.

We planned to spend 5-6 weeks travelling the UK and a visit to a colleague and friend in the Netherlands who had attempted to build an emerging church in NZ and had taken some study leave in 2000 to consider the question of the emerging church.

I was put into contact with George Lings in the UK. George heads up the "Sheffield Centre" a centre focused on church planting and growth. It is a ministry of Church Army UK. I was supplied with 12 addresses of churches in the UK that were working in this area. I emailed them all and out of that I had invitations to 5 plus time with George.

As preparation I also did some extensive reading of articles mainly written by New Zealanders – See appendix and bibliography for these. By the time we left New Zealand I was well on the way in my thinking and clearly building some images of what an effectively evangelistic church would look like.

Most this has been well summarised in an article from the "Ministry" magazine and I have included this in full at the end of this section.

If there is any question that stood out more for me than any other it was "What will I do with all this when I get back?" "How long can I remain where I am doing what I am doing if my position has shifted and the church as it has been cannot satisfy the passion within me?" This is not a comfortable place to be in and I fear most of all that nothing will come of it. Life is too short for that and the urgency of the gospel is too great.

Process versus instant evangelism

Miroslav Pujic

(Communications director of the Trans-European Division, Hertfordshire, England.
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The western world is in a state of flux; the modern world, stretching back to the Enlightenment, is now crumbling. Postmodernism is no longer merely part of academic theory and classification. It is accepted as part of reality and normality, a phenomenon in popular culture; it permeates popular magazines, television, music, and art. It is also manifested in the workplace and in the way people communicate and relate to one another.

Postmodern people:

- + Reject the stated truth expressed in dogmas and absolutes; they would rather *experience* truth.
- + Are open to emotion and intuition.
- + Are accustomed to communicating through words linked to images and symbols; they are more comfortable conversing through plain words or simple statements.
- + Are concerned about the global human situation and the environment.
- + Are suspicious of institutions, bureaucracies, and hierarchies; their suspicions run deep, but they like to be part of a community in which they participate and interact.
- + Are at ease talking about spirituality and values.

They suspect claims of certainty and distrust allegations of objectivity; to them the world is much more blatantly a subjective place.¹

Postmodern people like to "mix and match." They say such things as, "I create my own version of truth from all sorts of different resources. I have mine – do not try to force yours on me."

In the postmodern world the first question is more likely to be: "How do you feel?" rather than "What do you think?" Robert Webber says, "Indications of a postmodern worldview suggest that mystery, with its emphasis on complexity and ambiguity, [and] community, with its emphasis on the interrelationship of all things, and symbolic forms of communication, with an emphasis on the visual, are all central to the new way of thinking."²

Why does Christianity struggle in the Western world?

In this kind of world, with its increasing hunger for spirituality and for finding fulfilment and meaning in life, why is the Christian church still unpopular?

One reason is that when we offer a full alternative world to people, we are acting in the imperialistic style, which postmodern people reject. We present the gospel from A-Z, as a package, and think this remains as a productive way of doing evangelism. But nowhere do we find Jesus or the apostles working with such a model.

In much of traditional evangelism we seem to operate under the premise that we have a "product" (the gospel and/or Seventh-day Adventist teaching) you (the consumer) need; and then we close the deal (conversion and baptism). This approach is not giving us success with postmodern people, who see this "religious sales operation" as a manipulative marketing technique.

Instead, we should be looking to build relationships with postmodern men and women through friendships, which will open the door of trust and confidence. Our approach should be more of relational and contextual rather than confrontational and propositional. The challenge to all churches is how to adjust to societal changes and how to express eternal truth in and through this emerging culture, while we strongly retain solid objectivity and our grasp of normative truth.

Invitation

The Bible says that we "have a great sense of obligation to people in our culture and to people in other cultures..." (Rom. 1:14)³ "... carrying the everlasting Good News... to the people who belong to this world – to every nation, tribe, language, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

Surely this includes today's post-modern culture. When the young man who was demon possessed was healed, Jesus told him "...go *home* to your *friends*, and *tell* them what wonderful things the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been" (Mark 5:19, emphasis supplied). In this story, Jesus taught us the bedrock principles of evangelism.

He wants us to go back to our *community* and build *holistic connections* with people around us, with those where we live, work, and play. We should share the wonderful *story* – our story – of a wonderful, loving God who has made a difference in our life.

The life-development approach

In searching for a culturally sensitive way of reaching postmodern people in an essentially post-Christian culture, we in the Trans-European Division have developed an approach that is known as LIFEdevelopment.info, or Ldi.

At its heart Ldi is a strategic vision to involve Adventist Christians:

- + In building authentic *friendships* with unchurched postmodern people in our communities;
- + In the *process* of leading them to Jesus Christ;
- + In providing *hope* through support and nurture.⁴

This vision is built on three biblical models that are placed over the "map" of our largely postmodern world.

1. *Belonging before believing*. The traditional, most widely adopted evangelistic strategy is: Teach people about the gospel, see that they behave according to the doctrines taught, and *then* accept them into the body of Christ. Again, this method has proved inappropriate and ineffective in the Western, postmodern world.

"The never-churched need to be enveloped by small communities of believers so that they can see the impact of the gospel in their relationships and experience some of the benefits through an intentional spillover [from within the small community]. Such was the dynamic that made the pre-Constantinian church so effective. Within the context of the Christian communities, the disillusioned, cynical and uninterested are respected and accepted, and are converted into 'awakened seekers', to employ John Wesley's significant description."⁵

People are seeking genuine relationships. Jesus is the best example of how to build friendships. "The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"⁶

This requires planning and sacrifice. We have busy lives. Committing oneself to making friends and building relationships with non-Christians takes time and energy, but if we want to share the love of Jesus Christ we need to step out of our comfort zones. In all relationships, talking and sharing is crucial, and we have to remember that talking includes authentic, attentive listening as well. To help people grasp the story of Christ requires time and patience. We must be understanding, honest, and non-judgemental.

In fostering such an environment, food and eating together are important components. Shared meals sustain human relationships and symbolize solidarity. Meals express the texture of human associations, the way of life, the norms and commitments. Jesus ate and drank with people, even with the sinners most disdained by the religious establishment of His day. He was criticized for doing this (Matt. 11:19; Mark 2:15-17; Luke 15:1, 2). He knew, however, that being with people around the table would enable Him to build trust, confidence, and friendship, enabling further meaning and depth to develop.

If the main purpose of evangelism is just "believing," then we are under the limiting and limited constraint to press people into an awareness of the truths they need to know. But when the point is not only what people are coming to know but the way they are coming to know it and experience it, then there is a new and much more effective dynamic.

If the main purpose of evangelism is "behaving," then we make people focus on themselves and changing their personal habits. But if the point is to help someone who is becoming a true friend; if the main purpose of evangelism is "belonging," then we make people disciples of Jesus Christ and incorporate them into a vibrant Christian community.

"Belonging before believing" does not mean that the person is spiritually incorporated into the body of Christ but rather accepted into the process of transformation, which is the work of the Holy Spirit.⁷

"A sense of belonging places seekers in the position of observer-participant so that they can learn what the gospel is all about. They can observe at close quarters how it impacts the lives of individuals and shapes a community. Through this process the seeker comes to know when he or she is ready to make a personal decision to identify fully both with the Lord and with the body of Christ."⁸

People long to belong to a place they can call home. The Western world is going through the shift from modernism, where Enlightenment created self-autonomy, individualism, and isolation, to postmodernism, where people are searching for identity and community. Instead of a scientific discovery, we now have virtual reality, an experience that is real in effect but not in fact.⁹

In the misery of loneliness and the search for identity, Christians should create a community that will embrace these changes and help people find their identity in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. *Process evangelism*. When Jesus started His mission, He entered deeply into the world of 12 people, identified with them and their conditions, and committed Himself first of all to begin the process of evangelising. It took the apostles more than three years to grow up in understanding Jesus; first as a teacher, then a prophet, then the Messiah, then the ascended Son of God with a cause beyond any they had imagined. This suggests a process rather than an event.

Even though we are used to instant food, instant drinks, instant cash, instant messages, we cannot do evangelism instantly, at least not with the generation in which we are a part. Evangelising is a process. It takes a person on a journey, a spiritual journey that we Christians are on as well, with all its ups and downs.

On that journey our job is to go one step at a time. The Holy Spirit's work is to convince the person and bring them to conversion. Our responsibility is to be available as the tools that God uses to complete His

work. It is our objective to simply follow Jesus. Among other things, this will help us experience the miracle of walking on the water, as Peter did (Matt. 14:29).

Six steps in the postmodern conversion process

Jimmy Long identifies six steps in the postmodern conversion process. They are:

- (1) discontentment with life,
- (2) confusion over meaning,
- (3) contact with Christians,
- (4) conversion to community,
- (5) commitment to Christ, and
- (6) a calling to God's heavenly vision."¹⁰

Of course, conversion sometimes doesn't follow this sequence exactly. Time, place, and speed are applicable to the individual. It could be that one person goes through the process faster than the other or jumps over one to another, but it is still a process because the postmodern generation requires time to make any lasting commitment in life.¹¹

The process helps the seeker to see the gospel in action in the setting of the Christian community. The process shapes the seeker's heart, not only his or her mind. The process leads the seeker into a holistic Christian maturity. The process converts the seeker to become a disciple, not just a "member." The process enables the new disciple to become a disciple-maker.

3. *Narrative evangelism*. As part of this process, "story" has the power to provoke our thoughts, emotions, laughter, and can prompt us into action. A story has the power to create a vision, which in turn produces character. This changes the person's mind and affects his or her attitude, worldview, and soul.

Jesus understood the power of a story, and He used many stories and illustrations to teach as much as people were able to understand. In fact, in His public teaching, He taught only with parables (Mark 4:33, 34).

The concept of story, or narrative, evangelism presents the gospel, not just a mass of data that leads to a logical conclusion. The whole gospel is a narrative in which God's story collides with a human story, and that intersection of human and divine is what makes the difference.

A new generation is seeking to find a viable model through or in which ultimate meaning may be found. When they see Christians who live out their stories in faithful community, albeit imperfectly, they will respond. It will provide hope to a generation without hope. It will support them in their everyday life and nurture them in their spiritual formation.

Golden opportunity

"The Story that there is a God who cares about the individual human being is an old message – but it has been given a new attractiveness, a new plausibility in our time. Our Postmodern generation is more ready than ever to hear this Story with new ears – Why? Because of the emptiness and brokenness of Postmodern life."¹² The very state of "storylessness" among this generation creates a golden opportunity, an open window through which the light of Christ may shine.

The Christian community has unique resources that can be drawn upon to respond to the new cultural situation. Postmoderns are providing a more hospitable platform for spiritual and theological possibility. It is not enough for us to understand our world from a distance, or simply to have a strategy for evangelisation. We need to wade in and rub shoulders with those we desire to reach for Christ. We need to be willing to live with unchurched postmodernists on their terms, not ours. This will lay the foundation for real communication to take place. This will provide us with exciting opportunities to deepen our own faith and to allow the Holy Spirit to work through us.

Footnotes

1. Tony Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry: Exploring Cultural Shift, Creating Holistic Connections, Cultivating Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), 31-43.
- 2 Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 35.
- 3 All Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.
- 4 See <www.lifedevelopment.info> for more information.
- 5 Gibbs/Coffey, 192.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), 143.
- 7 Gibbs/Coffey, 194.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 194.
- 9 Jimmy Long, *Generating Mope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 73.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 206.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 208.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 190.

Evangelism and the Emerging Church

There are clearly two different issues that we have confronted on this trip; evangelism and church. We set out to look at ways we can connect with secular society evangelistically. We wanted to discover and know how we can speak into the secular society with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We quickly found that as some observations and conclusions were forming that we were being confronted with real questions about our understanding of church and what kind of church will interface with secular society in meaningful ways?

These are separate questions but I have found that the established church or “Christendom” is more interested in making sure that our theology of church is correct than supporting any effort to be evangelistically effective. This is of great concern as it has the power to reduce the ministry of evangelism to mediocrity. This leads me to conclude that this pursuit of correctness stifles creativity. If we are to really make a difference in the secular world we need not only to be creative but also be able to take real risk. We may not know what the outcomes will be but the demand for accountability and quantifiable results that are institutionally acceptable and theologically sound stifles the pioneering spirit of the evangelist and those who are seeking to serve the community for Christ rather than the church.

A common theme from those we speak with is a despairing of Christendom. It isn't because they don't love the church and all it has stood for, or that they want to leave the church. Many feel it is the church that has left them – they see themselves quite clearly Anglican – but acknowledge that that is not necessarily the opinion of the organisation.

We had already found that there are 3 distinct responses to what we are seeking to learn.

- (a) Those who are so caught up in “Christendom” that they cannot perceive what is being talked about. It is often a threat and will seek to re route the conversation back to the church model they are safe with. Sometimes getting angry and rejecting the notion of the emerging church, others will ignore it entirely.
- (b) Those who think they are on the journey but are still so caught up in the model of church that they know that they cannot see the new for the old.
- (c) Those who are on the journey. They have struggled and continue to struggle with both “Christendom” and its power and hold on the one hand and yet have successfully moved beyond it and are seeking to establish a new form of faith community.

I find myself somewhere between b and c. I am faced with the reality that I have a sense of vision but I am too entrenched in the system to be able to break free to make an authentic new beginning. However I would want to give all I can to support and back the vision of someone who can.

So what have we found?

1. The church that is going to have any real impact on the secular society must be **highly relational**. People take precedence over buildings, structures, theology and order. Everything we have seen has confirmed this – there is as deep a hunger for community as there is for real and effective discussion about God.
2. **The cell church provides the best form of church**. What Kerry Thorpe and “Harvest New Anglican church” is doing in Broadstairs perhaps is the best example that we have seen of this. The cell is “church” and within these groups people build relationships. They explore the implications of their faith in their daily work and living, which is clearly seen as their place of ministry. The church at this point has been de institutionalised. There are no buildings or the numerous institutional church groups so the whole energy of the faith community is given to building the cells and affirming members place of ministry in the work place etc. Sunday is about resourcing and not the event.
3. **The community that people belong to does not have to be their physical address**. For many the centre of community is in their work place or their recreation. David Male in Huddersfield –The Net Church - has worked on this and builds a fairly convincing argument. Further he believes that events are the best place to draw the secular community in. They run programmes in gym's, and secondary schools about life and living – these have caught the imagination of the secular community. Further he also believes that the weekly event if it is to truly be aimed at the secular community needs to happen at a time and place that best works for your target group and if that is on a day other than Sunday then there is no Sunday service. Again the cell or home group has a high profile and the building and securing of relationships is the priority. Again “The Net” doesn't have buildings and all the usual structures of church – the amount of time this frees up enables them to do the work that they are called to do.

4. If we are however going to be really serious about meeting with the secular community **we need to be willing to move right out of our territory and meet people on their own ground.** We need to leave our fortresses and enter the world of work and recreation – not on our terms but on the terms of those with whom we are meeting. We need to go with the following focus and questions. "I am interested in you" and asking:
 1. What is your business
 2. What are the people issues
 3. If you were doing my job "How would you do it" – others have used this last question. Martin Garner at St Thomas' Sheffield has used it with good effect when talking with people on the street. However we must be real in asking and be prepared to seriously consider what is said. For many this is just too threatening and will result in a defensive argument. Personal security and being honest and secure in our faith and belief in God and in the person and work of the Trinity is essential here. It is only those who have this security who are going to make the best and biggest impact into the secular world because they are free to attend to, listen and journey with them. They are neither threatened by the different nor will judge those who are.
5. **To interface with secular society we will need to establish a net work** that has 3 components:
 1. Heart for God
 2. Home– friendship
 3. Hub – from which people can relate to and from

All this is about "journey" – To meet people where they are and to journey with them and they with us as we seek to discover God.

Such ministry will need to develop 3 core values

1. Sanctuary: for the battered/bruised/stressed
2. Efficiency: Don't waste my time
3. Effectiveness: If you are going to ask me to commit ask me to commit to something that works

And it is out of the resulting community that the question can then be asked what form of worship will be right for us.

All of these principles are being worked out in the "Oasis" (Ministry in the Business Community) and Raven Community (Ministry into the Night Club industry) in Edinburgh and we were grateful for the time Peter Neilson spent with us talking to us about this radical work.

6. To do this is to force **some questions about church and structure.** For too long we have assumed that church is the be all and end all of our life. That this is what Jesus and the New Testament church gave us to do. But is this correct? Did Jesus and his disciples spend their time in church? I don't see this as I read the gospels – but I do see them spending time in quality community – 3 years of it in fact – close community. They lived, journeyed and worked together – a band of all sorts following their Lord and master and being disciplined by him. Apart from their regular visits to the synagogue and temple little is mentioned about their worship life. Very often such visits were more memorable for their trouble than honourable worship.

Even when the disciples were sent out "two by two" there is no instruction about "worship or the building of systems – just simply the telling of the Good News and speaking and doing the works of the kingdom of God. Later after the ascension and Pentecost the emphasis in Acts is upon community out of which rose their worship. Structure was always a consequence not the motive.

This was also risky development. No one had a clear idea what was coming. Jesus instructions to his disciples gave no hint of outcomes or any demand of meeting a set of institutional expectations. They were told to "go". "To make disciples and to teach all that I have commanded and baptise". There is little evidence beyond simple faith statements of well thought out dogma and theology – that came later. Clearly they were risk takers or pioneers into a new world that would take them to peoples, cultures and religious communities that were the very antithesis of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to people who would welcome them or seek to destroy them. Their only vision was Jesus and his command to go. They rejoiced when persecuted and sang when in jail and prayed for boldness and the courage to keep going despite the odds. This is in stark contrast with the prayers of the modern Christian asking God to spare them their troubles and deliver them from their minor distress and discomfort.

Am I saying that worship is not necessary? Absolutely not, worship is an integral part of our life as a community of believers. It is also an essential ingredient in our personal and private time with God. However the form of worship that we so often express in our Sunday services and other such gatherings has little appeal to the great mass of the unchurched, nor should it, as worship is for those who are in relationship with God. I think we have believed that it is the shop front of the Christian community when it never was nor should have been. The shop front of the Christian community is in its behaviour when it meets with the world. The shop front is in our relationships within the faith community and in the social networks that we have with those who do not yet know the grace of God. This is why Jesus' prayer of John 17 focuses entirely on the nature of relationships. It is by our love for one another that the world will know that Jesus is the Son of God.

This invitation to risky living needs to be rediscovered. There is a desperate need for some of us to be set free to go and do our stuff for Jesus without the system demanding accountable results in such a way that kills the initiative. There are few road maps in this pursuit; there are only a few shadowy pathways and an awful lot of rubble. I think it was Mike Breen who said to us something like the "Post-modernism is simply a term. What has happened is that there has been an earthquake that has reduced what we know to rubble and confusion. What we must discover is the bits of the past that are still standing that we can capture and build from"

This may seem a bit dramatic but if there is one thing that has become clear on this trip is the way in which Christendom has created a fantasy world and often considers itself to be in good health. Denial is a natural grief reaction when we don't want to face up to the truth. It is also a natural reaction to be possessive of what it believes it has. The other unhelpful response is "panic" by the institution.

I have a great respect for Christendom and for the treasures it has cared for, and nurtured. Western civilization has had a solid foundation upon which to build but the child it has borne has long left its embrace and has little wish to return.

May be if Christendom could be like Old Abraham, who was asked to sacrifice his child and as it draws the knife as a sign of obedience and surrender to the call of God, will find that there is a ram caught near by and the promised future will be assured as the child is set free to follow its God gifted destiny.

The courage of the aging parent now must lie in giving the freedom to new pioneers of the new world. If it doesn't it will happen anyway but it would be better to go with blessing and encouragement.

7. I spied the following quote in a book "The Apostle's Notebook" by Mike Breen. It came from a paper of Eddie Gibbs.

*From being evangelical churches to become evangelising churches, from evangelism as a hiccup in the life of the church to **evangelism as the heartbeat in the life of the church.***
(Gibbs, 'Church Growth & Urban Mission)

One of the gnawing problems of the past 25 years has been this insistent message to move from "maintenance to mission". With much energy from some and a lot of frowning by others, very few have actually made the transition. In my more sceptical or cynical moments I think that we have thought we were doing it by talking about it. The reality is that we have not succeeded in matching the vision.

Evangelism still remains an unmentionable word in many church circles and the appeal to fulfil the great commission or carry out the implied commitment in the churches mission statement is either ignored or over ridden by a syncretistic religious worldview. And even those who pride themselves as being evangelical – a people of the Gospel or good news have regrettably fallen short of the Gospel demand. As Gibbs has said there needs to be a substantial shift in our activity. This shift will require more than the posturing of well meaning church leaders but the total commitment to release some with the necessary resources to move out and connect with those who do not yet know Christ.

New model and fresh dream

What follows is a broad picture of the kind of faith community I would like to build. What it might look like and how it might be achieved.

(a) Loose association and a strong commitment to vision

A leading observation of the postmodern generation is the reaction to commitment, especially commitment to an institution of any form. There is however a deep hunger and search for spirituality and a longing for belief in ideals and vision. It is this, I believe, that provides the backbone for the emerging faith community. Affirmation of vision will therefore need to take precedence over commitment to an organization.

I know that many within Christendom will struggle with this as it seems a sop to a self centred and self-indulgent society and why should we be pandering to their whims and fancies.

There is no easy answers to this challenge save to say; if what we are doing is not working then we must consider the paradigm we are working with and ask if we have got it right. Surely a commitment to a spiritual journey is better than no commitment at all. If the truth be known the vision of Christendom has long been buried despite the disparate attempt during the 90's to get churches to declare their vision it has had limited affect, once stated they have been lost in the many words and habits of the people.

If someone will commit themselves to a dream, a vision, then the chances are they will also find a way to be committed to a faith community. What is more, if they are committed to some kind of spiritual journey then at least the wheels are turning and with sensitivity and patience they may journey towards Jesus and the Cross. It may take time but I believe it is a correct perspective but risky as it comes with no guarantees. I have long observed that people are often approaching church in this manner anyway. To resist it is like pushing water up a hill.

(b) Relational

It is fundamental for any faith community that is to interface with the secular community is that it is highly relational. That it develops and promotes relationships between its members as a priority. Today people will belong before they believe and they will only belong if it is a safe community that gives room to develop safe and open relationships where there is room for differing opinions.

Having attended the Leaders School of Ministry at TACF and seen the power of teaching and ministering in the Father's Love I would want this to be taught and experienced. Clearly it is essential to come to the cross of Christ by one of the many routes that we may take, but that is only part of the story. Knowing the God who has sent his son Jesus Christ so passionately and discovering the personal depth of that love will bring individual and corporate healing in a way that I have not seen anywhere else. As members discover the power of the Father's love for them and as they know the depth of healing he can bring they become safe, able and available to journey with the broken and wounded. By their healing they become healers not because of some "magic" words or formulas but by their servant lives.

(c) Small groups

Small groups are the primary tool for the emerging church. They provide a natural place for relationships to be built and nurtured. Small groups are a safe place to share our stories, our celebrations and struggles.

While some will find hard to hide in a small group I am convinced that if the groups have a good understanding of the Father Heart of God and his love for us then being sensitive to the shy will be natural to the group.

(d) No plant

It is essential to release as much of the faith communities resources into people not plant or organisation. Both Harvest New Anglican Church and The Net have no plant other than a house for the ministry leader. The amount of time this released to do and be involved in ministry and to develop ministry was well recognised.

The only significant problem this presented was the need to hire halls for events or celebrations and the complications of setting this up.

(e) Build in a homogenous community

This is perhaps a very un “PC” statement especially in a country that has made a virtue out of equality and bringing standards down to a level where everyone can belong without achieving. However it is still true that if we are going to reach people we need to be specific in our targeting and that will naturally exclude others.

Whether we like it or not young people stay away from events that has a high proportion of old people. Even if they believe that they are really 20 year olds in an antique body the truth is they are still 60 (or 40) or whatever to those who are really 20.

Business people don't relate as well to those who are labourers and Nightclubbers don't feel comfortable with those who love the classics and Ballroom dancing – they belong to different worlds. We should not be surprised at this and nor should we be surprised at the fact that if we try to please everyone at once we will land up not pleasing anyone.

This is not pandering to the present age obsessed with its own needs rather it is recognising that we minister and relate best to those who belong to our homogenous group. We should not be offended at this but release each other into the truth by which we live.

The biggest problem this presents is that the Sunday event cannot be that broad. But small groups can be. They allow for groups to be homogenous, relational and will minister appropriately to the community in which it is set.

To achieve such a community would take the following:

- (a) Build a team of people who would be prepared to give themselves to the work of mission in their own town and community. This team would need to embrace the values and practices of the emerging church.
- (b) Each team member will clearly understand that their ministry is in the community and work place not in the institutional church
- (c) Small groups would become church and these groups will be the hub of the faith community
- (d) Once a week the cells would come together for resourcing or to host an event that will connect with the community.
- (e) On a regular basis a joint celebration service would take place. For example: If there are multiple cell groups several may come together weekly and then all join for a once a month celebration service.
- (f) Members will be expected to be evangelistically intentional in their relationships and committed to those relationships for life regardless of the response to Jesus Christ.
- (g) Once the initial team is established no one can transfer out of another church into this one. It grows relationally and evangelistically.
- (h) There can be no time frame to the life of the faith community as there is no reference to build such a time frame.
- (i) An accountability group is established with the Bishop as its chair. The membership of such a group must be committed to pushing Christendom's boundaries while able to ask the hard questions. They will need to understand that there is no formula and no clear idea of what the faith community will look like. Members need to be open for the faith community to develop in any direction that enables an honest connection with those it is seeking to reach.

I have a dream

I have a dream of a church that pursues excellence in all that it does.

In its worship – what ever form each faith community may find helpful.

In its leadership

In its teaching

In its welcome

In its small groups and discipleship

In its evangelism and mission

In its care of its members and those in the community about it

In its care of resources and environment.

Reconciliation Redemption & Renewal

These things must be attended to with the best of its ability and within the faith resources of its members. This I believe God calls us to do

I have a dream of a church that will let each generational group “go” to pursue forms of faith community and worship that best enables them to be God’s people for their own time. I have a dream that such a church will nurture and release leadership into their dreams and visions without performance controls.

I have a dream of a church that is prepared to let some of its members go to plant new and creative faith communities that will connect with secular society and will nurture and empower these communities to become authentic people of God.

I have a dream that each of these new faith communities will fearlessly journey with the spiritual journeys of those who do not yet know Jesus and have not come to the cross. That these new faith communities will build their life around the “Father’s Heart” and live as an expression of his abundant and safe love, that they would be communities of grace.

I have a dream that these new faith communities will exist within the world and will impact the world by asking what would Jesus do here at this address and how would he express his love for these his children. They would go to meet people where they are and not attempt to bring them to some sacred place but rather understand that the kingdom of God is anywhere and any place that God and people meet, and that such a place is sacred, a holy moment, a sacrament of love. The question is: How will we express our devotion to God here together, in this place of work, or recreation, or living.

I have a dream that the new and the existing faith communities will stand alongside each other and learn from each other because neither can be Christ to the world on their own nor can they fulfil the great commission on their own. It is a true partnership of believers who hunger for God’s redemptive plan for our time to be fulfilled.

But Is it Anglican?

One of the prevailing questions that people ask of Anglican churches that do things differently is: Is it Anglican? This is an interesting question as it forces another questions: what is Anglican? What is the base line to which we can return and say this is “it” - this is what makes us an Anglican church.

Very often we define who we are and what we do on the customs of the church life and experience that we come from. For a high-church person robes, ritual and reflection would be seen as what is Anglican. For someone from the other end of the spectrum it could be simplicity, songs and sound doctrine. These and any other descriptive words only speak of the way we do church not what the church is. In 1886 a meeting of Bishops drew up what became known as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. This document later ratified in 1888 at Lambeth has become the base line statement among churches that are evolving as a new and different church. In summary they say provided that

- (a) The Bible is the central document
- (b) The creeds are seen and understood as a summary of belief
- (c) Baptism and Holy Communion are practiced
- (d) Relate to a Bishop

Then it is authentically Anglican. This is the accepted premise of Harvest New Anglican Church at its inception and accepted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

To live courageously means that we need to take courageous steps and if this can be accepted as the base line for what it means to belong to the Anglican Church then it is a good one. But it does mean that we need to clearly separate out practice from principle and I believe that the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilaterals offers us a useful way forward for the emerging church at the beginning of the 21st Century.

I have included here the full text of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral

The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886, 1888

Adopted by the House of Bishops Chicago, 1886

We, Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in Council assembled as Bishops in the Church of God, do hereby solemnly declare to all whom it may concern, and especially to our

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fellow-Christians of the different Communions in this land, who, in their several spheres, have contended for the religion of Christ:

1. Our earnest desire that the Saviour's prayer, "That we all may be one," may, in its deepest and truest sense, be speedily fulfilled;
2. That we believe that all who have been duly baptised with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, are members of the Holy Catholic Church.
3. That in all things of human ordering or human choice, relating to modes of worship and discipline, or to traditional customs, this Church is ready in the spirit of love and humility to forego all preferences of her own;
4. That this Church does not seek to absorb other Communions, but rather, co-operating with them on the basis of a common Faith and Order, to discountenance schism, to heal the wounds of the Body of Christ, and to promote the charity which is the chief of Christian graces and the visible manifestation of Christ to the world.

But furthermore, we do hereby affirm that the Christian unity...can be restored only by the return of all Christian communions to the principles of unity exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first ages of its existence; which principles we believe to be the substantial deposit of Christian Faith and Order committed by Christ and his Apostles to the Church unto the end of the world, and therefore incapable of compromise or surrender by those who have been ordained to be its stewards and trustees for the common and equal benefit of all men.

As inherent parts of this sacred deposit, and therefore as essential to the restoration of unity among the divided branches of Christendom, we account the following, to wit:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God.
2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.
3. The two Sacraments,--Baptism and the Supper of the Lord,--ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.
4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

Furthermore, Deeply grieved by the sad divisions which affect the Christian Church in our own land, we hereby declare our desire and readiness, so soon as there shall be any authorized response to this Declaration, to enter into brotherly conference with all or any Christian Bodies seeking the restoration of the organic unity of the Church, with a view to the earnest study of the conditions under which so priceless a blessing might happily be brought to pass.

Note: While the above form of the Quadrilateral was adopted by the House of Bishops, it was not enacted by the House of Deputies, but rather incorporated in a general plan referred for study and action to a newly created Joint Commission on Christian Reunion.

Lambeth Conference of 1888 Resolution 11

These are the slightly revised version of the four Articles agreed upon at the General Convention of the (Anglican) Protestant Episcopal Church held at Chicago in 1886. In this revised form the Articles were approved by the Lambeth Conference of 1888 as stating from the Anglican standpoint the essentials for a reunited Christian Church. The text of the Articles is as follows:

That, in the opinion of this Conference, the following Articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made towards Home Reunion:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
2. The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
3. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself--Baptism and the Supper of the Lord--ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.
4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.

Study Visits in UK.

Details of visits to Broadstairs, Sheffield and Edinburgh

1. Harvest New Anglican Church

Address: 1 Wealdhurst Park, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2LD United Kingdom

Phone: 01843 871183 email: KerryThorpe@harvestnac.freesevice.co.uk

Webb: <http://harvest.future.easyspace.com>

Name of person responding: Kerry Thorpe Position: Senior Minister

1.1 General observations from travel log:

A phone call was necessary to locate Kerry and Eunice Thorpe. One of the wonderful parts to this adventure has been the privilege of meeting new people. Kerry has been pioneering a cell church plant. This is inside existing parishes and is autonomous to them. I will learn more.

For the evening I joined him and we went to Canterbury where he was taking the final evening of an evangelism course.

This morning I woke up and for the umpteenth time since being in the UK have been impressed by the noise of the Doves. I was always under the impression that they were a fairly quite bird – don't believe it!!

Our time was characterised by many discussions about the background and development of Harvest New Anglican church. In summary: The cell is the church and the Sunday celebration is a place of resourcing. There are no buildings, other than the house. There was none of the organisational and institutional structures and plant to gobble up time and energy. This faith community is able to devote itself to Mission. Ministry is seen in what the people do in their daily life – it is not connected to a building or a regular Sunday event. Ordinary everyday work is given a high profile and is affirmed as the place of ministry. The thrust of the cell studies is about working out the faith in the ordinary life of its members.

The church is unashamedly relational and it works.

For a couple of hours Kaye and I walked down to the shore front calling into many shops and places that caught our attention. This was the place where Charles Dickens often came and wrote some of his novels. Buildings can be found highlighting this fact.

We meet up with Kerry and Eunice for coffee at a café before being taken back to their home for lunch – its now raining. In the afternoon we meet with a local Church Army Officer who was clarifying issues about cell church – she was preparing to lead her church into developing the cell model. This was an informative meeting. In the evening we visited an Alpha group and then a cell group. I loved the consistent passion these people have for their cells and the way this faith community works.

Thursday morning saw us again on the move – How we appreciated this family and the ministry they are leading. We left feeling that here was something that could breathe hope into the church, the question that continues to plague me is – will the church organisation have the courage to accept the challenge to develop in this way?

1.2 Specific Questions asked of Kerry and Eunice

1. Would you describe your church as having a credible Christian presence in the secular community? If yes, in what way.

Yes. By the way we affirm the workplace as the place of ministry

2. Are you effectively evangelising/reaching out/connecting with the non-churched in your community?

Aiming at – ethos building that the workplace is the place of mission and witness. Still a long way to go with conversions of the non churched.

3. What evidence do you have of this?

Members are known as Christians in the workplace.

4. What specific actions/steps did you take to arrive at your present position?

Deliberately took steps which would allow us to put ourselves in God's hands. The church deliberately shaped by mission and needs of the community/context.

1. stepped outside of the institution
2. supported by the diocese in house and 1 year salary
3. took 50 people as a plant and core
4. established cells
5. Sunday celebration in school hall

5. What five (5) key things would you advise someone starting out to form a credible Christians presence in the secular community?

1. Release people from extraneous pressures – meetings, organisation, in house stuff
2. Identifying their everyday setting as mission – Keep reaffirming this
3. Setting a priority of building relationships
 - in and out of the church
 - good relationships is a sign of the Kingdom of GodTheological heart beat of what we are about.
4. Taking the long view long haul – About “being” something. No short cut – staying with it
5. An ability to listen – allowing to grow in what you are learning – building genuinely

6. What five (5) things would you avoid?

1. Becoming enmeshed in institutionalism – Mission/tradition conflict
2. Avoid major plant – energy for people and plant.
3. Avoid a sense of quick fix and simplistic answers. Prepared to learn and fail. Doing it because it is the right thing to do. Avoid looking right in the eyes of peers or hierarchy
4. Avoid giving into the pressure of all the needs

7. What others lessons have you learned?

Model isn't designed to produce the mega church. As grows develop other small Sunday celebrations – the emphasis is always on the cell.

8. What role, if any, has the church establishment (ie diocese, church courts, hierarchy) had in this?

In negotiations and given space to try and became increasingly supportive
Provided house and 1 years salary and 5 year licence.

9. How are you now relating to the church establishment?

Reference group chaired by the Bishop. Report to this 3x's a year in detail and meet with them. Very positive and supportive groups

10. How would you describe the character of your church?

As a faith community

A flexible network of relationships founded on Kingdom values into which we seek to draw other people.

Cell net work
Sunday services

Cell is church – Sunday is a resource to the church

Its vision

We want Harvest to make a difference

- to the lives of all who become part of the Harvest story
- to the communities to which we belong
- to the way we do church in the 21st Century

We want Harvest to grow

- by developing our individual lives
- by increasing the membership of our Cells
- by multiplying the number of our Cells
- by establishing new Sunday congregations

Harvest Cell Church Values

1. Jesus Centred –

We want to rediscover God's original purpose for his church. We take seriously his promise that he is with us when we meet in his name

2. Single Focus –

We can't do everything! Sometimes we get exhausted by attempting too much. Jesus priority was to call and equip the disciples, who in turn would train other disciples.

3. Growth Oriented –

We are not yet all that we could be! We believe that God takes us as we are, then changes us. Through personal growth and invitations to friends and neighbours, our Cells will grow and multiply. By consciously increasing the number of Cells, we will eventually multiply our Sunday congregations into other locations across Thanet.

4. People Empowering –

Everyone has a gift to use, a role to fulfil and a part to play. Everyone matters and everyone counts.

5. Relationally Based

God loves us and invests himself in building friendship. That's the model for all that we do in Harvest

Its leadership style and structure

Releasing and facilitating – development of leaders

Enhance and draw out the gifts of other people

Effective structure is the cell –

Coach team oversees the body

Very consensual – no voting

Cell leaders form a forum that meets once a month

Ideas and proposal come from coach leaders to cell leaders forum

11. Where do you plan to be as a church in 5 years time?

Very little at this time as have been prioritising values rather than goals
Hope to be further out and more on the margins – more ground breaking.
Cells drive it – more leaders and people equipped for mission.

A separate issues

12. By what means do you resolve conflict within your church?

Cell leader seeks to resolve --- cell coach --- and if need be involve Kerry

How effective has it been?

Yes – but don't win them all

2. Sheffield St Thomas'

Our introduction to St Thomas's church was to attend a major celebration Sunday evening 15 June. Held in the Octagon – a hall in the Sheffield University. This service was a joint service with the King's Centre. The Kings Centre has been an independent cell based church that is moving into closer relationship with St Thomas' with a view of becoming one church in the future.

One of the unique things about St Thomas' is that it is already an amalgam of Anglican and Baptist churches and is one of the largest churches in the UK, with a vision ' *to call a City back to God*' There is a Baptist pastor, and Anglican Vicar and over them all is Mike Breen – who is the Rector.

It is a growing church with approximately 2000 people currently worshipping on Sundays, some in the parish church of Crookes, and others at city centre venues. The congregation covers all age ranges but God has given a special calling to reach the under 35's, who represent over 70% of attenders many of whom are university students

The church is mainly made up of cells groups that meet weekly. On a Sunday morning a number of cells meet as a cluster – Some meet in school halls, others in pubs and so on – I think there are 28 of these. Then on a Sunday evening the clusters come together for celebration services or a teaching service. Again I think there are a number of these – I am still trying to sort that one out.

In sharing what God has given them they function as a resource church or "Minster", offering training and all kinds of support to other churches. It is evangelical and charismatic in character and is aiming to release all our members in ministry and mission

2.1 Its Vision:

Our **Mission** is to fulfil **God's Purpose** for us in the world, by living **God's Values** in a growing community of shared lives and communicating the Truth we hold in a **Language derived from God's Word** .. the Bible.

Our **Purpose** is to live under God's Rule, or Kingdom. This involves embracing God's order as opposed to the chaos and strife in the world. We pursue reconciliation with God, with one another and wherever there is brokenness in family or society ... based on the reconciliation that Jesus brings through his cross and resurrection and the power that his Holy Spirit gives.

Our **Values** flow from God's generosity, or Grace. This involves receiving all God's gifts and blessings and freely sharing them with all. So, as we build community together we celebrate the wonder of God's loving relationship and the goodness of God's creation with thankful, praising hearts.

Our **Common Language** expresses our goal to be followers, disciples of Jesus. This discipleship which we work out together and in the world, is about being life-long learners and growing leaders. All the core biblical principles are communicated through training processes called LifeSkills in practical everyday language.

Up: In: Out are the three dimensions of our life together, guiding everything we are and do. We are committed to pursuing our Up-ward relationship with God; our In-ward relationship to one another and our Out-ward relationship in evangelism and mission to all and all creation.

Our **Structure** to support our Mission and Calling as Church is worked out through three circles of relationship and social community .. **Cells** or **small groups**, **Clusters** and **Celebrations**. These different levels / sizes of gathering provide identity and belonging enabling us to fully develop and express our restored humanity in Jesus. The growth and multiplication of these communities of faith involves both planting in new groups and planting out church.

The Scope of our Mission and Calling spreads out through four enlarging spheres of influence. Our local Community or historic parish, our City of Sheffield, our Country and the Continents of the world. Aspects and activities of our church engage with all four through relationships that God opens up to us.

Local church and Missionary Order. To fully work out this ever expanding vision, we see the emergence of two overlapping entities ... engaged local church and mobile trans-local missionary order.

2.2 From our notes

Now the church is expanding again as it builds this new relationship with the Kings Centre that also has its own pastor.

Needless to say this is one big church and it has a big vision and gives hope for the future of the church as a whole and hope for the Anglican Church.

It is a church that is low on programmes and high on values and priorities that naturally leads to the development of practice.

We spent a valuable hour with Mike on Monday afternoon in the Philadelphia campus, a former light industrial site that is to be transformed into a major worship centre for celebration services and conferences, it will have a piazza as well as the administrative hub for the church..

Tuesday we met with Alex and Hannah Absalom, Alex is the pastor of the Kings Centre. While we talked about his church a little our time was really about their coming to NZ later in the year. However it was also a time of sharing and reflecting on the nature of ministry and the emerging church. We heard a little about the history of the Kings Centre and its journey towards cooperation with St Thomas'.

The afternoon was spent with Martin Garner, a Church Army Officer and on the staff of St Thomas'. His passion is evangelism and church planting. At St Thomas' he actively encourages the leadership to go out on the streets and engage real conversation with those they meet with the aim of introducing them to Jesus. Martin is certainly a man with a vision and passion. If the leadership are not doing it – how do we expect the membership to do it and there is nothing like testimony to catch the imagination of people and encourage them to try.

He observed that “Nothing causes growth better than starting new congregations” and that such congregations need to begin once they arrive at about the 40-50 size. Beyond that they struggle relationally (an important point in the emerging church) It is of no surprise that he advocates church planting teams and the importance of thinking small to grow big.

He further believes that we should be equipping the whole church in the art of witnessing. Now we are not talking methods here – but getting out and doing it. Being vulnerable and humble. The assumption is that the “Harvest is plentiful” and that God is the God of revelation – which is why 80% have had some sort of revelation or spiritual experience. It is this that we need to key into and build conversation from, to partner them in their journey towards the cross.

I was greatly encouraged by the time we spent together and for me it also had the sense of the meeting of kindred hearts and minds that is unique to Church Army officers.

3 “The Net” Huddersfield – General Observations

Wednesday took us out of Sheffield to Huddersfield and to “The Net”. This is another of these wonderful Anglican faith communities without buildings. Initially the Diocese of Wakefield gave David 3 years as a trial period and then made it up to 7 years. In the 4 years it has been running it has grown from the 40 to 100. From the beginning it carefully set out not to grow by transfer but by real conversions.

It seeks to network people from their natural communities. There is an assumption that where a person lives i.e. sleeps and has their home that that is their community. But in fact their true community may be their places of work, or recreation and that such places form a natural place to build relationship. David and “The Net” have set out to build their church by reaching into these natural communities

Unlike the other churches we have looked at this church does not major on cells or home groups rather it has majored on events and Sunday worship from which people attend small groups. They have come to see that people find it easier to explore and discover from a distance that the event offers, and are more inclined to shy away from small groups as they are to intense and personal.

This is a church that has built its life by majoring on relationship. This I both understand and can get excited about. Their vision statement is: By knowing and loving Jesus and each other we seek to enable non church people to develop real and relevant relationships with Jesus.

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We had nearly 2 hours with David and left encouraged, though I would have to say that there is a danger in the structure of this church to be caught up in the Sunday syndrome. He is aware of this and sees it is something that they have to face.

They do have an interesting thought. About 4 times a year they have an event that is directly prepared for the community. When this happens on any other day than Sunday, there is no Sunday "service". Why? Because they are there to contact and relate to the community and to have an event and Sunday service is to say that the event is not real church. But it is and has to be.

3.1 Details of discussion with David Male:

Name of the church: The Net

Address: 50 Longcroft, Huddersfield

Phone: 01484 315511_email: davidmale@netchurch.org.uk Webb: www.netchurch.org.uk

Name of person responding: David Male Position: Ministry Leader

1. Would you describe your church as having a credible Christian presence in the secular community? If yes, in what way.

Designed to reach the unchurched – create a community for unchurched.

Very intentionally a relational Church

Sharing lives, accountability, teaching and preaching leadership

2. Are you effectively evangelising/reaching out/connecting with the non-churched in your community?

60-70% who come are from non churched backgrounds

3. What evidence do you have of this?

Redefined what community means. Not a parish system. Network style church.

Community is defined in many different ways

Affirm ministry in the work place – on some Sundays they are invited to talk about their work and faith.

Relevant faith is integrated so we live what we believe

4. What specific actions/steps did you take to arrive at your present position?

Build relationships with others in

- (a) Sport
- (b) Internet
- (c) How to be Relationships
- (d) World of work.

"Connected for Life: at gym 4 week course based on material from "Intimate life ministries" this has been so successful that it is being repeated and some businesses are asking that it be run in their firms. A secondary school has asked for it to be run for their staff and senior pupils.

5. What five (5) key things would you advise someone starting out to form a credible Christians presence in the secular community?

- 1. The Church community needs to be credible in its relationships
- 2. The church community needs to be clearly outward focussed
- 3. Identifying and understanding the community you are in
- 4. make connections into the community you are working with
- 5. Think of ways to enable people to join in – ie the church needs to know how to cross the threshold into the community

6. What five (5) things would you avoid?

- 1. Don't use guest services
- 2. Avoid being church based. This has the idea of people come to us. Rather go to where people are and meet them there.

7. What others lessons have you learned?

Need good leaders – Need people who are both competent and of good character – avoid early mistakes with leadership

8. What role, if any, has the church establishment (ie diocese, church courts, hierarchy) had in this?

Paid David for 3 years with housing and staff but this is now increased to 7 years.
Set up an advisory group, chaired by the bishop and Diocesan missionary. Meets 4 times a year – not an authority body but go give advice and help – good relationships here
Role of Archdeacon and Diocesan Missioner were critical in the inner diocesan decisions

9. How do you now relating to the church establishment?

Really positive and exciting

- (a) How we transition from trail to an authentic church – not if but how we continue
- (b) Part of the original vision was to develop other such churches in the diocese and the role “the Net” will have in this

10. How would you describe the character of your church?

As a faith community

Loving relationships

Its relationships and community life

Relational

Its vision

By knowing and loving Jesus and each other we seek to enable non-church people to develop real and relevant relationships with Jesus.

Its Values

God Centred: *Our priority is our relationship with God*
Bible Based *Our commitment to the word of God is central to all we do*
Authentic Relationships *Our desire is for a developing honesty and reality with each other*
Seeker Focused *Our aim is to help people of all ages find Jesus*
Relevant Faith *Our daily lives and faith need to be integrated so that we live out what we believe*
Developing Discipleship *Our concern is to help each other grow in our relationship with God*
Open to Change *Our principles make us willing to take risks as we seek to follow where God leads*

Its Mission

Knowing and loving God

Because God loves us deeply our focus will be on Him Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We want to see Jesus glorified and to spend time studying the Bible, worshipping and praying.

By...

1. Believing in the centrality of the Bible.

Which includes...

- Aiming to study it and experience it in our daily lives, both personally and corporately.

2. Believing in making worship, prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit a priority in our lives.

Which includes...

- Believing prayer is vital and must surround all that we do.
- Being open to the Holy Spirit with an expectation to see him working in our lives and in our church.
- Having freedom in our worship and praise to express and explore our love for God.
- Regular breaking bread (communion) together.

3. Recognising the need for ongoing discipleship and aiming to nurture each other's relationships with God.

Authentic loving relationships

We are committed to authentic loving relationships, recognising that the church is the body of Christ and is made of people not buildings. We believe that relationships are more important than activities.

By...

1. Believing in building authentic loving relationships with each other

Which includes...

- Being committed to sharing our lives in God-inspired loving relationships, with friends, family, neighbours and colleagues.
- Our relationships with one another being based upon unconditional love, honesty, fairness, practical sharing and friendship as modelled by the early church. Recognising that such relationships are best nurtured in small groups where people can feel listened to, cared for and have the safety to be open.
- Actively welcoming people from all walks of life, regardless of their age, sex, race, class, ability, or stage in their Christian life. We will work to avoid cliques.

2. Believing that the church should be a unified body of Christians all developing and exercising their spiritual gifts.

Which includes...

- Aiming to see every member of the body as of equal value and having an important part to play in 'The Net'.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of everyone's gifts to their God-given potential and recognising that people's roles may change.
- People undertaking roles according to their gifts and leaders leading with servant humility.

3. Believing that building God-inspired loving relationships conflicts with over burdening ourselves with church activities and meetings

4. Believing, as a church, we are to represent God's heart to others.

Which includes...

- Expecting God's loving concern for people's material, emotional and spiritual needs, both locally and globally, to lead us to action.
-

Being a relevant Church

We believe that non-Christians matter to God. In sharing the Gospel we will try to be a relevant church to today's cultures in all we do, constantly considering how we appear to non-church people.

By....

1. Believing our relationship with God should affect all areas of our life.

Which includes...

- Aiming to demonstrate that God is important to us through the week and by trying to talk about our faith naturally and normally.

2. Believing that the children and young people are an integral part of the church.

Which includes...

- Believing children and young people are special to God ? they are an integral part of the body and our approach needs to be tailored to be culturally relevant and interesting to them, using people who are gifted in this way.

3. Believing in being an open and 'user friendly' church to non-members.

Which includes...

- Aiming to be welcoming, loving, creative, experimental, exciting, interesting and by having fun.
 - Aiming to provide an environment to which it will not be embarrassing to bring a friend.
 - Aiming to use everyday language, practices and media as well as avoiding Christian jargon. Assuming no prior church experience and aiming to be understandable to everyone.
 - Aiming for high standards in all we do.
-

4. Believing we should constantly consider how we appear to non-church people.

Which includes...

- Regularly reviewing our activities and making changes if they are not working.

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Its leadership style and structure

Minimal

Staff team – leadership team – Small groups

Staff team – David,
Full time children's worker – church supports
Curate – full time unpaid – not ordained
Youth worker – full time for 3 years (not yet appointed)

Leadership team of 4 (half way between PCC and Wardens – they are elected)

They do a lot of work on leadership development – all sorts not simply church leadership

Constitution

Constitution of The Net Church, Huddersfield, Diocese of Wakefield.

The creation of the Net Church was formally agreed by the Bishops Council on 26th November 1998. Funding for a ordained staff post was initially agreed for 3 years from January 1st 1999 but has been extended by the Council for a further 4 years.

The Church is fully part of the Diocese of Wakefield. The Mission Statement of the Church is, “ *By knowing and loving God and each other we seek to enable non church people to develop a real and relevant relationship with Jesus.*”

Management Committee.

The Leadership Team shares with the Vicar in the running and oversight of the church. The Vicar of The Net is Chairman of the Team and is not elected. The rest of the team is elected by and from the members of the Net. Each elected Leadership team member is elected for a term of three years and then must seek re-election if they want to continue.

No staff member of the church, (paid or unpaid) can seek or be put forward for election to the Leadership Team.

Any church member can nominate someone for election through the Small Group Leader. The continuing Leadership Team then would make proposals of who should be elected. All church members will be then notified in writing. The new Leadership Team will then be ratified at the Annual General Meeting.

Oversight.

The Bishops Council agreed to the setting up of two groups to help with the oversight of the Church both Chaired by the Bishop of Pontefract.

1. A Reporting Group

This group to meet annually to report back to the Bishops Council on the progress of the church.

2. An Advisory Group.

This group to meets to support and give advice to the leader of the church. The group consists both of people from and outside the diocese.

Membership.

Any person shall be eligible to become a member of The Net providing they are able to indicate their support and understanding of the Vision and Values of the church and who shall sign a written consent to that effect. Such matters would need to be decided in consultation with the Leadership team.

Finances.

The Net Church will appoint a Treasurer who is responsible for maintaining the financial records of the church, preparing budgets & forecasts. The treasurer will provide regular financial reports to the

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Leadership team & attend Leadership meetings as requested and agreed. The yearly financial records of the Church will be presented by the treasurer at the Annual General Meeting each year. The appointment of the Treasurer will be reconfirmed annually at the AGM.

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11. Where do you plan to be as a church in 5 years time?

In 2 half years looking toward a church of 160 and developing 2 congregations. Keep it relational means keeping it small

Separate issues

12. By what means do you resolve conflict within your church?

Relational structure is that you work it out

Leadership team

Advisory Group

4 Church Army visit

Thursday 19 June at 10.30am we were at the Church Army training college and the Sheffield Centre, I have to say that we did find it by a circumnavigated route. We are getting rather good at that. We were allowed in once the door was electronically opened and we had signed in and received our "Visitor" tags.

Claire met us and showed us around the facilities – very impressive. Finally we meet up with George Lings – the man we came to see and talk with. George has done a lot of work in church planting and the emerging church. It was a privilege to spend a good hour with him. Talking through the issues as we saw them and to have them teased out and extended. He will be in NZ beginning of August before we get home..

Lunch in the college dining room set us up for the rest of the day. By this stage we were realising that we really didn't want to travel as far as we had planned so Claire helped us secure a room in the Skipton Travel lodge.

5. Wakefield Baptist Church

We then found the road to take us to Wakefield where we were to meet Glen Marshall of the Wakefield Baptist Church. We duly arrived and he then took us on to a café that is associated with his church. There while we drank coffee, tea or juice and munched cake we talked about the developing ministry of the church he leads.

Name of the church: Wakefield Baptist Church

Address: Belle Isle Christian Centre Belle Isle Ave, Wakefield, UK

Phone: 01924 382966 email: d.male@ntlworld.com Webb: www.wakefieldbaptist.org.uk

Name of person responding: Glen Mashall

Position: Senior Minister

1. Would you describe your church as having a credible Christian presence in the secular community? If yes, in what way.

Not yet but would like to be

Have interfaced with community

Formally

Asylum seekers Drop in Centre

Coffee shop
Individual relationships eg through pub attendance
Film night – show and discussion on implications

2. What evidence do you have of this?

Alpha as a result of Pub contact
People are starting to think about interfacing with community on an individual basis.

3. What five (5) key things would you advise someone starting out to form a credible Christians presence in the secular community?

1. Change peoples theology to kingdom theology rather than the church/world.
2. Change attitude – more hospital and less judgemental.
3. Release from maintaining over busy church programmes
4. Look for and respond positively to partnership opportunities with
Church including other denomination
Community organisations
Government

4. What five (5) things would you avoid?

1. avoid a “come to us” approach to mission
2. Wouldn't expect to have conversion before joining

5. What others lessons have you learned?

Released to pursue their interests and passions – may not be strictly Christian eg football – help them see it is part of Christian mission.

6. What role, if any, has the church establishment (ie diocese, church courts, hierarchy) had in this?

Encouragement
Difficulties with Trust Deeds

7. How would you describe the character of your church?

As a faith community

Relaxed and informal

Its relationships and community life

Varied. Some meaningful, positive relationships – but also superficial ie just Sunday

Its vision

“Helping people follow Jesus”

Community	Conviction	Compassion	Journey
	<i>rather than</i>		
Conformity	certainty	crises	

Its leadership style and structure

1 Full time 1 half time pastor 1 half time youth worker
Leadership team plus 6 others. = 3 general leaders – 3 specific brief

- (a) worship
- (b) learning and growing
- (c) Ministry

8. Where do you plan to be as a church in 5 years time?

As many worship services that is needed and sustained by the community
As many discipleship programmes that is needed and sustained by the community
As many ministry initiatives that is needed and sustained by the community – no matter how small.

A whole raft of people Christian non Christian or unconventional people

Be a place where people will find God and be able to continue the journey where ever they are.

Separate issues

9. By what means do you resolve conflict within your church?

1 to 1

Church wide – church meeting

5.1 Further information

Glen gave me an extensive range of papers that fill out the above detail as it is given to the church membership –

What follows is an extract from those papers

The Next Step For Wakefield Baptist Church?

19/06/03 C:\Work\Portfolio Church\Handout

Introduction

We would like everyone at WBC to consider before God the possibility of changing our way of doing church. The suggestion outlined below would involve moving on from our present whole church in three congregations pattern. The thinking behind the suggestion has been prompted by trends within WBC and by the need to respond to changes in society at large. The hope is that the changes would lead to more authentic Christian living and more effective Christian mission.

The Heart Of It

There are two central objectives:

1. To become more effective as a church in helping individuals to journey from wherever they are towards a mature, well balanced Christian life as worshippers of God, followers of Christ and servants of others.
2. To make church more varied, flexible, accessible and responsive to peoples real needs.

Two phrases try to sum up the developments we have in mind: *Portfolio Church* and *Community of Communities*.

Portfolio Church

This refers to the way that each individual would build up their own pattern of church life according to their own personality, passions, outlook, gifting and culture instead of expecting everyone to buy into the same, one size fits all, package of house group, congregation and whole church.

People would be encouraged to build their own portfolio of involvement from three menus each one describing what the church offers in each of three areas - worship, discipleship and ministry. The idea would be that each person could find the way of worshipping that helped them most, the pattern of discipleship learning that suited them best and the particular ministry they were felt called to.

Not everyone would be involved in all three aspects of church life. People at an early stage of their journey may first come into contact with WBC by their involvement in one of our ministries such as the prison fellowship, eco congregation or Black Sheep. Initially they may not attend worship at all and may have no interest in learning and growing. Hopefully though, by being treated as part of the church community they might be helped on their journey towards greater commitment to Christ and fuller involvement in the life of WBC.

Sample menus are shown at the end of this paper together with some worked examples of how this would apply to different people.

Community Of Communities

This second phrase describes a move away from a congregation based understanding of church to seeing church as a flexible network of relationships.

The congregation model expects people to worship, to learn and to serve together with the same group of people. Everything is a subset of the congregation. The idea behind seeing church as a community of communities is to recognise that we may worship, learn and serve with different groups which may or may not overlap to varying degrees. The diagram at the end of the paper may help to see the distinction more clearly.

Also, under the congregational model, in practice it tends to be attendance at worship services that dictates whether or not you are regarded as belonging to the church. The idea of church as a community of communities recognises that discipleship and ministry are equally foundational expressions of church and that for some people the worship piece of the jigsaw may be the last one to drop into place.

If we adopt the changes under consideration we will be abandoning the three congregations as we now understand them. We will also give up trying to gather the whole church every week.

Why Consider Change?

Negatively there are weaknesses and tensions in our present pattern of church life. Positively there is the challenge to find ways of being church appropriate to the 21st Century. To be more specific ...

1 Lack of significant growth in the congregations.

This is probably more true of the North & the South than of Central which does seem to have grown back since the planting of the southern congregation. But the reality is that the congregations have not become the dynamic centres of growth that we had envisaged.

2 The Need For More Effective Discipling

We have tried a range of different patterns, House Groups (done in every conceivable way), Options, Prayer Triplets. None has really worked - or at least not for everyone. If different things work for different people then why not offer a variety of methods?

3 The Benefits Of More Decentralisation

Getting a way from a one size fits all mentality allows for fresh initiatives in various areas of church to arise from the grass roots. Witness for example gospel choir, church football team, Black Sheep, TGI Friday.

4. The Need To Respond To Cultural Diversity

To be effective in mission we must find legitimate responses to the increasing diversification of western culture. People are more likely to become followers of Jesus if they don't have to cross lots of unnecessary barriers in order to do so -barriers such as music style, particular organisational structures etc. Equally, it is important to enable people who are already Christians to express their faith in a natural, culturally appropriate way that doesn't feel forced or alien.

5 The Need To Respond To The Pick & Mix Approach To Life

People are less and less inclined to buy the whole package. Many it seems who are giving very loyal service to the present pattern of church life are doing so out of a sense of duty rather than from their heart. Others without that strong sense of loyalty to the whole simply vote with their feet. We may well find that folk are very passionate about and committed to certain aspects of the way we do church whilst remaining, at best, lukewarm about the rest of the package.

6 The Benefits Of More Flexibility

A more flexible pattern of gathering for worship, discipleship and ministry would fit better with the demands of modern life.

7 The Need To Emphasise The Relational

We need to minimise the institutional dimension of church life and to major on the relational dimension as an appropriate response to contemporary culture. People do not like joining institutions and having a membership - they do like getting stuck in and feeling that they belong.

8 The Benefits Of Freeing Up Resources

Inevitably our present pattern of church life does involve a significant amount of duplication of resources - building costs, leadership etc.

But What About ...

Clearly this paper is very sketchy (deliberately so) and it probably raises as many questions as it answers. Questions such as:

- How Would We Maintain Whole Church Identity?
- What Would Be Our Pattern Of Decision-Making / Leadership?
- How Would Pastoral Care Operate?
- How Would Finance Be Allocated & Controlled?

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- What Would Happen To Membership?
- What About Kettlethorpe & Outwood?

There has been some limited thinking about these issues but the leadership has deliberately not taken this too far as we wish to focus on the heart of the proposal and to remain as flexible as possible on questions of structure.

Conclusion

The heart of the changes being considered is not so much about structures as it is about a different way of being church. It will require a whole new mindset. On the other hand there are certain signs that such a mindset is already beginning to emerge amongst us. Perhaps what is being suggested should be seen less as a radical new departure and more as response to developments that are afoot, developments that could well be evidence that the Spirit is calling us to take the next step in our journey together.

The Worship Menu

Celebrations

Monthly (or perhaps termly) whole church celebration taking place on a Sunday evening (or possibly some other night such as a Friday or a Saturday) These would be open to everyone and every effort would be made to get as many as possible of those committed to the church to attend. The style would probably be broadly similar to the current Sunday evening service but with more that would be helpful to those of a traditional bent so as to be more inclusive. If we are successful in getting most of those committed to the church to attend then these gatherings would need to be held somewhere else other than BICC

All Age Worship

Sun a.m. @ BICC with a style similar to the regular services at central and at the north. The main purpose of this service would be to provide worship across the age spectrum It would not be expected that everyone committed to WBC would attend but only those who found this particular way of worshipping helpful.

Regular Sunday Evening Worship

A development of the present evening service but more explicitly targeted at younger adults. Held @ BICC, the service would no longer be described as whole church.

Midweek Worship

A regular, more traditional worship service @ BICC either seeking to boost the present TMF, drawing more people in on alternate Tuesday mornings or as a monthly, mid-week, daytime or evening service.

Mysterious Ways

A monthly or bi monthly time of worship @ BICC in the more experimental style of the present MW, again aimed at those who find that particular approach helpful.

The Discipleship or Learning & Growing Menu

There would be no single whole church pattern to the discipleship programme. Instead it might include the following options:

Triplets

Groups of between 2 and 4, meeting at the group's convenience (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) for prayer, bible study and mutual support, perhaps with centrally provided resources such as study notes, prayer guides etc.

Mentoring

One to one discipling with a more mature Christian linked to a newer Christian to provide encouragement, guidance and accountability. Meetings would again be at the convenience of the pair.

Traditional House Group

One or more according to demand, providing the usual elements of a house group -prayer, bible study, worship, fellowship.

Evolve

As now - a discussion based programme aimed mainly at younger adults.

SNAG

The discipling arm of our youth ministry

Other Small Groups for Young People

As now

Courses

In addition to such things as Alpha courses, Alpha II, membership nights, and baptism preparation we could also put on, say once a term, a course that would major on learning rather than formation and support. These could include for example courses on Christian marriage, how to study the bible, Christian healing.

The Ministry or Service Menu

By ministry I mean a whole range of ways of using our gifts abilities, time & passions to work for God, including both outreach and more "internal" forms of ministry. Perhaps the best way of making clear what I mean would be simply to list many of the different things that might appear on our ministry menu.

- Kettlethorpe Kids Klub
- Eastmoor Kids Klub*
- Possibility*
- Prison Visiting Team
- Alpha leadership team
- Black Sheep
- Music in worship teams
- Eco congregation
- Gospel choir
- Football team
- Youth leadership SNAG TNT
- Youth leadership Motivate
- Beeline
- Parenting Course Team
- Acorns
- Worship support - ohp, pa, refreshments, welcoming, set up.
- World Mission Team
- Prayer Ministry Team
- Healing Team
- Creative Arts Team
- Student Liaison Team
- Church Weekend Planning Team
- Church office staff

* These particular ministries are not exclusively WBC but are ecumenical, however there is a significant enough involvement from WBC folk for them to appear in our menu.

Some Example Portfolios

The Postlethwaites - Mum, Dad, Teenager & 9 Yr. Old

Mum	<i>Worship</i>	Family worship	weekly
		Celebration	monthly
	<i>Ministry</i>	Possability	monthly
Dad	<i>Discipleship</i>	Triplet	monthly
		Course	4 weeks once p.a.
	<i>Worship</i>	Family worship	weekly
		Celebration	monthly
	<i>Ministry</i>	Eco-congregation	monthly?
Teenager		Sun. a.m. p.a. rota	monthly?
		Prison team	monthly?
	<i>Discipleship</i>	Mentoring	2 per month?
	<i>Worship</i>	Celebration	monthly
		M.W.	monthly
9 Yr. Old	<i>Ministry</i>	Celebration p.a. rota	termly
	<i>Discipleship</i>	SNAG	weekly
	<i>Worship</i>	Family worship	weekly
	<i>Discipleship</i>	Sunday School	weekly
	B-Line	weekly	

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Geoff (Don't Know His Second Name) Student

<i>Worship</i>	Celebration	monthly
	Mysterious Ways	monthly
	Sunday evenings	weekly term time
<i>Ministry</i>	Celebration Music Team	every other month
	Creative arts team	4 or 5 times a year
	C.U. Prayer sec	?
<i>Discipleship</i>	CU	?
	courses	2X four week block per year

Betty Smith (single, early 70's)

<i>Worship</i>	Celebration	monthly
	Family worship	weekly
	Mid week service	monthly
<i>Ministry</i>	Family worship tea rota	monthly
	World mission team	Every other month
<i>Discipleship</i>	House group	weekly

6. St Cuthbert's Edinburgh

Our first appointment of the day was with Peter Neilson at St Cuthbert's. Peter became part of the staff with a particular brief of ministry into the cities business community. This ministry had begun 4 years before his arrival and he has been here 6 years and was about to leave at the end of the week.

The parish has something like 2000 residents, 12,000 office and business people come each day and some 20000 visitors in the weekend. This is a highly peopled area.

They set out to establish a network that had 3 components

4. Heart for God
5. Home – friendship
6. Hub

To meet people at the wells – the place of natural meeting. They did this by the developing of two ministries.

6.1. Oasis

Ministry to the business community – a place that offers stillness for people. Been running for 10 years. Need to take a decade view!!

Needs to be established by a business person.

More about Oasis: *In their own words:*

Do you work in or near Edinburgh's West End?

If you do, you are one of around 12,000 and we at OASIS may be of interest to you. OASIS is a service of the West End churches into the business community. Spearheaded by St Cuthbert's on Lothian Road, the kirk below the castle, this project started in the early 90's as the brainchild of a minister and a leading accountant.

OASIS comes to you in your world of work where people invest so much time and energy. It is staffed by a business consultant and is overseen by the ministers of St Cuthbert's. An Advisory Group composed of people from the business district and the three West End churches helps us channel our time and resources well.

So what do we do at OASIS? We offer a supportive Christian presence to individuals, groups and companies. We make ourselves available as friends to any and everyone working in the area. Our mission is fourfold: to be of assistance to people of all faiths and none; second, to encourage Christians and relate Christian values to the workplace; third, to address general "people issues" of interest to the many who work in the West End - often as not in lunchtime seminars; and fourth, to foster a sense of community in the often hectic, pressured world that is the business and office environment.

One day we may be helping someone going through a personal crisis. The next day we may be organising a speaker on maintaining good relationships at work. And the next day we may be planning a fun run in Princes Street Gardens to help raise money for worthy causes.

Whatever the issue and whatever your situation, we will offer a listening ear. And if we don't know the answer, we may be able to refer you to someone who does. Needless to say, you can count on us to care and observe confidentiality.

Sample of the kind of programme that Oasis has offered the Business community How do I help a colleague / friend / relative / client

June 12 2001: who has suffered a bereavement

Speaker: Jean Morrison, a leading counsellor in Scotland and author of "Loss - an Invitation to Grow"
Venue: State Street, 50 Lothian Road

June 26 2001: who is dealing with major organisational change

Speaker: Ben Williams, a respected corporate psychologist here in Edinburgh and gifted public speaker
Venue: Scottish Widows, Room 2D1, 69 Morrison Street

July 10 2001: who is facing a terminal illness

Speaker: Tom Gordon, chaplain at the Marie Curie Centre, Fairmile and contributor to journals and TV and radio programmes
Venue: Baillie Gifford, Conference Room, 1 Rutland Court

July 24 2001: who is struggling to achieve lifestyle balance

Speaker: Hazel Bech, a chartered occupational psychologist with Champfleurie Consultants who specialise in performance improvement
Venue: Standard Life, Audio Visual Suite, 30 Lothian Road

Feedback on Jean Morrison's talk on bereavement:

"Authoritative", "sensitive" and "very helpful" were typical comments. Jean spoke about mourning as a process and said that every experience of it is unique. Thus, we should never presume to say to someone who has suffered a bereavement:

"I know how you feel", because nobody can quite know. And we should not expect a person to "get over" their loss by a certain given time either.

Perhaps Jean's greatest service to us was to help us face the trauma of mourning, by "giving us permission" to do so and by providing us with much needed simple vocabulary with which to talk about this painful and delicate area.

If you would like to know about Jean's counselling service or similar services in the area around Lothian Road, please get in touch with OASIS.

Feedback on Ben Williams' talk on dealing with major organisational change:

"Thrusting", "insightful" and "entertaining" were some words used to describe Ben's talk and state-of-the-art technological presentation. Also "direct" and "from the heart".

The key question to ask oneself is: does my colleague / friend / relative / client need me to be supportive, or gently challenging? Our starting point has to be really listening and ascertaining where the person is at. There were echoes here of the advice given us by Jean Morrison on being of help to people who have suffered a bereavement.

Ben also pointed out that the level of trust in the general working environment is a key factor. Have key decision makers taken their teams into their confidence? That can make all the difference to a person going through organisational change.

For further information on Ben Williams Corporate Psychology, see: www.benwilliams.co.uk

Feedback on Tom Gordon's talk on dealing with a terminal illness:

"An accomplished speaker", "very relevant", "he imparted confidence", "he reassured me I'm doing the right things" were some of the phrases. Tom was deft at opening up what for many is a "taboo" subject, and he did so with humour. Humour, indeed, can sometimes be a key ingredient in helping a colleague / friend / relative / client who may be facing a terminal illness. Certainly, the last thing such a person needs is for us to ignore the issue.

Again, listening is a big service we can offer, especially when the person we are with wants to review their life (which Tom likened to their being in the observation car at the back of the train on the scenic route to Mallaig: they want to look back on the whole view of where they have come from).

Examples of insights: instead of talking of helping "the dying", we should rather see them as "living people who are facing mortality"; and if they are angry, we should not assume this is personal rejection of us . . .

Tom left us with a helpful list of resources. Do contact OASIS if you would like a photocopy.

Feedback on Hazel Bech's talk on struggling to achieve lifestyle balance:

Those who came to this, the best attended talk in the series, have said things like, "This is very much a live issue," "It was entirely relevant," "I was helped personally," "Hazel left us with lots to go away and think about," and "We were scribbling like mad!" Hazel gave us interesting research findings and then touched on several management philosophies which, when understood and applied correctly, can be helpful to all when it comes to achieving lifestyle balance, e.g. the 80's emphasis on getting to know yourself, the environment, others and the organisation.

Hazel mentioned the Gallup Organization's Q12 checklist and scoring system. Great food for thought . . . It reads thus:

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
9. My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work.
10. I have a best friend at work.
11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Perhaps the key slide in Hazel's talk was: SIMPLIFY

- adopt a positive approach to gaining and keeping control of your life
- in particular, your time, commitments, expectations and not least your spending
- realise that in every situation there are choices
- be sure to have fun - e.g. eat chocolate!

This was followed by: DECIDE

- make a list of the 10 activities you enjoy most
- make a list of the 10 activities that occupy most of your time
- compare the two lists
- what do you really want to do? . . .

Books mentioned:

Scott Peck: *The Road Less Travelled*

Marcus Buckingham: *First, Break All the Rules*

and probably most relevant of all when it comes to lifestyle balance: Gordon MacDonald: *Ordering Your Private World*

(Wesley Owen, 119 George Street will have it - 225 2229.)

Finally, one attendee - an investment manager - was kind enough to say, "The thinking behind this series has been spot on."

6. 2. Raven Community

Ministry to the night club community – transcendence and intimacy.

Has a monastic character. 3.5 years

More about Raven *in their own words.*

About raven where did the Raven Trust come from?

Raven was born out of the `Exploring Church for Club Culture Project which was initiated by St Cuthbert's Parish Church in 1998.

What is Raven?

Inspired by the way in which Jesus lived and taught, Raven is a resource base for people wanting to follow Christ in club cultures and emerging urban cultures. Through relationship, Raven seeks to Strengthen, support and encourage people in this journey by cultivating helpful paths and stable rhythms of: hospitality: creating together (worship): learning: prayer

The people who value this resource are:

Students: artists: musicians: office worker~: local community workers: business people: lawyers: predominantly part of the Church's `missing generation" some actively pursuing a Christian journey some exploring life in other ways

Places where these people interact:

Clubs: the flat (111 Lothian Rd): homes: Other venues around the west end

Resources currently offered by Raven include:

Music equipment: facilitating
· making live music
· running club nights
· writing hymns and lyrics
· DJing (disk-jockeying) themed with Christian values
· music workshops

A venue: the flat in Lothian Road Used for

· events: for example : 24/7 prayer week for 7 days and nights in December the flat was open for prayer and over 200 people from diverse backgrounds, participated: from students to Orthodox and Roman priests
· workshops
· meals and kitchen chats
· times of worship: for example: every Sunday night some people have been exploring ways of worshipping together *They are asking the question: "What does worship look like here?"*
· interpretation of scripture
· prayer: for example: some people meeting for a daily rhythm of prayer, others meeting weekly in stillness to pray for peace

People

· part time community worker
· 2 guestmasters who stay in the Lothian Road flat and facilitate the hospitality of Raven

Where is raven going?

· Individuals coming together are forming their own broad liturgical community, reinventing the wheel if you like, but conferring ownership on its participants in a way that attracts and challenges them
· Although some may not recognise it, the institutional churches are its parents and grandparents and are necessary and valued family members.

From my notes:

About Christian presence in the urban culture.

The ministry has 3 core values

4. Sanctuary: for the battered/bruised/stressed
5. Efficiency: Don't waste my time
6. Effectiveness: If you are going to ask me to commit ask me to commit to something that works

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Peter Neilson suggests that ministers should take 1 day a week to sit with his business people in their businesses – but it does mean that the business people need to do the inviting.

Warning: “Set up events that supposedly support people but they are expected to support” – this is not a good ministry model or motive.

Key focus” I am interested in you

Ask: 1. What is your business

4. What are the people issues

5. If you were doing my job “How would you do it”

Business invited to be involved in a regular lunch event – some may even provide the venue and lunch. Topics often Christian but not always – Topic hits the button

Business Alpha Held in a hotel. Use business people to do the talks. 15 minutes – core issues and contextualised to business community.

Relational

Follow up with Life worth Living

Now looking to build a contextualised church/worship

Our time with Peter was very worthwhile and I regret that it could not have been longer. Here was a ministry that was really working on the edge with some accountable affect and can provide some valuable learning. I have a contact to follow up and he is going to send me some further information.

Is there any hope or model for “Christendom”?

Not everything we saw was outside of the institutional box. Both Wakefield Baptist church and St Thomas' Sheffield and the ministry rising out of St Cuthbert's church of Scotland, Edinburgh have worked from within their church systems to give rise to a new form of church without actually abandoning its buildings, plant, and historic structures. But it has to be said that much of what is left bears little resemblance to its former self. They have managed to give birth to a new church within the old and the new has taken over the old. St Cuthbert's is the exception in that its ministry to business and the nightclubs are independent of the regular church life.

What these churches have done is exceptional and can in no way be considered the norm and in many cases not even a remote possibility – at least in the short term. These churches have taken many years to arrive at their present point.

We were reminded many times that any radical redevelopment of the church needs to be seen in “decadal” terms. It is this fact that presents the biggest difficulty. Invariably churches are slow to recognise the need for change and when efforts are made to alter their directions when there is a change of ministry leadership (eg new vicar appointed) the clock seems to be reset and in many cases a new direction is taken. This militates against both growth and moving out of the traditional and institutional box.

Most of the churches that have been significant in moving ahead have had more than one vicar or rector but they have maintained a common direction, the new incumbent building on the work and direction of the last.

Some of the church plants from Holy Trinity Brampton display another approach that has worked. They export 100 – 200 active members who are committed to the vision of ministry and to reach out into the community they are moving into. It is little wonder that within a year or two the churches have doubled, have three or more full time and part time staff. They have also been intentional in developing worship and ministry that deliberately interface with Gen X.

Note this from St Paul's Hammersmith, a church that took on a new lease of life in 2000 when 180 folk shifted from HTB. (We saw St Paul's from the outside but were unable to see Simon Downham as our times in London didn't suit. We did however spend sometime walking around the Hammersmith area. It is rich in cultural and racial diversity. Small businesses many owned by immigrants. Light industry and shopping mall complex)

Welcome to the St Paul's Hammersmith website!

I write as the Priest-in-Charge and Senior Pastor of the Church to give you a flavour of our vision and a sense of God's call on us as a church. You can discover more and see for yourself by exploring the website. Even better, why not come to join us on a Sunday?

In short our vision is to be '**A Transforming Community for Hammersmith and West London.**' But what do we think that means?

First, we think God calls us to be a community. We believe God is at work in the world today doing a great work of reconciliation. So through the work of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit he creates a community of people who are marked by their lack of division, where young and old, male and female, rich and poor (and all points in between) come together from every race and background. That community is called the church. That community is one where all have a part to play. In the face of a world full of extraordinary hatreds, extraordinary selfishness, extraordinary loneliness, we are committed to **getting together**.

Second, we think that a community should be transformative. To belong to the community is to be committed to personal change. In some way we think we have glimpsed what it means to be truly human in Jesus. A Jesus who lived free, who lived for the flourishing of others, who was marked by compassion and sacrificial service. We believe the Holy Spirit is committed to shaping us into this Jesus' likeness - to restoring our humanity. This is what we want to be, but we know we cannot do it on our own. That is why we are committed to **growing together**.

Third, we believe that community should be transformative for those it meets. In our case, Hammersmith first and then out from there. Jesus calls us to be like light shining in the darkness. Not because we think we have all the answers but because we bear witness to him who is, we believe, the answer. Jesus calls us to follow

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him, and we think that if he were walking around Hammersmith today he would be at the points of pain in the wider community. That's where we want to go and that's why we are committed to **going together**.

We hope then that if you were to join us you would see signs of our vision being worked out in practice.

It may help you to know that institutionally we are part of the Church of England. Whilst we are deeply grateful for our place within this historic denomination, with its system of governance and liturgies, we do not stress the denominational distinctive. People from any church background are welcome.

In the service of our vision there is significant emphasis on mission (evangelism and social action), the teaching and applying of the Bible (in particular the work of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit), intercessory prayer, pastoral prayer ministry, the adoration of God and living well for Christ wherever we find ourselves in the world. We hope that you would find us orthodox in belief, generous in spirit and committed to living out our faith.

I hope that in all this our motivation as a church is a passionate concern for God's glory, for His reputation. Our constant prayer is that He would be glorified through us.

Please come and check us out and whether you want to consider making your spiritual home with us or you simply want to visit we want to assure you that you would be very welcome.

Simon Downham.

Simon had worked for 5 years on the staff of HTB before shifting with the 180. As wonderful an idea as this is it can hardly be called normal and generally not a realistic way to grow churches.

My only conclusion is that Churches must continue to pursue the strengths of the church growth movement. We can be very good at reaching those who have some experience of church. There are also masses of retired folk who have at one time or another been regular in church attendance but for one reason or other have given it away. To extend a hand of reconciliation and love to such people is not only profitable but also essential. The Mission field for Christendom is still very rich, but may not give the yield that the likes of Willow creek or Saddleback or even HTB and St Thomas' Sheffield. There can be no doubting the value of faithful pastoral ministry and a determined effort to reach into our communities. **God has not finished with Christendom.**

However if the church of the future is dependent on the local church, as we know it I fear that it will continue to decline and sink into deeper pools of insignificance. The social climate of the Western world has so radically altered that we cannot remain complacent or compliant. There is an urgent need to discover a new approach to church and evangelism.

I hope that in some way I have pushed a little along the road of finding that new approach. How it will work out in practice will depend on the courage and passion of those with the authority and power to release some into the risky business of moving out of mainstream church life and seek to seriously interface with secular society and build a new community of faith.

Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship Leaders School of Ministry

While much of my time and attention had been given to the visits in the UK and my urgent sense that we need to address the evangelistic question the time at the TACF Leaders School of Ministry will stand out as the most significant event in our study leave. I will have spent a total of six weeks at TACF counting a week in 1997.

I know that many question what occurred here 10 years ago as an aberration and many felt that it was all shallow and a lot of noise. I had learned in 1997 that that was far from the truth and grieve at the inability of many within the Christian church to discuss with us what we saw and learned.

There is nothing instant or passing about TACF. It has worked as hard as any church at all the basics of church growth save for one thing, it prays. This may seem harsh but it is my observation. 17 years of love and prayer preceded the outpouring of "the Father's Blessing" Since that time they have grown on in their pursuit of God. It has been interesting to see how this has matured over the past six years and I praise God for this place and the courageous journey it has taken. John Arnott said at the Leaders School graduation. "I don't understand how it is that people object to the love of God and the expression of that love that is found here at TACF"

This is a servant people who have been willing to step out and serve the church and to love them with grace and humility. I observed this in 1997 and it was demonstrated again on this visit. Over the past ten years some 4 million people have passed through its doors. It has never judged those who have come. Whatever your background, church affiliation or nationality you are welcomed.

The school was the safest place I have ever experienced. Here we were allowed to be vulnerable and ourselves. Who we were was never an issue, it was a case of how can we serve and love you into a better and deeper understanding of God and his love for you and how can we be there for you as you journey towards a better understanding of yourself.

Over the four weeks the school takes you on a journey deeper into God. Some 50 students from the UK, Europe, Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, USA, Canada and ourselves from NZ. We were made up of a bishop, pastors and ministers of churches as small as 17 to 1000's but none of this mattered we were companions together on a common journey. Our small group leaders were often a lot younger than their group members, but had been through the school and knew the issues and cared for us with love and prayer.

Communicating with God

The first week we spent time learning again to listen to the voice of God. Lectures led by Dr Mark Virkler, an academic in his own right and principal of Christian Leadership University (USA) challenged us in depth to be attentive to the voice of God and why. He was able to bring together the academic and the experiential. Something too often not achieved in our Theological colleges. We were encouraged to do journaling – more than that we were expected to journal and time was given in class to do just that.

The Father Heart of God

Week two: Ed Piorek, a former Presbyterian minister and team member with John Wimber took us on a journey into "The Father's Love" He opened up to us the heart of God in ways I had never comprehended before. This teaching is also a core value of TACF, as are all the topics covered in the school, but it is this one that comes through more strongly than others. Out of this arises their passion and love and service for others.

As was said. Many thought TACF was about power and signs, but it never has been. It has always been about "the fathers love".

We were confronted by our own father experiences and the wounding we have had from the Father figures in our lives. We were also faced with our own failures as fathers. These were carefully and loving worked through. Healing and wholeness came with many telling of how they had at long last come to terms with past family hurts. Many letters and emails were sent home as a beginning of family reconciliation. In all this there was a release of blame and a deep expression of love and forgiveness. As the week went on and we

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understood with greater clarity the depth of God's love and desire for intimacy with us many stood taller and stronger than before.

Many tears were shed and much love was given. For me I heard the words of the father to his Son Jesus "This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased" I began to realise that I could stand with Jesus at that critical moment in his call into ministry and hear the father also affirm me. For this I was deeply grateful and felt years of pain and frustration melt away. I knew the father loved me. I knew it deep in my heart, mind, spirit, soul and it was all true.

Ed led us through the work of Henri Nouwen, James Dunn, John Piper, Clark Pinnock, the early fathers of the faith and others to make it clear that we are the objects of such love. The desire for intimacy between God and people as pictured in Adam in the garden of Eden is still the Fathers intention. In Christ we too can recover something of that intimacy albeit in a fallen state – but as forgiven sons and daughters.

Healing Life's Hurts

Week three was to take us on in our healing journey. A week given over to healing life's hurts, led by fellow New Zealanders Stuart and Lynley Allan, who are members of the TACF staff. The first two weeks were gentle and we felt cocooned in love. This week was rugged. We had been loved into a place where we could become serious about our inner life and were invited to face up to our inner judgements and vows. To the life choices and fantasies we have made to escape what hurt and what we didn't like.

On the Thursday whatever our belief in Christians being demonised we were given little choice but to go with the ministry – I would have to say that I left the prayer ministry lighter and happier and freer. A fortnight later I can say that I know that something profound happened in that week

Prophecy

The last week was given to prophecy led by Isabel and Ivan Allum, its practice and art. All the school had been building to this point. Motivated by love and having spent three weeks encouraging one another and seeking each others highest good we were in a wonderful place to speak into one another's lives and we did.

The pressure to not think up our own stuff but to listen and speak only, that which was given by the Spirit of God, was a bit tough to start with but soon we were working with it and again and again found that we were speaking specifically into each other's lives. This added wonderfully and securely to the healing and affirmation that had already taken place.

For me I found a profound affirmation of the call to ministry and what the future may hold for us. Another big plus is that I feel less anxious about speaking prophetically into people's lives.

Ministry Reflection

During this week I took the time to do some ministry reflection and that is written in a separate document and not for general publication. Suffice to say that this was an ideal environment to do such a reflection.

“Soaking”

One of the practices of TACF is “Soaking” this was where we spend extended times – 1-2 hours in silence with quite and sensitive music played in the background while we lay on the floor or sat in a comfortable place to pray and listen to God and enjoy him, this is a wonderful thing to do. In our overly busy lives to take the time to be still and with God was both refreshing and life giving. I highly recommend the discipline. TACF has just released “Soaking Kits” for churches to set up centres for people to gather and take this time with God.

During the school we spent at least one afternoon a week and two evenings “soaking” This will become part of my devotional life and I will encourage it within our church.

Graduation

Thursday 24 June was graduation day and we were all given a certificate, prayed for by John and Carol Arnott and had a dinner. If I could I would make such a school as this mandatory for ministers and those in ministry leadership.

A Final Word on TACF

TACF is an interesting place in that it calls you back. There is something about the place that attracts you. I think it is their selfless love and the way the Holy Spirit fills the place. You can't come for a couple of days and expect to get it all – my observation is that those who try this leave disappointed. But those who come for a week or more begin to discover the heart of this place.

There is nothing spectacular about it. The buildings aren't impressive, after all they are industrial buildings, so it is simply a place where God dwells in a particular way. I expect to be back, I also expect to see or hear from many of our new friends with whom we journeyed in the most intimate and vulnerable way.

It may be of interest to note that the church 4 times a year take the school to 3rd world countries at its own expense and is hoping to also go to western nations at the expense of those who would attend. I have volunteered to be a contact for NZ and would love to see such a school run here.

The Releasers of Life Equipping School

A popular conference since 1996, the Releasers mandate is to awaken, equip and release women into their calling and potential in the body of Christ; to lift off weights of bondage, shame and perceived inability to function alongside men in declaring and doing the works of the Kingdom; to bring them into wholeness with a strong foundation in the Word, growing in the knowledge of who they are in Christ and who He is in them.

This 2003 Releasers of Life Conference/Equipping School will be a one-week program beginning Sunday evening and ending after the Friday evening meeting. The school program differs from other years in that there is a general morning and evening session each day where all sit under the ministry of one "equipper", then break into three specific classes of choice each afternoon.

There were five speakers, one from each of the five fold ministry giftings

On many days at the Leader's School there was a quick word spoken over us all. Again and again, from people who did not know me, came the same pattern. For me there was confirmation that the dreams I have carried and the words God has spoken to me, as a young child and teenager were indeed his calling on my life. Moreover the time for them to begin to come into being was now. As a result of these I attended the three apostolic workshops and a prophetic and teaching one on the other two days.

Brief summary of each gift.

Each gift has a specific area

Apostles love to see the body of Christ grow

Prophets love Jesus

Pastors love people who are saved

Evangelists love people who are unsaved

Teachers love the Word rather than people

Apostle

The apostolic gifting is being restored, beginning 1990s, to prepare the bride for the bridegroom. This means we are part of the first generation to have all five equipping gifts in operation. As yet there seem to be very few mature apostles but they are in the process of being restored to the church. A mark of an apostle is his /her passion to see the church grow and come into scriptural order. The role of apostle is a 'fathering' one more than a church planting one. This will include a restructuring of ministry so that all the five equipping gifts are effective to release the whole body into ministry. It seems to be usual for apostles to have a definite time in their lives when they had an encounter with God that they can look back to know that God has called them. They will be passionate intercessors and very obedient to God's instructions rather than human wisdom. It is assumed here that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is normal for every believer. Not every church will have an apostle but every believer would benefit from having contact with an apostolic team through the local church. Signs and wonders will follow a mature apostle.

Prophet

Since the 1980s the prophetic gifting has been in the process of being restored to bring life to the church. Prophecy is about sharing God's love. The prophet will draw on the Father's never ending supply of love to give out to others. The prophet will call people into God's presence. The problem of the prophetic is often the vessel. Churches shut out prophecy to shut out problems but if you have an ox you will have a mess. The enemy wants to close down the prophetic to close down life and vision. The rise in interest in the occult is related to the church not being able to give the comfort and word from the Lord that we have been gifted to do. Prophecy will console, confirm, and create. Where the Holy Spirit is, so will be prophecy. People especially gifted in this way have a high level of sensitivity, which opens them to wounding and rejection in life, the reason for the vessel problems. It is church's job to bring the healing love of the Father to all. Prophecy from the Father's heart will bring love and hope, not judgment and more pain. When prophetic people are denied their place in the body the 'eagle' that God meant for the health of the church can turn into the 'vulture' as they cope with the pain. Good guidelines are essential, no dates, mates or babies. All prophecy must be tested. It is to be expected that every believer will be able to prophesy to some degree. The prophet must be in right relationship to a church and is not responsible for the word given being put into action.

Teacher

“The world is not looking for truth but comfort and relief from life”. This goes against the grain for many teachers. Jesus taught using stories that related to the people rather than the academic that churches often emphasise. Scripture does not command us to study (our understanding) but meditate on the word so the Holy Spirit can bring it to life in us. This is a right brain not left brain activity hence quite foreign to many of us westerners especially men.

Evangelist

We think the world is resistant but they are not resisting Jesus but our forms of him and are anti-institutional. We need compassion to let them know that Jesus is good, that he is not mad at them but loved them enough to die for them. If we believe the gospel works, it will, through us. The world is not desperate for the truth but for relief from the pain and struggle. They are looking for people who are real. People were around Jesus because the anointing flowed from him. Unsaved people like the anointing. (Religious people may be jealous of it) He was likable. We fear the undesirable parts of creation i.e. smells, more than we fear the creator and his commands so don't want to be in the hard places. Our ministry will be worked out in our lives where we are first. We are to share the little we have first. The anointing on our lives is for others and will only grow by giving ourselves to others.

Pastor

A pastor's job is to perfect the saints. The people will feel uncomfortable as they move out from hiding behind others and find their own place of ministry. God is in the restoration business not the cut off and throw out one. It is imperative that the people know from experience the love the Father has for them, as that is what they will take with them to minister to others. The sheep need to know the shepherd's voice and follow him.

Where to from here?

1. As leaders we must lead the people into God's presence
2. As leaders we must know from experience the Father's love
3. As leaders we must be continually experiencing God's healing in our lives. Our insecurities will hinder the church.
4. As leaders we must make room for those that are called to minister to the body
5. As leaders we must encourage all to find their place of ministry in the world
6. The church (including the wider church) must identify those that God has called to be released so that all churches will have the advantage of on-going ministry from each of the five equipping gifts. The clergy cannot be expected to provide all as Jesus did. Who are our prophets? Who are our apostles? Who are our evangelists?

Are the teachers free to spend much of their time teaching? Are the pastors growing the people so that they become mature?

7. We need to encourage the healing ministry in all forms, physical, emotional and spiritual and train those who are especially called to it. Who are our leaders in this field? This will involve ensuring there is a safe place for healing to occur. It is important for leaders to receive prayer from the people as well as the other way around.
8. The assumption is that hearing God speak is a normal everyday occurrence.
9. We need to be familiar with and at ease using the spiritual tools that have been given to us especially prophecy, prayer language and word of knowledge.
10. What are the dreams and visions that God has planted in us over the years that need to be restored and prayed into being?
11. We need to be aware of God's seasons. Today he is calling Jesus' bride to wholeness and holiness structurally, relationally and personally. Are we focusing on preparing the Bride for the bridegroom? Are we hearing his call?

Women of Destiny Conference

Kingdom Faith Centre (Colin Urquhart)

Horsham UK

Speaker- Mary Alice Isleib is an ordained minister based in the USA who travels speaking and equipping churches in the fields of prayer and emotional wholeness.

This was a one day event

She was encouraging women to excel in whatever area of life that they feel God has called them to, as there is a need for strong women of faith in every area of society.

She encouraged us to take up the ministry gifts that God has given us and use them.

It is time for men and women to be working side by side.

For those of us called to be apostolic, we were reminded of the necessity of having all areas of our life in order and continue seeking the Lord for the way to move forward.

We were challenged to identify with our land (also spiritual) and take a prayerful responsibility and fight for God's kingdom to be established there.

She spoke of the need for continual healing of the emotions for us all and the testimony that will be to the non-believers. We were encouraged to seek healing from any shame that we had taken upon us from feelings of inadequacy or unworthiness so that we face the world openly

Mediation Skills Training Institute

LOMBARD MENNONITE PEACE CENTER
First Congregational church, Glen Ellyn Chicago, USA 4-9 August 03

The week at the Mediation Training was intense, we started at 9am and worked through to 5pm each day with little let up, however it was well run and our time management was such that we were kept awake and active through out the week.

Richard (Dick) Blackburn knew his material well and was clearly very skilled in the art of mediation and had a lot of integrity to the way he carries out this ministry within the church. I felt that there was some real hope in finding an authentic restorative model for reconciliation and healing in the church.

This training is based on the fact that conflict is normal and inevitable in any setting. It is attended by clergy and lay leaders, the institute focuses on: individual styles of response to conflict; win-win negotiation skills; skills to mediate conflict between individuals; and tools to effectively manage congregational conflict. A component on group consultation and intervention is also included. Specific attention is given to mediation conflict in the church, though the skills gained are also helpful in other settings including the home, the school, and the workplace.

The Mediation Skills Training Institute has also been described by participants as being "A great event for developing skills in working with conflict in the church," and as "Well worth your investment of self as well as resources." One participant concluded, "You must take one week out of your life to do this!"

LMPC is committed to the mission of helping the church grow into health and wholeness, into all that Christ wants the church to be. LMPC pursues that mission by conducting workshops on biblical peacemaking and conflict resolution skills and by providing mediation and consultation services for conflicted churches in addition to offering several Mediation Skills Training.

Summary of the Sessions

The institute involved a combination of input, discussion, and guided roleplays. Active and practical in focus, the institute emphasized hands-on skills training and real-life roleplays based on the kinds of conflicts faced by participants.

DAY 1

Introduction: The Nature and Role of Conflict

Conflict is often approached with fear and anxiety due to the typically negative view we have of conflict. In the session we will suggest that conflict need not be bad, but that it can be an opportunity for growth if approached by using skills and strategies which we can all learn and practice.

Conflict in the Bible: Finding Renewal in Conflict

The Bible supports a positive view of conflict, indeed the Bible makes it clear that conflict can be an arena for divine revelation.

Understanding Your own Preferred Style of Response to Conflict

Because conflict is ultimately a very personal matter, one must first assess what one's preferred conflict response style is, before knowing how to work at developing more appropriate and healthy styles. Participants will take a self-assessment exercise designed not only to provide insight into oneself, but also to help one understand and respond appropriately to the conflict styles of others.

Your Personal Style Profile for Communication at Work

Conflict often results from the fact that people have different styles of relating to others. Participants will fill out a survey, which helps one to identify one's own personal style; we'll then outline the basic characteristics of the various styles, highlighting some of their differences and how such differences can cause conflict.

Affirming Your Strengths and Managing Your Excesses

Continuing the discussion of personal styles, we will identify conflict prevention strategies which grow out of maximizing the inherent strengths of one's personal style, appealing to the strengths of others, and working at managing the potential excesses inherent in one's style.

DAY 2

Interpersonal Peacemaking Skills: How to Be Effective When People are Angry

The full range of communication skills which are useful in resolving conflict will be discussed, with particular attention given to listening and other collaborative skills. Given the "hands-on" nature of the training, participants will have ample opportunity to practice the skills during the sessions.

Interpersonal Peacemaking skills: Negotiating Win-Win Solutions

The session will outline the theory of principled, win-win negotiation and how such precepts can transform the way one addresses conflict. Guided roleplays will give participants an opportunity to fine-tune their negotiation skills.

Mediating Conflict Between Individuals: An Overview of the Process

The session will introduce mediation as a process for resolving conflict cooperatively through face-to-face dialogue with the assistance of an impartial third-party facilitator. The session will conclude with an overview of the process and a demonstration roleplay which will give participants an opportunity to see how the process actually works.

Mediation Skills: Getting People to the Table

After looking at an overview of the mediation process, each phase will be explored in greater depth. In this session, the various strategies employed in the pre-mediation stage will be explored, with a focus on overcoming the obstacles erected by resistant parties.

Mediation Skills: The Introduction Stage

The session will equip participants to be able to begin the mediation session with a sense of purpose and order, while also helping disputants understand the mediation process and the role of the mediator.

DAY 3

Mediation Skills: The Story-Telling Stage

The session will highlight the importance of building rapport with disputants, in addition to gathering information about the conflict, while each party shares their perspective without interruption. Participants will have an opportunity to practice their rapport building skills in a guided roleplay.

Mediation Skills: The Problem-Solving Stage

The session will outline both healing strategies and the various steps toward helping parties to resolve the substantive issues in a dispute. Again a guided roleplay will provide opportunity for practice and reflection on the various strategies employed.

Mediation Skills: The Agreement Stage

The session will highlight the importance of building clear and balanced agreements on the substantive issues in a dispute, formalizing the agreement on paper, and ending with a sense of celebration, while providing the opportunity for genuine reconciliation to occur. Another roleplay will give participants an opportunity to work through all the various stages.

DAY 4

Mediating Multi-Party Disputes

As we move into a discussion of group conflict, participants will begin the day with a final mediation roleplay of a complex multi-party dispute. The roleplay will challenge participants to draw upon all of their skills learned in the previous days.

Congregational Conflict: Understanding Conflict in Groups

The dynamics of group conflict are such that groups can either be torn apart or bound even closer together by conflict. The session will help participants to be able to properly classify the nature of the conflict being faced, in addition to understanding the issue of powerlessness and how it can impact a conflict situation.

Family Systems Theory and Church Conflict

Family systems theory helps us to understand the patterns of interaction that enhance or inhibit problem solving in ongoing relationships. The sessions will introduce some of the family systems principles useful when analysing a system's functioning. Strategies will be suggested for surfacing the dysfunctional patterns, which often turn out to be among the root causes of conflict in the church.

Designing Effective Group Decision-Making Procedures

In order to manage current conflicts and prevent future conflicts, leaders need to be able to implement decision-making procedures, which confront the issues directly while giving opportunity for all sides to be heard. The session will empower leaders to be able to manage conflict in a way that enhances the spirit of community within groups.

Congregational Conflict: Structuring Dialogue When Anxiety is High

The session will outline various strategies for mediating group conflict through techniques, which allow concerns to be aired, but within a controlled context that fosters genuine listening on the part of all parties.

DAY 5

Mediating Congregational Disputes: An Overview of the Intervention Process

The session will outline the various phases for serving as an outside consultant to church divided by conflict. A roleplay, to be used the rest of the day, will also be introduced.

Mediation Skills: Early Phases of the Intervention

The discussion of group consulting skills continues with a more in-depth look at the contracting, education, and information gathering phases of the intervention process. Participants will practice various aspects of these phases with the aid of the guided roleplay.

Mediation Skills: Healing and Problem-Solving Phases

Input will include guidelines for using the neutralizing history process and facilitating the various aspects of problem solving within a large group setting. The previously introduced roleplay will be continued as a way of giving participants an opportunity to practice their skills.

Mediation Skills: Bringing Closure to the Intervention

The session will outline the reporting process and various options for structuring a closing reconciliation service. Participants will again practice some of the techniques as they conclude the day's roleplay.

Outcomes and applications:

Attending such a course asks the question what I would do with it. I have a certificate for the event and am able to include the fact that I have attended 32 hours of mediation training in my CV. But is this all it is good for? I certainly hope not.

We have been told that we are now able to run the course "Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches" This course is part of the education programme produced by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Centre and is also a critical course for the journey towards resolution of conflict in churches. So it can be used in two settings; (a) to educate church leaders and members about conflict and how to manage it, and (b) it is part of the education phase when working with a church to resolve its conflict.

The programme may look something like this:

Friday:	7.00-8.15pm	Introduction: The Nature and Role of Conflict
	8.15-8.30	Conflict in the New Testament: Finding Renewal in Conflict
	8.30-9.30	Break Understanding your own style of response to conflict.
Saturday:	9.00-10.30	Discover your personal style profile for communications in Groups Interpreting your personal style profile: Your unique strengths and potential excesses
	10.30-10.45	Break
	10.45-12.0	Interpersonal peacemaking skills: How to be effective when people are angry
	12.00-1.00	Lunch
	1.00-2.30	Congregational conflict: The dynamics of conflict in the Church
	2.30-2.45	Break
	2.45-4.0	Congregational conflict: Managing conflict in the church

I have real interest in **developing the programme** in both these settings. I am also interested in **building a mediation team** that can be taken into churches as mediators. I shall be exploring this possibility with a

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number of folk known to me who may have an interest in this. One of the observations that I made during the training is the need to have co-mediators who work as a team thinking and interpreting the process together. It was the fact that the programme has been developed on a team basis that attracts me to it as a useful tool. It also needs to be noted that this training can be used in secular mediation.

One of the comments made about mediators was that they couldn't be seen as part of the authority structure of the church. That is to say they cannot be seen as people who have the power to decide the future of the church and especially its paid staff. If the mediators are perceived to be part of the disciplinary process of the church they cease to be effective. It also needs to be noted that the only report made by the mediators is the agreement that is reached at the end of the process between the disputing parties. No other documentation is kept or made public. Any breach of this will neutralise the trust necessary between the mediator and those who are in dispute.

It is also my hope to attend either an advanced Mediation training programme in the future or a Healthy Congregations Workshop.

Bringing Mediation Skills Training Institute to New Zealand

Richard Blackburn has indicated a real interest in coming to New Zealand to run courses here and I am very willing to act as a liaison person for this.

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Evangelism in Third Millennium	Jim Wallace	Reality	36	
Meeting the secular mind in uncertain times	Jon Paulien	Ministry	March	2003
Faith in the Work Place	Julian Doorey	Reality	38	2000
Believing without belonging	Kevin Ward	Reality	43	2001
Christendom, Clericalism, Church and Context	Kevin Ward	sPanz	February	2002
Churches which are Growing	Kevin Ward	Reality	45	2001
Religion in the Post Aquarian Age	Kevin Ward	Presbyterian Church		2000
Rugby and the Church: Worlds in Conflict	Kevin Ward	Reality	53	2002
The Church – an Anachronism or God's Agent	Kevin Ward	sPanz	February	2002
Translating the Gospel	Michael Frost			
Outside Looking In	Michael Mead	sPanz	February	2002
Postmodernity: What in the World is going on?	Mike Riddell, Mark Pierson & Cathy Kirkpatrick	Reality	47	
Process versus instant evangelism	Miroslav Pujic	Ministry	March	2003
Christians and the New Pagans	Nicola Hoggan Creegan	Reality	44	2001

Reconciliation Redemption & Renewal

The Human Universals of Culture: Implications for Contextualization	Not given	International Journal for Frontier Missions	July-Sept	1995
Postmodernism and implications for Evangelism	Paul Cracknell			2002
Ministers Emerging in the Marketplace	Rich Marshall			
A New Generation Leading the Church in a New Millennium	Steve Taylor	Reality	41	2001
Post Modern – Between a Rock and a Hard Place	Thomas Hohstadt			2002
Manifesto for the Future	Tony Whittaker	Internet Evangelism Conference	November	2000

Books

Title	Author	Publisher	Year
Communion with God	Mark and Patti Virkler	Destiny Image	1995 (revision)
The Apostle's Notebook	Mike Breen	Kingsway	2002
Reaching the Invisible God	Philip Yancey	OMF Literature	2000
Experiencing the Fathers Embrace	Jack Frost	Strange Communication Company	2002
Extraordinary Relationships	Roberta M Gilbert MD	Wiley	1992
How to Reach Secular People	George A Hunter III	Abingdon Press	1992
New Canterbury Tales	George Lings The Sheffield Centre	Encounters on the Edge – Church Army UK	No 7
The Enigma of Alternative Worship	George Lings The Sheffield Centre	Encounters on the Edge – Church Army UK	No 12
The Father loves You	Ed Piorek	Vineyard International Publishing	1999
The Father Revealed	G Craig Lauterbach	Evergreen Press	2003
Managing Church Conflict	Hugh F Halverstadt	Westminster/John Knox Press	1991
Mass Planting	George Lings The Sheffield Centre	Encounters on the Edge – Church Army UK	No 16

For Light Reading

The Shelters of Stone Vol 5 in Earths Children series	Jean M Auel	Coronet Books	2002
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