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## Preface

The 2008 General Assembly affirmed the concept of a 'mixed economy church' within the Church of Scotland where both existing expressions and fresh expressions of church co-exist, not at the expense of each other, but for the benefit of the whole. That Assembly also instructed the Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils to form a Joint Working Party to consider some of the theological and practical implications of 'Emerging Church' and mission and to report to a future General Assembly.

In 2009 a report was presented to the General Assembly. This began by discussing some of the problems of definition and suggested that emerging church might be better viewed as a sensibility than a movement. It went on to describe some of the features of this sensibility before describing how it was both rooted in, and offered a challenge to, the Church of Scotland.

The Joint Working Party faced a dilemma after the Assembly accepted this report. On the one hand it was clear that there was a need for ongoing theological reflection about the new models of church emerging in Scotland. On the other, faced with a huge subject, while having limited time and resources, it was unclear what the Working Party could do that would be of genuine benefit.

The Working Party concluded that a piece of contextual theology would serve best. If the previous report was primarily conceptual, that is based on debates taking place in academic circles, this report is rooted in the actual experience of some new models of church. The Church of Scotland is funding an increasing number of these through its Emerging Ministries Fund. So the Working Party commissioned some research in order to discover the theology and understanding of church and mission expressed in the life of some of these new models.

John Drane and Olive Fleming Drane conducted the research on behalf of the Joint Working Party. They are perhaps, uniquely qualified to conduct this, combining proximity with perspective.

John and Olive have lived, worked and worshipped in Scotland for most of their adult lives. They have an intuitive understanding of the church in Scotland because they have been, and still are, part of it. They understand its culture, its history and its character from the inside. In addition John taught Religious Studies at Stirling University (1977-1998) and Practical Theology at Aberdeen University (1998-2004). Over the years he has contributed to the Church of Scotland in many ways.

Throughout their careers John and Olive have been particularly interested in new patterns of spirituality, worship and church. Olive's MTh research was an ethnographic study of Sanctus I, which was one of the earliest examples of a new form of church for the 21st century to be sponsored

by the Church of England, to reach the growing population in Manchester city centre. Increasingly they have found themselves focusing on the phenomenon that is sometimes called, emerging church, or fresh expressions of church or new models of church.

While still based in Aberdeenshire John and Olive have an extensive ministry throughout the country and the world. Both of them are Fellows of St John's College in the University of Durham, as well as being adjunct professors in the School of Theology at Fuller Seminary, California. They are also regular visitors to Australasia, where they have worked with denominations that are pioneering new forms of church, as well as teaching at theological colleges in Sydney and Adelaide. They are also involved in the Church of England's Fresh Expression initiative, particularly in the *Mission Shaped Ministries* course that it has developed. John serves on its Board and both he and Olive are Associate Missioners with Fresh Expressions. As a result they combine writing, researching, and discussing emerging church issues with mentoring and encouraging individuals who are developing new models of church. The global spread of their contacts gives them a perspective on the subject, which both informs and is informed by their involvement with the church in Scotland.

The Working Party is grateful to the leaders and members of the Ark, City Life, Fridays in Faith and Hot Chocolate for their willingness to participate and tell their story. The Working Party asks the Church to commend their creativity and courage and to pray God's blessing on them and all others developing new models of church as they strive to share in the mission of Jesus Christ.

The Working Party is grateful to John and Olive for the care with which they engaged with these four initiatives, for the depth and quality of their reflection and for their insight that helps to place this story in the wider context of the Church of Jesus Christ, not simply in Scotland, but across the world.

With this report the Joint Working Party concludes the task it was set up for. It does not suggest that the task of reflecting on emerging church and mission is complete. The church will always be engaged in ongoing theological reflection. The Working Party offers the research John and Olive have undertaken to the church for study and reflection. It suggests that the Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils should consider the issues that have been raised in the final section (Conclusions) and to report to a future Assembly. At the same time as they do this, the whole church will be considering the report. Out of that mix a particular issue may emerge for further study. At that point the Assembly may create a group for that purpose.

**Neil Dougall**

Convener, Joint Working Party on the Emerging Church

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# Reformed, Reforming, Emerging, and Experimenting

A study in contextual theology reflecting the experiences of initiatives in emerging ministry being funded by the Church of Scotland

This Report was commissioned by a Joint Working Party of the Ministries Council and the Mission and Discipleship Council and written by John Drane and Olive Fleming Drane. This summary has been compiled by members of the Joint Working Party.

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Introduction sets out the remit of the Report, setting it against the backdrop of a post-Christian society generally. Churches worldwide now accept that there are ways of being church other than the traditional and seek to relate to emerging (or emergent) churches or fresh expressions. Church without Walls (in Scotland) and Mission-Shaped Church (in England) in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century laid a foundation for this. The Church of England embraced the principle of a mixed economy by creating Fresh Expressions. One of its most significant initiatives is the *Mission Shaped Ministry* training course (already piloted in Scotland). The Introduction describes how emerging church has been discussed within the Church of Scotland and the progress to date, up to the operation of the Emerging Ministries Fund. Following discussion of the choice of terminology for this phenomenon used within the Church of Scotland, the Introduction concludes by setting out the methodology used in compiling the Report.

### The Four Initiatives

The four initiatives described are:

- Hot Chocolate (Dundee) – formed to provide hospitality for young people who gather around the city centre Steeple Church where it is hosted. The Church of Scotland is one of several partners.
- Citylife (Edinburgh) – the longest established of the initiatives but currently in a transitional stage, Citylife aims to effect long-term change amongst inner city communities by working with, and caring for, children, young people and their families.
- Fridays in Faith (Annan) – through a monthly gathering, aims to meet the spiritual needs of people of all ages who for a variety of reasons would be unreachable by traditional forms of church.
- ARK: Actively Reaching Kids (Newmains) - substantial numbers of children and parents attend and, while still related to the parent churches, Coltness Memorial and Bonkle, the ARK shows potential for separate life.

### Reflections

Although diverse in character, the four initiatives show common characteristics such as nurturing community, being constantly changing, basing themselves in the gospels, and providing 'servant' leadership by lay people. Similar developments, which can be traced in Scottish church history from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to Victorian times, have always faced the criticism that they are not 'real' church, leading to a clash of cultures. Particularly unhelpful is the notion that the purpose of emerging ministries is to act as feeders to the established church whereas the reality is that they can only survive by remaining true to their own cultural context. Since both emerging and traditional church share identical aspirations, and there is considerable common ground between them, it is regrettable that dialogue appears so difficult, especially as the Reformed understanding of the Church implies a provisional character (reformed and reforming). The stark choice for the Church of Scotland now is to do nothing or accept change as an inescapable feature of 21<sup>st</sup> Century life. The latter will involve finding a balance between not devaluing tradition while encouraging creativity. There is no simple answer as discipleship and mission are, unfortunately, 'messy' categories. The reflections conclude with a helpful analogy of the 'lake and river church' exemplified through the work of Phil Potter in one part of England.

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## Conclusions

### 4.1 Emerging leaders and the institution.

- All four initiatives feel that they are in the Church but not of it. Lessons could be learned from the model of Bishop's Mission Orders, which have benefited the Church of England, by facilitating the development of other forms of church alongside existing parishes.
- Some emerging leaders believe too close an engagement with traditional church will be detrimental to the life of new faith communities.
- This clash of cultures is not restricted to the church. It reflects a wider clash between two different ways of looking at the world, and their understanding of the importance of order and structure.

### 4.2 Expanding the structures

- The Church of Scotland requires inspirational leadership and creative theological reflection to help it understand and respond to the missional imperative it is facing.
- Possibly Presbyteries could recognise and actively pursue the establishment of network parishes or a (short-term) formal network of experimental initiatives to see what evolves in an organic way.
- The Church of Scotland might consider full partnership in Fresh Expressions as a way forward.
- Already The Ark and Fridays in Faith could easily be recognised as 'congregations' but two basic issues require to be addressed. First, the need for new structures e.g. to allow Ark members to 'join' that expression of their church. Secondly, the Church's understanding of ministry (i.e. sacraments and ordination), a topic which the Report declines to engage with more extensively except to observe that it is the 'elephant in the room'.
- Leaders of the groups emphasise 'celebration' rather than 'definition' and would welcome affirmation by the Church of the ministry they are already exercising. Two questions arise: how might the Church wish to affirm those already engaged in this work? How will the Church develop a strategic missional approach to deployment of missional pioneers alongside parish ministers?

### 4.3 Needs and opportunities

- All leaders interviewed speak of the need for companions/mentors (not managers). That is people who can help them nurture their own spirituality while working with them on theological reflection.
- The Church of Scotland requires high profile theological heavyweights, possibly on a voluntary basis, to act as advocates of this movement.
- Many misunderstandings between Emerging Ministries Task Group (EMTG) and groups arise as an unintended consequence of the arcane language relating to Church functions. The work of EMTG is hampered by high turnover of its membership, which militates against long-term strategic thinking.
- The Report recommends the Emerging Ministries Fund to be more proactive in seeking out gaps in provision, specifically identifying older people as one such group.

### 4.4 Attitude and Ethos

- There is an obvious need for open conversation among interested parties. Leaders contrasted openness among themselves with their experience of traditional church gatherings. Ironically, the established Church seems comfortable with inclusivity in civic and social policy but can be uneasy with this in church matters.
- 'The Spirit of God blows in unpredictable ways, some of which fly in the face of inherited ecclesiastical polity. To determine whether the emerging church is one of them will require serious engagement with spiritual discernment, as well as meetings of church committees that spend as much time in prayer as they do in discussion.'



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Here we offer proposals for particular aspects of church practice and structure that could be adjusted or reimagined in order to reflect the experience of the initiatives in emerging ministries, including some issues of considerable theological and organisational substance as well as practical matters that would facilitate more effective recognition of the initiatives within the life of the wider church.

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**John Drane**

**Olive Fleming Drane**

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## 1.1 The Emerging Church and Fresh Expressions

**1.1.1** The underlying questions which inspired this particular project were not new when they first began to be discussed in the councils of the church in 2005-06. For something like fifty years there has been a steady decline in church membership and attendance from its high point in the 1950s and a gradual recognition that, notwithstanding its position as the national church, the Church of Scotland was no longer able to claim the allegiance of anything like a majority of the Scottish people. This phenomenon is by no means unique to the experience of the Church of Scotland: similar stories of decline characterise all the state churches of Europe, and even the newer independent churches that came to prominence through the influence of the charismatic movement in the 1970s and 1980s. All are now facing the same challenges of declining congregations and lack of engagement with society at large.

**1.1.2** While a minority would seek the causes of such decline in things like a lack of commitment among Christians, or a loss of faith in some previously pristine version of the Gospel, it is widely agreed by missiologists and church leaders that the malaise is much deeper than that, and by no means all of it can be attributed to failures on the part of the Church. The cultural changes that first became evident in the 1960s have accelerated at an ever faster pace in the last twenty years, as attitudes and understandings that had been taken for granted for centuries were questioned and, in many cases, abandoned, while the speed of technological innovation over the same period of time has permanently changed the way that we now communicate with one another and, consequently, the nature of community and of human relationships. Moreover, with an expanding global awareness, Christians in the global north have come to realise that their own inherited ways of being the church are not the only ones possible, and that the search for some pure form of faith might actually be misguided, as all traditions have insights and understandings that offer authentic expressions of Christian spirituality.

**1.1.3** The search for contextually appropriate ways of expressing Christian community is nothing new to this generation. There have always been groups of Christians who experimented with pushing the boundaries of conventional religious discourse and praxis, and the Reformers themselves were such people. More recently, concern to find new ways of being an effective church for the 21<sup>st</sup> century has sprung up in pockets right across the theological and ecclesiastical spectrum. The cover of Matthew Fox's book *A New Reformation* explicitly makes that connection with its picture of him nailing his own theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg.<sup>1</sup> Others, while not having quite the same flamboyance, have engaged with some enthusiasm in the effort to redefine faith for today's culture. Whether it be Bishop John Shelby Spong<sup>2</sup> and Marcus Borg<sup>3</sup> at what would traditionally have been described as the 'liberal' end of the spectrum, or people like Bishop Tom Wright<sup>4</sup> and Stanley Hauerwas<sup>5</sup> at the more 'conservative' end, there is widespread agreement that the church can no

longer continue to do 'business as usual', and there is a need for some radical and far reaching reappraisal of what it means to follow Jesus in faithful discipleship – which, in turn, has inescapable consequences for the future shape of the church as the community of those disciples.

**1.1.4** In the last ten years or so, these questions have given rise to a considerable worldwide network of church leaders, theologians and missiologists which has come to be known as the 'emerging' or 'emergent' church movement. This is not the place to engage in any extensive analysis of the movement as a whole, though it is worth identifying some of the streams which feed into it. The most broadly based study to date is that of Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, reflecting research conducted in the opening years of this century<sup>6</sup>.

Though they acknowledge that 'the emerging church spans a range of church traditions'<sup>7</sup> their perspective is much narrower than that might suggest and, with only one or two exceptions, the groups and individuals they mention are in some way participants in debates among conservative evangelical Christians that can be traced back to Dave Tomlinson's book, *The Post-evangelical*.<sup>8</sup> It is certainly the case that many of those who would identify with the 'post-evangelical' label have engaged with some enthusiasm in the search for new ways of being church, and these are the voices that often shout most loudly through their websites and published works. But to understand the emerging church only in that context is to underestimate the extent to which this is a movement that genuinely transcends sectarian arguments of that sort. Other key influences can be traced to Lesslie Newbigin and Raymond Fung, both of them committed ecumenists who resisted being tagged with an evangelical (or any other) label.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, though Gibbs and Bolger credit African-American church leader Karen Ward with coining the phrase in 2000 with the launch of a website ([www.emergingchurch.info](http://www.emergingchurch.info)), both the terminology and the underlying questions had been around in wider church circles long before then, and what might have been the first such experiment in the context of a mainstream denomination had been started in 1989 by Mark Pierson and Mike Riddell in Auckland, New Zealand: *Parallel Universe*, which was a church for club culture.<sup>10</sup>

One might suggest that it was in 2000 that some who up to that point had been confined within an evangelical ghetto began to engage with questions that more mainstream Christians had been grappling with for some time.<sup>11</sup>

**1.1.5** The first traceable appearance of the term 'emerging church' was in the title of a book by William Kalt and Ronald Wilkins, *The Emerging Church* (Chicago: Henry Regnery 1968), whose thinking grew out of their experience as Roman Catholic missionaries in a non-western setting, and the realisation that the challenges of communicating the Gospel in that cross-cultural context were exactly the same as those that were looming for the Western churches in a culture that was no longer going to assume Christian beliefs and values as the norm.<sup>12</sup>

The German Catholic theologian Johann Baptist Metz adopted the terminology in his book, *The Emergent Church: the future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World* (New York: Crossroad 1981), the themes of which (if not always

the actual word) were restated and expanded in his later work, *Faith and the Future*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1995). These works proved to be seminal for the later discussions, and introduced several key themes that are still central to the ongoing discussion:

- The understanding that we now live in a post-Christendom context, in which the church can no longer expect its voice to be either heard or taken seriously as if by right.
- A recognition that Western culture is now therefore a mission context, with the consequent need for Christians to 'learn the language of the culture', which might be in terms of values and attitudes but is increasingly the new language of the mass media (including especially film) and of the technologies which serve as its main vehicles.
- A call to be 'radical' in the literal meaning of the word, namely a return to the roots of the faith, asking fundamental questions about the nature of discipleship and what it means to be a community of faith that is continuous with the historic tradition while being appropriately contextualised in today's rather different cultural situation.

For Roman Catholic missions in the last decades of the twentieth century the practical outworking of this sort of thinking included the rise of base Christian communities, with their 'back to the roots' style of both believing and gathering, a new awareness of the ministry of all God's people with a consequently clearer definition of the role of the priesthood, a re-appropriation of Christian history, especially the structured lifestyles of religious orders, a fresh appreciation for the Bible, and a renewed commitment to issues of justice and peace – all of which was fully in line with the documents of the Second Vatican Council. In Scotland, the Iona Community reflects some similar concerns, and while the terminology might be different and the influences more diverse, the emerging church conversation taking place today is still largely focused on exactly these issues. The tendency in some circles to dismiss the emerging church as a trendy movement originating among disenfranchised conservative evangelicals offers a jaundiced and one-sided view of the matter, and is by no means the whole story. Ultimately, it may not be the most important part of the story, for one outcome of this movement is a realignment of Christians from diverse backgrounds into a new consensus that sees mission as being at the heart of the renewal of the church with a willingness to learn from many different traditions, including especially a rediscovery of some key spiritual practices from the ancient catholic and Celtic churches.<sup>13</sup>

**1.1.6** Recent developments in the UK highlight this more catholic and ecumenical nature of the 'emerging' conversation. In January 2004, the Church of England's General Synod received a report with the innocuous sounding title, *Mission-Shaped Church*, the contents of which largely reflected the sort of concerns just outlined above, with a particular emphasis on cultural change and its implications for the life of the church. In its core thinking, it was not so very different

from the Church of Scotland's *Church Without Walls* report that was approved by the 2001 General Assembly, and some acknowledgment was made of that fact.<sup>14</sup>

But whereas *Church Without Walls* generally envisaged new forms of church emerging within the established institutional structures of the church, with the concept of 'congregation' as traditionally understood at its centre (albeit worshipping in a different style), *Mission-Shaped Church* identified a whole series of entirely new ways of expressing faith in a corporate setting and offered them as case studies and models that the Church was invited to learn from and embrace. These included so-called 'alternative worship' communities, base ecclesial communities, cafe church, cell church, community development initiatives, traditional churches with multiple diverse worship styles and groups, network churches, school-based churches, 'seeker friendly' churches, youth churches, and new monasticism – as well as traditional churches that were just doing traditional things but doing them really well.

**1.1.7** It is significant that in the English context there were already in 2004 a sufficiently large number of such experiments taking place for them to be noticed in an official report, and they had been in existence for long enough for their characteristics to have become clear. The common features identified in what might otherwise look like a somewhat diffuse and disconnected collection of initiatives included the following:<sup>15</sup>

- Small groups as the heart of discipleship and relational mission.
- They do not meet on Sunday mornings (or, for that matter, on Sunday evenings).
- They connect to a particular network of people that is relationally orientated rather than geographically (parish) based.
- They are post-denominational, not in the sense of being anti-denominational, but rather that denominational distinctives mean nothing to those who come to faith with no previous church connection.
- They tend to have connections to wider networks which share the same vision, rather than necessarily finding common cause with other churches in neighbouring parishes.

Instead of calling these initiatives 'emerging churches', they were intentionally called 'fresh expressions of church', the reason being that this phrase has resonances with the Declaration of Assent made by Anglican clergy at their licensing.<sup>16</sup>

Within less than a year of the report's acceptance, there was a growing movement to encourage such fresh expressions of church throughout the dioceses of the Church of England, and very soon thereafter the Methodist Church joined in a formal partnership to promote similar initiatives in its various districts. Under the leadership of the Revd Dr Steven Croft (previously a theological college principal and now Bishop of Sheffield), Fresh Expressions was established



as an identifiable movement, and the recommendations of *Mission-Shaped Church* began to be implemented and became the inspiration for creative initiatives throughout the country, and in all sections of the church as defined by the inherited theological and ecclesiastical conventions. At an early stage, a working definition of a Fresh Expression was adopted:

- A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples. It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.

**1.1.8** The practical outcome of this understanding (which had been carefully argued for in *Mission-Shaped Church*) was the recognition that there are many different external manifestations of an authentic Christian community, and no reason to suppose that one congregation or parish would need to be the same as any other. The report insisted that there was no such thing as a 'one-size-fits-all' pattern of authentic church, which was something that had engaged the attention of Rowan Williams long before he became Archbishop of Canterbury. While still Bishop of Monmouth (1991-1999), he coined the term 'mixed economy of church' as a way of describing the truth that no single form of church life is adequate on its own in the development of mission to our diverse culture. We need traditional forms of church life but we will also need new forms of church to connect with different parts of our society.<sup>17</sup>

This notion of a mixed economy has been widely adopted as a succinct summary of what a missional church in today's culture might consist of: groups of people whose primary allegiance is to Jesus Christ, but whose outward expression of that allegiance is likely to be highly diverse and distinctive in any given circumstance, and not necessarily identical with what might be an equally authentic expression of faith for a different time, place, and people group. Though it is a phrase that has captured the popular imagination, it is much more than just pragmatic window-dressing, and has been further defined in relation to some fundamental theological understandings:

- It echoes the Trinity
- It reflects creation
- It expresses the Eucharistic heart of the church
- It was modelled by the Jerusalem and Antioch churches
- It can draw strength from the forbearance of the Spirit<sup>18</sup>

The practical consequences of this environment are, in Archbishop Rowan's words, that there is plenty of theological room for diversity of rhythm and style, so long as we have ways of identifying the same living Christ at the heart of

every expression of Christian life in common and, in a characteristically understated way, he continues:

- we are going to have to live with variety ... This immediately raises large questions about how different churches keep in contact and learn from each other; and about the kinds of leadership we need for this to happen.<sup>19</sup>

Now, some six years after the publication of *Mission-Shaped Church* and the establishment of Fresh Expressions, Steven Croft has moved on and Bishop Graham Cray is the leader for the second phase of this initiative, which has every appearance of being one of the most significant missional movements in the recent history of Christianity in these islands. It has already spawned the development of the training course *Mission Shaped Ministry* which has now enrolled more than 2000 people, many of them clergy who are eager to be equipped to meet the challenges of the new missional imperative. In 2010, seventy participants enrolled in Scottish pilots of this course in Glasgow and Inverness, and have shown the same enthusiasm for it as Christians in England, Wales, and Ireland. Moreover, Fresh Expressions has become a catalyst for renewed missional thinking in other mainline denominations worldwide, and the *Mission Shaped Ministry* course is now also being taught overseas.

## 1.2 A Tradition in Transition

**1.2.1** For the last twenty years or more, church leaders have been bombarded with efforts to persuade them to embrace the latest fad or missional fashion, from the church growth theories of the 1980s to the adoption of the *Alpha* course and its marketplace competitors. Some have worked for a while, and some have worked in one location but not elsewhere – a reality which underlines the need for a 'mixed economy' of church and of patterns of discipleship. It is not difficult to find people who think of Fresh Expressions as just the most recent of a long line of such initiatives which will, in due time, be found wanting.<sup>20</sup>

It is therefore important to note that the rise of Fresh Expressions in the Church of England did not happen randomly, but was the end result of a process that in one way and another can be traced as far back as 1945, with the publication of William Temple's report, *Towards the Conversion of England*.<sup>21</sup>

In the intervening years a good deal of serious theological and missiological reflection had taken place in Anglican circles, affirmed by the promulgation of the 'five marks of mission' by the Lambeth Conference of 1988.<sup>22</sup>

It is precisely this legacy of sustained and serious theological and ecclesiological thinking that has enabled Fresh Expressions to find such ready acceptance in all sections of the Church and which has given local leaders the confidence to know that in tackling some fundamental questions in relation to the reimagination of the Church and its ministry they are acting with measured integrity within the parameters of the historic tradition. For its entire history, the Church of England (like the Church of Scotland) had been able to assume that, as the established church, it was responsible for the spiritual welfare of the entire population



– and that the people, for the most part, could be expected to recognise that and act accordingly by supporting the church and its services on a regular basis and for a whole lifetime. Throughout that period, ministry had focused on the maintenance of the *status quo*, training priests to offer pastoral care to those who came to the church's door – an approach that had many strengths but which was becoming increasingly detached from the reality of an essentially un-churched population, a growing proportion of whom had abandoned the church even for the celebration of traditional rites of passage.

**1.2.2** In the new cultural environment, many clergy still feel ill equipped to venture from the safe territory of the ecclesiastical establishment and engage in missional ways with the wider community, not because they see no need of it but because the training of ordinands has at best paid only lip service to the importance of skills in cultural analysis and cross-cultural mission. In the period following the publication of *Mission-Shaped Church* and the launch of Fresh Expressions, there was a willingness to acknowledge this and to recognise that the traditional training models that had worked well in the days of Christendom were no longer fully fit for purpose in the context of a missionary church. The new reality demanded a different form of ministry, and therefore a different model of theological education, and by 2006 the House of Bishops had agreed guidelines for a complementary form of ministry – 'Ordained Pioneer Ministry' – that would be fully recognised as 'real' ministry, but with specialised skills in mission and cultural awareness in addition to the traditional emphasis on church management and pastoral care. This was a radical shift for a denomination with half a millennium of tradition behind it, and a strong sense of continuity with more ancient models of church and ministry. But what might be regarded as an even more radical reformation of the tradition occurred in 2008 when *Bishop's Mission Orders* came onto the statute book of the Church of England as a way of giving legal structural recognition to Fresh Expressions of church alongside the existing parish system. A 'parish' no longer needed to be a geographically located entity, but could also consist of a network centred on people groups as diverse as old age pensioners, Goths, and police officers, or interests that might range from skating or surfing to craftwork, gardening, computing, cycling, and many others.<sup>23</sup>

This was a natural outcome of the notion of a mixed economy of church and the need for the style of a faith community to be an authentic engagement between Gospel and culture. Like the concept of the mixed economy, it also emerged from the theological reflection and episcopal practice of Rowan Williams, who when he was Bishop of Monmouth had extended such formal recognition to Jacob's Well (a healing ministry) and Living Proof (a community youth work with the un-churched). The advantage of offering formal recognition to such groups was that it included them in the corporate life of the Church, 'but freed them from quasi-parochial status and modelled creative untidiness in church life'.<sup>24</sup>

**1.2.3** In parallel with such practical moves, Fresh Expressions also encouraged and facilitated some further

serious theological reflection on what was happening, beginning with the well attended *Hard Questions* tour of 2007, which saw fourteen distinguished theologians in different English cathedrals tackle some of the obvious questions about continuity and discontinuity, faithfulness to the Gospel and the ancient tradition, and much more besides.<sup>25</sup>

The popularity of that tour (and of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report itself, which is now a best-seller – an unprecedented accomplishment for an official church document) has in the meantime led to a veritable explosion of further theological and ecclesiological thinking and writing on the nature of church – and faith – in the fast changing cultural landscape that is Britain in the 21st century.<sup>26</sup>

**1.2.4** Though this report concerns Scotland, and more particularly the Church of Scotland, this account of recent developments in the English churches is by no means irrelevant here. The energy that has been released through Fresh Expressions, not only in the Anglican context but also among other denominations in England and Wales, soon drew it to the attention of church leaders in Scotland as an innovative and creative vision that had not only fired the imagination of many activists at grassroots level, but was also becoming the basis for significant and far-reaching structural change in the operation of traditional church institutions. Whereas previous initiatives in mission had generally been aimed at reaching those with some prior connection to the church (often referred to as the de-churched), this movement was explicitly seeking to connect with what is now a majority of the population across all age groups except for the oldest old (the over-80s) who have no previous connection with any form of organised faith community (the un-churched). Moreover, there was a recognition that the problem was not primarily with those who did not connect with church, but with the church itself, its processes and procedures as well as its forms of worship and congregating, all of which had their origins in a cultural context that today reflects the experience of a diminishing proportion of the population. Of course, it is worth pointing out that, despite the rapid decline of church membership and attendance, these traditional forms are still meaningful for a substantial number of people, predominantly those who process things in an essentially rational, cognitive, and analytical way rather than those who might be regarded as more intuitive, emotive, and relational. Studies have suggested that our inherited ways of being church appeal to individuals of a certain personality type, and one that is declining as a proportion of the wider population.<sup>27</sup>

This is where Archbishop Rowan Williams' definition of the 'mixed economy' is particularly helpful, for the answer to current problems will not be to close down the churches that now exist, nor to negate the historic tradition as worthless, but to acknowledge the diversity of humankind and therefore the multiplicity of ways in which it is possible to respond to the grace of God in Christ while retaining an authentic reflection of the core values of the Gospel.

### 1.3 Emerging and Scottish

**1.3.1** As a Reformed church, the Church of Scotland is no stranger to the concept of change as an integral aspect

of any faithful following of Christ. The slogan 'reformed and reforming' is deeply embedded in the DNA of the tradition. Moreover, mission has also been high on the agenda in Scotland for at least the last half century and more, and the sort of questions that are now surfacing under the guise of 'emerging church' are, in principle, nothing new, though it is probably true to say that there has been less distinctively theological and ecclesiological reflection on the matter in Scotland than is the case in the Church of England.<sup>28</sup>

In the early part of the twentieth century, churches were planted wherever new population centres developed, in a process that continued for forty years or more, and which followed migrating people groups into what might at the time have been thought of as alien territory. The 1950s gave birth to the much admired *Tell Scotland* movement, which itself signalled a recognition at grass-roots level that the days of Christendom were all but over, and many people in Scotland had no meaningful connection to either the church or to Christian faith – a movement that continued through the work of summer missions, and whose values were also embraced by parachurch organisations such as Scripture Union. All those initiatives were entirely appropriate to the circumstances in which they emerged, namely the immediate post-Christendom period – a time at which a majority of the population had some knowledge of the Bible and of Christian faith, even if they regarded it as irrelevant to their own daily lives. Most people at that time were 'de-churched', and if they had been asked a question like 'what would church need to do to welcome you?' they would have been able to give an answer – maybe in relation to the facilities, the times of services, provision for children, and so on. Today, when most people are 'un-churched', a question like that would be meaningless, and would be likely to produce an answer along the lines of, 'Why would we do that? What has church to do with me and my life?'

**1.3.2** These questions are not particularly new in 2010: they have been with us for at least the last twenty years, if not longer: nor are they new in terms of the mission thinking of the Church of Scotland. The *Church Without Walls* report of 2001 highlighted precisely these issues, and the experience gained through the establishment of New Charge Development has demonstrated the value of creating spaces where church can be done differently and still be recognisably church. The New Charge Development programme envisaged an end point that, in essence, consisted of the establishment of congregations that in most respects look the same as more traditional churches, in form and structure if not always in worship style. Fresh Expressions, however, is encouraging the emergence of faith communities that are not necessarily congregational in the usual sense of that word nor (following the introduction of the *Bishop's Mission Order*) in institutional form, and which might be headed up by pioneer ministers who typically work in a team setting, quite often at the behest of a Deanery (area grouping within a diocese) that has made a conscious decision that out of (say) a clergy team of a dozen people, two or three of them should be engaged in the establishment of new forms of church. In six years this strategy has radically changed the face of the Church of England right across the board, so it is as easy to find high church Anglo-Catholic Fresh

Expressions as it is to find new ventures in more obviously evangelical congregations – and at least one high profile Fresh Expression (York Minster's *Transcendence Mass*) is a collaboration between those two traditions.<sup>29</sup>

But it is also a vision that has captured the imagination of middle-of-the-road parishes that have no particular sectional allegiances, and had never imagined that mission was something they might become involved with.<sup>30</sup>

**1.3.3** It was out of an awareness of all these factors, both cultural and ecclesiastical, that informal conversations took place between officers of the Church of Scotland's Ministries Council and the Mission and Discipleship Council, in the years immediately following the reception of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report by the Church of England. There was a recognition that, with increasing globalisation and population movements, lessons learned in the English context were now likely to be more easily translated into Scottish culture than might once have been the case, and also an awareness that what was taking place there was part of a much more extensive ongoing conversation among church leaders all over the world. The experience of the Church of England had shown that it was not possible to explore new forms of church without also considering new forms of ministry and institutional structures, and a proposal for a post in the general area of 'emerging church' to operate under the joint auspices of the Ministries Council and the Mission and Discipleship Council was discussed as early as 2005-06,<sup>31</sup> though it was only with the Ministries Council's Operational Plan for 2007-8 that the proposal was finally approved for action as a joint appointment funded by the two Councils.<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, a variety of formal and informal groups initiated some in-depth consideration of the exact nature of what have come to be known as 'emerging ministries'. The Mission and Discipleship Council established its own Emerging Church Study Group, which was principally a partnership between its Mission and Evangelism Task Group and its Worship and Doctrine Task Group. It included within its membership a representative each from the Ministries Council and the Panel on Review and Reform, recognising that aspects of 'emerging church' were of interest to both. The remit of this Study Group was specifically concerned to take cognisance of developments in the Church of England following the publication of *Mission-Shaped Church*, with a view to assessing its relevance to the Scottish context.

**1.3.4** During the same period, the report of the Ministries Council to the 2008 General Assembly, *Building for the Future*, was taking shape and the remit of the group tasked with producing this specifically included the promotion of this 'fresh expressions' agenda.<sup>33</sup>

The report echoed the statements of Archbishop Rowan Williams with its insistence that for 'fresh expressions to flower in Scotland ... the wider church will need, in certain respects, to change its culture'.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, some structural adjustments had taken place that led to the establishment of a new main Planning and Deployment Committee which would have what were now to be called 'Task Groups' reporting directly to it. As part of this reorganisation, the Emerging Church Task Group (subsequently renamed as the Emerging Ministries

Task Group) was established with the remit of assuming responsibility for the work of New Charge Development as well as taking account of wider issues related to the need for new forms of church in the missional context of contemporary society.<sup>35</sup>

From the outset, it was made clear that this Emerging Ministries Task Group was to function essentially as a think tank, with no power to either make or change policy in relation to the nature of ministry, though with an implied understanding that its insights would be fed into discussions of future policy in respect of Emerging Ministries, under the aegis of the Ministries Council.<sup>36</sup>

**1.3.5** Some considerable time was spent, especially by the Emerging Church Study Group, in reflecting on developments elsewhere, not only in England but also in other parts of the world, aimed at gaining a full understanding of what might be involved in promoting something like the emerging church within the Church of Scotland. On the instigation of this group, the Mission and Discipleship Council and the Ministries Council jointly sponsored a day seminar on emerging church in January 2008, by which time the joint post had been filled with the appointment of Revd David Currie as Development Worker (New and Emerging Ministries) with a remit to:<sup>37</sup>

- develop the Church's capacity to engage with new models and 'fresh expressions of church' in Scotland and throughout the UK.
- identify examples of such 'fresh expressions' in Scotland, and to offer accompaniment and support to them.
- develop other examples and facilitate the local delivery of appropriate training.
- network with those with similar interests in other denominations.
- identify and disseminate examples of good practice.
- relate to other new initiatives in mission and renewal (New Charge Development, *Church Without Walls*, Parish Development Fund, etc) and identify appropriate ways in which these might relate to 'fresh expressions of church'.
- offer strategic advice regarding future policy to the two Councils.

When the 2008 General Assembly gave its blessing to the establishment of the Emerging Ministries Fund in order to resource groups that were exploring 'emerging' ways of being church, all the pieces were in place to offer some level of formal recognition to the existence of such initiatives in Scotland, at least in relation to financial support. Following this, the work developed with a more formal structure for grant applications, and ongoing discussions sought to refine the process and give more focus to what exactly might qualify as an emerging ministry – something that was hastened by the suggestion that the Emerging Ministries Fund could be administered more effectively by the Parish Development Fund (the conclusion was that emerging

ministries had distinctive aims and understandings that were best assessed by the Emerging Ministries Task Group, whose members had particular expertise in that area).<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, the terms of reference of the Fund continued to be clarified and expanded, so as to make it clearer what form of 'emerging ministry' might qualify for funding, with the conclusion being that such an initiative should be missional, ecclesial, and experimental. Ultimately, the outcome of these and other discussions was embodied in the *Joint Report of the Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils on the Emerging Church*, presented to the 2009 General Assembly, in which (among other things) the purpose of all the previous conversations was described as an attempt to:

- discern the substantive elements within the emerging church conversation and to consider whether they might, under God, inspire and enrich our own understanding and practice as a church.<sup>39</sup>

This present research is a part of that discernment process, asking what 'the substantive elements' might be within a Scottish context, and how they could also relate to the insistence that the Church of Scotland continue to define itself as 'one Church catholic'.

## 1.4 Definitions and meanings

**1.4.1** Before coming to a consideration of those groups that are currently receiving such support, it is worthwhile reflecting on the nature of the terminology that has been adopted by the Church of Scotland, both in informal discussions and also in official documents. The inspiration for this initiative clearly came from a recognition of the significance of what was already happening in the Church of England and the Methodist Church, and a desire to learn from that. In September 2008, a group representing both Councils spent time in London with Steven Croft and other members of the Fresh Expressions leadership to explore that very question. The Scottish emerging initiatives have occasionally been referred to as 'fresh expressions' though the preferred terminology here is 'emerging church' or 'emerging ministry'. 'Fresh Expressions' (with upper case initial letters, to distinguish it from the more generic term) is the name of a legal entity (a plc) owned by the Lambeth Partners,<sup>40</sup> and with a formal membership (which currently includes the United Reformed Church as well as the Anglican and Methodist Churches, but not the Church of Scotland). For various reasons that need not detain us here, in the context of the broader discussions taking place around 'emerging church' there is a difference between those movements that are usually designated as emerging churches and Fresh Expressions. Not all emerging churches would be Fresh Expressions (though some might be), nor would all Fresh Expressions regard themselves as emerging churches (though again there would be exceptions).

**1.4.2** The designation of these initiatives in Scotland as 'emerging' churches and/or ministries could yet turn out to be something of a hostage to fortune, if only because the terminology itself is being used in many different ways. A

quick search of the worldwide web will immediately identify diversity in the vocabulary itself: is it 'emerging' or 'emergent', and is there a difference between the two? And what are they all emerging from? Or into? There can be no question that many such groups are emerging out of the sort of critical engagement between Gospel and culture that has been described here and which is reflected in the aspirations of *Mission-Shaped Church*. However, others that tend to be either more vociferous or have a more intrusive presence, especially on the worldwide web, are certainly emerging out of other concerns and narrow interest group agendas, most notably those who describe themselves as 'post-evangelicals', typically consisting of people who are angry about their fundamentalist churches and the way they believe they have been abused by them, and whose main motivation is a desire to show their erstwhile fellow believers what 'real' church is all about. Others are emerging from the 'alternative worship' scene of the 1990s, some of them motivated by a desire to reach those who as yet are not Christian, but many more having a concern to create safe spaces for disenfranchised believers who have fled the traditional churches. Moreover, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that for some, the term 'emerging' is being used largely as a marketing ploy, as existing ministries simply rebrand themselves but basically continue with business as before.

**1.4.3** It is also important to be aware of the way that the promotion of 'emerging' or 'emergent' ministries has itself become big business. Much of the literature being sold in Christian bookstores emanates from the Zondervan Corporation (owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation International), which publishes radical emergents like Brian McLaren (himself a refugee from conservative evangelicalism) alongside strident opponents like the Reformed Baptist theologian Don Carson,<sup>41</sup> with the common thread (obviously) being that both sides of the argument make money for the publishing house. The mention of two American authors highlights a particular danger of misunderstanding what the Church of Scotland is trying to accomplish. For there can be no doubt that what is taking place in the US under the guise of 'emerging church' is significantly different from what is happening in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. Caution must be exercised in reflecting on this wider emerging scene, as the many US based websites by no means reflect what is happening here, nor do the beliefs and attitudes of those leaders who dominate the American landscape necessarily reflect the opinions of British theologians and missiologists who might be identified with the same label. To understand what the two Councils mean by the use of 'emerging' terminology, it is necessary to read their own documentation and by no means to assume that other understandings of these words can be read as some kind of unspoken subtext to the matter in hand here.

**1.4.4** Of course, the choice of 'emerging ministries' as the dominant descriptor rather than 'fresh expressions' does convey some distinctive messages. The vocabulary of emergence has been embraced in many disciplines as a useful way of understanding the cultural circumstance in which we find ourselves, especially in relation to the new social realities

of the day. With origins in geometry and chaos theory, the concept of emergence offers a helpful way of identifying the phenomenon whereby a complex organisation comes into being not as a result of a grand design promoted by a leader, but as a consequence of the collective actions of its ordinary members – something that reflects accurately not only the way in which new forms of church are springing up today, but also describes the way in which creative missional movements have come to birth throughout history.<sup>42</sup>

The discourse of emergence conveys a strong sense of a movement for change that may be either resisted or embraced by the traditional ecclesiastical institutions, but which by definition will not be either instigated by or controlled from the top down. To that extent, the adoption of the terminology of 'emerging ministries' sends out a clear signal that the Church of Scotland is not, in this enterprise, engaged in a process of rebranding things that already happen in or around traditional church, but is intentionally endorsing what is genuinely experimental, with an expectation that this is likely to come into being not through centralised planning but as ordinary Christians find themselves fired with a vision to reach others and are empowered to do so in ways that are highly unlikely to replicate what we now know and recognise as 'church'.<sup>43</sup>

## 1.5 The Emerging Initiatives<sup>44</sup>

In the period covered by this research, 27 such initiatives were receiving funding from the Emerging Ministries Fund. Some were at a very early stage, while one or two were well established and had been in operation for several years. Any attempt at classifying these initiatives is bound to be open to question, not least because some are so open-ended that they hardly fit into any preconceived patterns, while others could be described in any number of different ways. Nevertheless, the following categories are useful insofar as they offer a broad picture of the variety of initiatives that are taking place.

### 1.5.1 Children and Youth

- The initiatives falling in this category consist of the following:
- Route 8:1, or R8:1 (Garelochhead & Portincaple Church of Scotland)
- Church on the Move (Presbytery of Annandale & Eskdale)
- Connect (Brucefield Parish Church, Whitburn)
- The ARK (Coltness Memorial Church & Bonkle Church, Newmains)
- Selkirk Messy Church (Selkirk Council of Churches)
- Fridays in Faith (Annandale Churches Together)
- Craftzone (Howard Centre, Kilmarnock)

- Connect (Lighthouse Church, Musselburgh, in partnership with local parishes, Scripture Union, and East Lothian Council)
- The Shed (Martin Memorial Church, Stornoway)

With nine initiatives being funded, work among children and youth comprises the single largest category, largely motivated by the recognition that most existing congregations consist predominantly of older people, with the obvious challenges that poses for the future viability of many traditional parishes. Within the overall concern to create meaningful Christian community for younger people, funding is being provided for a variety of purposes. One initiative is receiving support for the construction of a dedicated building, another has received support for a bus, while several others have been given funding for the employment of full-time workers. Most of them, however, are receiving support for ongoing operating expenses such as publicity, the rental of buildings, the provision of equipment and materials, and the training needs of volunteers. Some represent the vision of a single parish, while others are the outcome of collaboration between different Church of Scotland parishes, some have arisen through local ecumenical projects, and one or two are independent charities (though having some relationship with local churches).

The stated aims of these various initiatives are quite diverse. Some are aiming only to reach children, others are concerned with teenagers and young adults, while others hope to reach children and youth in the context of their families. Two other initiatives (Citylife and Hot Chocolate) could just as easily have been listed here as they work predominantly with young people, though to view them as work among children and young people would be an inappropriate limitation of their work, which overall falls more easily into the category of community development. Some initiatives state unequivocally that their aim is to recruit new families for existing congregations, seeing this as a way to secure their own future, while others are intentional about the need to foster discrete forms of church for children and young people, and know exactly what it will look like ('Messy Church' being a favourite model here<sup>45</sup>). Yet others are content to work in a more open-ended way, seeing a need to reach out to those who otherwise have no meaningful relationship with the Christian faith, and being content to wait and see what shape of faith community might emerge through a more organic process of engagement.

### **1.5.2 Church Planting Initiatives & Mission Audits**

The initiatives that might be described under this heading include the following:

- Inverness East Mission Project (East Church, Inverness)
- The Gateway (Hutton, Fishwick & Paxton Kirk Session)
- The Aidan Project (Stenhouse St Aidan's, Edinburgh)
- West Mearns Church Plant (Maxwell Mearns Castle

Church, Newton Mearns)

- Andrew's Place (Crown Court Church, London)
- Infuse (Hilton Parish, Inverness)
- Points North (Cumbernauld)

This is a somewhat ambiguous category, inasmuch as all the initiatives surveyed in this report could, in one way or another, be described as church planting initiatives. But those listed here are specifically aiming to lead to the establishment of new congregations, usually of an alternative or different form to the traditional congregations with which they might be linked, and mostly aspiring to connect with people groups that do not easily relate to traditional church worship and structures. Whereas many other initiatives have adopted a 'wait and see' approach to their future development, those included here all self-consciously use the word 'congregation' as a way of describing their ambitions. It is important to recognise this more traditional approach as part of the emerging shape of the church of the future and to appreciate that the embodiment of the Gospel in different social and cultural contexts will always by definition represent a 'mixed economy' of forms and structures.

### **1.5.3 Community Development**

Seven initiatives clearly fall into this category:

- Emerge Granton (Edinburgh, Church of Scotland with ecumenical partners)
- Urban Expression (Glasgow, ecumenical)
- Tulloch NET (Perth, ecumenical)
- Citylife (independent charity, Wester Hailes, Edinburgh)
- Hot Chocolate (independent charity, Dundee)
- Glasgow Harbour Project (Glasgow)
- Martha & Mary Project (Royston, Glasgow)

These initiatives are among the most open-ended of all, and though operating in vastly different socio-economic circumstances, their aims can be summarised by saying that they have identified areas of their respective towns and cities where community is either nonexistent or significantly broken down, and are working in partnership with other local community groups to address the fundamental human need for relationships with the expectation that such engagement will create spaces for spiritual nurture and exploration that, in due time, will lead to the emergence of something that can be identified as a distinctively Christian faith community. All these initiatives involve a long-term strategy as Christians seek to be the catalysts for community building first and foremost, rather than church planters in any traditional sense. The stated aims of Emerge Granton fairly reflect the thinking



of all the initiatives in this group:

- no denomination's inherited ecclesiological system is going to work in this area; all have agreed to set aside historical expectations of what "church" will look like and to allow whatever grows the space to both function and belong to the Scottish faith landscape.

### 1.5.4 Networks and People Groups

The initiatives listed above have all come to birth from within traditional understandings of the nature of community. Though they vary considerably in their definitions of what constitutes community, and therefore church, they are all geographically based, reaching out to individuals and groups who happen to inhabit the same physical spaces. Increasingly, however, people today operate within networks that not only transcend but can easily ignore their immediate physical environment. Four initiatives share some of these characteristics, by reaching out to networks that are not intrinsically geographical or even tangible.

- Sanctuary First is an initiative of St Andrew's Church, Bo'ness, and represents a version of online church. The website [www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk](http://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk) offers daily prayers and readings, together with weekly podcasts on a particular theme, and a monthly service.
- Engage is a joint initiative of Renfield St Stephen's Church of Scotland and Adelaide Place Baptist Church (Glasgow), seeking to connect with the business community in the city centre.
- Lion Rampant is an initiative of Whiteinch Parish Church (Glasgow) which, as its name suggests, is aimed at relating to football supporters, more specifically those relatively poor young white males who its leaders describe as 'the most unreached people group in Scotland'.
- Sgeul Mòr @ Sabhal Mòr ('The Big Story @The Big Steading') is a Gaelic speaking initiative of Strath and Sleat Parish Church (Skye), and based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (the Gaelic College). This is obviously a very distinctive people group, which is less geographically limited than might be imagined, as the college attracts significant numbers of international students to study the Gaelic language, from Asia and America as well as other parts of the British Isles.

## 1.6 The Research and its Methodology

**1.6.1** The Joint Working Party proposed that, while this research would take a wider view of the issues involved in the emergence of new forms of ministry and church, there should be a particular focus on four of the initiatives currently being funded. All 27 initiatives were surveyed through the use of an online questionnaire, and the insights gleaned from those are incorporated in sections 3 and 4 of this report, along with the more detailed findings from those initiatives that have been studied in greater depth. Unattributed

quotations may have been taken from the responses to the online questionnaire as well as from face-to-face conversations with those initiatives that were studied more closely. The four initiatives identified by the Joint Working Party as best meeting their aspirations for this in-depth research were Fridays in Faith, Hot Chocolate, The ARK, and Citylife. Based on information from Revd David Currie, the Development Officer for Emerging Ministries, it was believed that these were more highly developed than some of the others, and therefore would provide more material on which to reflect. Since none of the others have been explored in any depth, the current research offers no basis for either confirming or denying that perception. However, the fact that all four of these are, in different ways, related to children and youth is bound to have had an impact on some of the findings presented here, and could arguably lead to the assumption that, in the end of the day, all the talk of emerging ministries and new ways of being church is just the latest trendy twist in a long-running effort to reach children and teenagers. Given that the church has often placed most of its missional emphasis and resources on reaching children and youth, it is especially important to recognise that the wider movement represented by Fresh Expressions is by no means limited to this aspect of church life and witness, and represents a far more radical departure in mission thinking than just doing the same old things but in a new guise. When we look more broadly at the experience of churches in other parts of the UK and internationally, it is clear that new forms of church for younger people do not dominate the scene, and to a limited extent that is also true in the case of emerging ministries in Scotland, as demonstrated by the diversity already noted in those initiatives being supported by the Fund. There is however one noticeable gap in these current initiatives, and that is the absence of any new forms of church specifically for the benefit of older people.

**1.6.2** It will be appropriate to refer briefly to the method that has been adopted in this research. Three approaches have been combined: a survey of the decisions of the relevant councils and committees, so as to understand the rationale behind the Emerging Ministries initiative; consultations with the Joint Working Party and with various individuals connected with it; and ethnographic study of the four groups identified by the working party as the most appropriate ones at this time. The first two of these approaches will be self-evident, and reflect processes that will be familiar enough without further explanation. However, the ethnographic approach will be less well known and, since this has also been a main driving force of the research, is worth explaining in some detail. Attentive readers will recognise the Greek roots of the word 'ethnography', literally meaning 'writing about people'. It has come into common use especially through its use in anthropology and sociology as a method of collecting empirical data on human life and culture, and an ethnographic study is sometimes referred to more colloquially as a 'case study' or 'field report'. It is especially useful for theological and ecclesiological investigation, not least because every local expression of the church is first and foremost a community of people who are related through time and space to other such communities, as part of the mystical 'body of Christ' (language which itself

implies an intimately personal dimension to the relationship between Christ and the church). When Christian doctrine becomes an end in itself, divorced from the real life dramas that are played out in the lives of people every day, it easily ends up betraying some core values of the Gospel. Arguably, the disconnection of belief from the challenges we now face at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been a key factor in the rapid decline of church membership and attendance that the Emerging Ministries Task Group hopes to stem through the encouragement and recognition of a mixed economy model of church and discipleship. This is one of the strands that has contributed over the course of the last twenty years or so to the development of the discipline of Practical Theology which, unlike its namesake in the 1930s, is not a way of making a pre-existing theology practical but a practical way of actually doing theology, beginning with real people and their struggles to be both human and spiritual, listening to their stories, and reflecting on the possible consequences not only for theological understanding but also for ecclesiastical action.<sup>46</sup>

This makes it an essentially empirical discipline, in the sense that it aims to explore, describe and test theological ideas within a specific context. The pattern of this report reflects that concern, as inherited understandings of belief and practice – in this case, most especially mission practice – are placed in dialogue with the lived reality of those who are engaged in creating communities of faithful discipleship within the cultural matrix that is Scotland today.

**1.6.3** Empirical research generally consists of either quantitative or qualitative approaches, or a combination of the two. In the case of the present work, there is no quantitative data that would be of direct usefulness in addressing the questions at hand, though the ultimate origin of the questions is deeply rooted in quantitative data, namely the steep statistical decline of the church over the last several decades. The approach adopted here is therefore predominantly qualitative, using a reflective technique that is both fact-finding and analytical. This type of qualitative approach offers open-ended questions and conversation starters which allow participants to express their views as fully as reasonably possible. More meaningful questions can in turn be derived from the data collected in this inductive way than would be the case with a deductive approach (in which the norm would be provided by a pre-existing ideological framework to which participants might be invited to respond). The questions thus identified can then be addressed to the inherited tradition in a way that gives serious attention to the voice of participants, while also allowing for further reflection on and critique of both the tradition and the plausibility structures of the new ways. An ethnographic approach also tends to enable a discursive narrative style of writing, which has the effect of making a report more accessible to a greater number of people.<sup>47</sup>

**1.6.4** Hans Georg Gadamar uses a helpful metaphor to describe how understanding takes place, which he calls 'the fusion of horizons', beginning from

- the wide superior vision that the person who is seeking to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means

that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand – not in order to look away from it, but to see it better within a larger whole and in truer proportion.<sup>48</sup>

New understanding occurs at those places where the horizon of the researcher intersects with the horizon of the subject being examined, and therefore

- to try to eliminate one's own concepts in interpretation is not only impossible, but manifestly absurd. To interpret means precisely to use one's own preconceptions so that the meaning of the text can really be made to speak for us.<sup>49</sup>

What this means in practical terms is that this research has been conducted in a reflexive way, in which as researchers we are consciously aware of our own horizons and their possible influence on the conversations with others, and the outcomes of such conversations have then been incorporated in a process of mutual critical correlation, as empirical information from the various groups is laid alongside theological insights and the experience of churches in other parts of the world, in a way designed to elicit pointers to possible futures for the Church of Scotland. Mark Cartledge describes this method as 'critical realism', and quotes with approval Tom Wright's description of critical realism as 'a relational epistemology, as opposed to a detached one, that functions within a narrative-laden world'<sup>50</sup> – something that aptly describes the approach taken here. The horizons of the researchers in this case can be described as broad empathy with the questions raised by the wider 'emerging church' movement (though not always with the answers being offered, particularly when they tend to distance new forms of Christian community from the traditions of the ancient church). We both have more than a passing interest in Fresh Expressions, having been speakers at some key events that fed into the Church of England's thinking on this matter between 1999 and 2004, and we continue to research and reflect on what is happening at grassroots level as well as being involved in the development of the *Mission Shaped Ministry* course (one of us as a member of the UK board, and the other as a member of the writing team responsible for the material, as well as both being Associate Missioners with Fresh Expressions and core teachers at the Inverness *Mission Shaped Ministry* course in 2010). We are therefore advocates as well as 'critical friends' of Fresh Expressions.

**1.6.5** Because of the relational nature of this form of ethnographic study, it typically takes more time than other more detached forms of research, as its success obviously depends to a very considerable extent on the establishment of trusting relationships between the researcher and those individuals who are key players in the various initiatives being studied. As it happens, leaders in all four of the initiatives selected for detailed study by the Emerging Ministries Task Group were initially suspicious of the research project, assuming there may be some hidden agenda behind it that was likely to result in a negative assessment of their work, leading to either a withdrawal of funding or a critical evaluation from whoever they perceived the



power brokers in the Church of Scotland to be, or to both these outcomes. As a result their initial default position was to ignore requests for cooperation, and it was only after some delicate negotiation and persuasion that their involvement was eventually secured, though the suspicions of one group continued right through to the end of the research and imposed extensive limitations on what it was eventually possible to say about that group. This itself raises some key questions for the future relationships between the institutional centre and what might be regarded as the missional fringe of the church, which are explored in greater detail in the final section of this report. But in terms of what was possible within the time frame allowed for this research, it meant that what might be regarded as somewhat more intimate questions were left to one side. These included some fundamental matters related to understandings of the Gospel and therefore of the nature of faith, but more especially it was not possible to do the sort of in-depth interviewing and reflection that would have been necessary for an assessment of the personality types of those enthusiasts who are involved in emerging ministries, as compared with the personality types of the leaders in their local parishes and presbyteries. A key motivator for the concept of Emerging Ministries within the Church of Scotland is the recognition that conventional expressions of church leave significant sections of society untouched. It is widely acknowledged that in terms of gender, traditional churches do a better job among women than among men, and among the elderly than among the young, and that social class and ethnicity may also be other factors. As already mentioned, research by Leslie J Francis has compared the personality profile of conventional church congregations with the personality profile of the UK population, and found extensive and significant differences between the two.<sup>51</sup>

Working with an understanding of personality types in terms of four polarities (introverts and extraverts; sensors and intuitives; thinkers and feelers; judges and perceivers), it can be demonstrated that conventional churches attract high proportions of introverts, feelers and judges. Anecdotal evidence suggests that fresh expressions of church are probably redressing the balance by reaching more extraverts, thinkers and perceivers, though at present no empirical evidence is available to either confirm or deny that. With more time, that aspect of Emerging Ministries in Scotland would certainly have featured here.

**1.6.6** It would also have been beneficial to have been able to meet with parish ministers and presbytery representatives in order to gain a more complete understanding of how the notion of a mixed economy church is perceived and applied at local level, but this also was ruled out because of the urgency and limitations of the time frame allocated for the research process. While conversations did take place with some parish ministers and other leaders of traditional churches, these were not structured in any formal way that can be reported on here. But they did highlight the need for a more open discussion of these issues than appears to have taken place hitherto.

## 2 The Emerging Initiatives

Four initiatives were identified by the Emerging Ministries Task Group for some in-depth investigation: Hot Chocolate, Citylife, The ARK, and Fridays in Faith.<sup>52</sup>

Their locations reflect the changing landscape of Scottish culture: Hot Chocolate is a city centre initiative in Dundee; Citylife is in Wester Hailes, a social housing area in west Edinburgh with significant issues of urban deprivation; The ARK is in Newmains, Lanarkshire, an ex-mining and industrial town in a semi-rural setting; and Fridays in Faith is in Annan, Dumfriesshire, which is a small market town still predominantly rural and not far from the border with England. In different ways, all four of them are concerned to reach children and young people – in the case of the last three also including their families – but Hot Chocolate and Citylife are probably better understood as community development projects, for reasons that soon emerged as they told their stories. All four groups were given the opportunity to read what is said here with a view to correcting any mistaken impressions or reporting of facts, though with one or two exceptions, the quotations from conversations with the various leaders have not been specifically attributed to any one individual. The leaders of the different groups were able to make variable amounts of time available for conversation, and not all of them were open to visits to their actual events as distinct from offering meetings with the leaders. Nevertheless, within these constraints, the snapshot of their activities presented here offers an accurate reflection of these initiatives in mid-2010.

### 2.1 Hot Chocolate

**2.1.1** When Alison Urie was appointed in 2001 as the youth worker at the Steeple Church in the city centre of Dundee, her job description included a concern to address the needs of the crowds of young people for whom the area immediately outside the church had become a favourite meeting place. It was not long before a group emerged as a response to those needs, which the young people subsequently called 'hot chocolate' because the serving of hot chocolate had turned out to be central to its activities.<sup>53</sup>

Things continued to evolve in partnership with the young people and by 2004 Hot Chocolate had become a charitable trust in its own right, though still maintaining a close relationship with the church, which regards it as part of its ministry and provides free accommodation as well as support through prayer and the direct involvement of some church members. A majority of the trustees also belong to the Steeple church, with others drawn from a variety of other churches, which at various times have included other Church of Scotland parishes as well as Episcopalians, Baptists, and members of an Independent Church.

**2.1.2** The initiative was well known to the Church of Scotland even before the establishment of the Emerging Ministries Fund, and had been publicised through various channels as well as being given financial support from the Parish Development Fund. Working with a very specific type of young person (namely those who hang around the city centre), Hot Chocolate describes its aims in two ways:

- to develop quality generic youth work, in partnership with other agencies in the city, with an emphasis on hospitality and community building as an end in itself
- to journey alongside those young people who choose to engage with the spiritual aspects of community life, with a view to helping them develop a conscious Christian discipleship

Though it was never part of the original vision, an unexpected additional outcome of the initiative has been the emergence of a distinctive Christian community among those adults who work as staff and volunteers with the initiative, and who have found their own spiritual life enhanced and strengthened through their involvement with offering hospitality, prayer, and practical service to the young people. Volunteers not only spend time with the young people but also provide practical help such as cooking, driving the minibus, and so on, while some make significant financial contributions to ensure the sustainability of the enterprise. No single model can adequately encompass all the activities of Hot Chocolate, which is now a multifaceted resource for young people with something happening on most days of the week. The age range is strictly limited to those between twelve and twenty-one, with the majority aged between fourteen and nineteen. This might seem a wide range, but is reflective of those young people who naturally congregate in the space around the church, and to change the age differential would be going against the natural dynamic of this discrete youth community.

**2.1.3** On Tuesday and Wednesday nights and Saturday afternoons the door is open on a drop-in basis, and on any given occasion around 80 people gather, out of a pool of about 150 who relate to the initiative more or less regularly. These occasions form the core around which other short-term activities evolve depending on the needs at any given time – some of them lasting for a few days or weeks, others for longer periods. There might be occasional dinners organised by the young people themselves, or small groups tackling specific issues. An intensive three week summer programme has run now for several years with considerable success. In addition to this, there is an ongoing programme of support and personal development resourced by a part-time worker with a degree in community education and previous experience with various government agencies that advise young people who might otherwise find themselves on the margins of society. She provides training for the staff and volunteers of Hot Chocolate so as to ensure they are fully appraised of new initiatives and opportunities that will be useful in their own conversations with young people about matters such as writing job applications and developing life skills.

**2.1.4** The fluidity of this way of working almost defies description in analytical categories, but matches the rhythms of the lifestyle of a typical young person in today's world – though even talk of a 'typical' young person tends to domesticate the reality of life for this people group, as the leaders explain:

- *We operate as a middle of the road support for young people, many of whom don't go to school, and some don't even live with their parents. Not all are on a low socio-economic demographic scale. There are middle class youngsters with stable homes who are well looked after, others whose lives are in chaos and have had a succession of foster homes, some who've been in juvenile detention centres or on supervision orders, some are OK with school while others are hanging in there by the skin of their teeth, still others have simply dropped out of education because they can't cope. There's everything and anything, nothing now surprises us.*

A single visit by an outsider could easily give a misleading impression of what is actually happening, and in the course of this research several such visits have been made in the hope of discerning some pattern in what goes on. The initial description offered by the leaders accurately captures the atmosphere:

- *Hot Chocolate seems manic when you first come in but if you come regularly you begin to get a different perspective. The young people talk to us freely and we debrief after every session. In any one evening we'll cover issues of employment, world issues, spirituality, education, relationships, sex and sexual health, drugs, alcohol, family – depending what their concerns are.*

These open events are co-ordinated by teams largely consisting of volunteers, including some who first attended Hot Chocolate when they were in their early teens and who subsequently wanted to give something back to the initiative. Andrea (not her real name) is a typical example of such a person. She is now seventeen, but first connected with Hot Chocolate as a thirteen year old 'mosher'.<sup>54</sup>

Even though she lives in Arbroath which involves a 90 minute bus journey to get home, she feels she has got so much out of it that she wants to give something back. She seemed surprised at how easily she was accepted onto one of the youth teams:

- *One day I just heard about it and said 'Can I be part of this?' So it happened. They just said yes.*

Her particular contribution has been in helping the other young people learn how to cook so they will be able to care for themselves in their own homes, which is the sort of skill that most of them lack.

**2.1.5** Many of these young people would be described as 'feral' by the tabloid press – and, quite apart from any other cultural barriers, their openness would be an embarrassment to the attitudes of many people in traditional churches. They speak honestly about their lives, their sexual encounters, their aspirations and fears, revealing things that their families or teachers (if they have them) will rarely hear. Hot Chocolate has in effect created a bubble in which it is safe to share absolutely anything, and is regarded as a second home by the regulars, many of whom are surprised to think that Christians can operate in such a way. In the words of one young person:

- *I came because my friend coaxed me, I stayed because I liked it. I was surprised. I didn't think I'd like anything in a church.*

Working in this environment requires quick thinking and speedy decisions at a number of levels, and not surprisingly the team do not always get it right. They do, however, recognise the importance of learning from mistakes. As one worker put it:

- *In the team it's the norm to question each other and be open about our mistakes. This then makes it hard to relate to the rest of church culture where this openness is not the norm. Reflective learning has become so much part of me and how I relate to other people that I find it difficult to be in church where I can't question things because I'm not allowed to question some people because of their position in the church.<sup>55</sup>*

Before each open session, the teams gather for a meal and to reflect briefly on what they are doing. But there is also a different style of drop-in event every Thursday evening offering an opportunity for more one-to-one encounters between team members and young people. This is a more intentionally structured occasion that might include more traditional Christian activities such as Bible study and prayer. Those involved in this group on a regular basis are inclined to regard it as their 'church', even though not all of them would think they are Christians.<sup>56</sup>

The one thing they – and a good many of the larger group – have in common, though, is a desire to make something out of their lives, and for their lifestyle to reflect values of service and community with integrity. This has not gone unnoticed by the leaders, who are intentionally working through the significance of this:

- *It could be an interesting model of being church and learning through service, rather than a church that is only about services of worship. For many of our young people it seems to be about behaving first – experiencing something first then unpacking and asking the questions.*

Conversion has often been described in terms of believing, belonging, and behaving – in that order, as a linear progression. We invite others to believe the same things as we do (something that tends to be an essentially cerebral process), then allow them to belong (through the formalities of church membership), and behaving is frequently regarded as, if not peripheral, certainly not the usual starting point for a journey of discipleship. These young people are turning that around, with lifestyle issues as a major entry point for reflection on the meaning of life and faith, recognising community (belonging) as a key aspect of that – and believing in any cognitive way is well down their list of priorities. For many of them, the centrality of service arises naturally out of their everyday realities:

- *They are simply there for each other. They share everything from a cigarette to their sofa. Someone says, 'I've been kicked out of my house' and the answer is, 'Come and sleep on my floor'. Sometimes this will go on for months*

*and they share food, the bills, they share life really.*

**2.1.6** This concern also shows itself in the behaviour of the young people at Hot Chocolate events. One word that kept cropping up in a conversation with Andrea was 'respect':

- *Here they teach respect. We all know if we break it or ruin things it will spoil it for ourselves, because we have no money to replace anything so we are all respectful.*

She offered the opinion that the initiative itself is what creates that sense of respect:

- *Some folk are hyper and just need to do something mischievous. Coming here gives them a place. If they were left to themselves they'd be out drinking. Here it's warm, there's the music room, pool, sports, a place to chill, something to do. They know they can't bring drink in or drink here, so they don't do it. It's respect.*

It might be argued that what she describes here displays some key characteristics of Christian community, as not only has this young person grown in personal maturity, but she has also learned the value of service even as she herself has been accepted unconditionally. However, like many people today, she confesses

- *I don't know what I think about the church. The young people here aren't religious, even those who go to church. But everyone has respect. Like at dinner we bow our heads for prayer.*

The way that 'church' and 'religion' are juxtaposed as being synonymous – and opposed to 'respect' – is typical of the outlook of many people, and not just seventeen-year-olds. It is merely one evidence of the extent to which 'church' is perceived as being disconnected from real life (for what is 'respect' if it is not a way of talking about love of neighbour?). As a consequence of her involvement with Hot Chocolate, Andrea has been motivated to try attending church services, some of which she found more appealing than others, though she has not found it easy either to get herself there physically or to integrate with any particular congregation. One thing that would help her, and others like her, is more affirmation from the wider church. Her final words as we left were: 'This is good. Will you come again and see us?'

**2.1.7** One particular short-term project highlighted both the reality of this sense of service and community and the discontinuity between it and the lifestyle of more traditional church folks. A group of these young people and a group from the church agreed to make a video diary of whatever was happening in their personal life over a twenty-four hour period. There was a striking difference between the two groups, and even a youth worker turned out to be significantly different from the young people. It was no surprise to discover that advance planning to meet up with friends was the style of an older generation, but texting also turned out to be too structured for the young people. They would just get up and go somewhere and know that sooner or later they would encounter someone, and they would be

happy to hang out and see what happens – which might be with someone they already knew, or a complete stranger. This is reflected in the way that individuals first encounter Hot Chocolate: there is no advertising or recruitment strategy, they mostly come through random contacts within their own subculture.

**2.1.8** This understanding has helped to inform thinking about what 'church' – and indeed faith – might look like in this situation:

- *One-to-one on the hoof is where we do lots of exploring God. We have tried to pull them together to learn from each other, but that has been impossible: it's so culturally abnormal coming together at a time for a purpose for the majority of these young people. ... This is a challenge for mainstream church because most people there just don't understand that this is how it is.*

This phenomenon also means that the community itself is continually changing. As people mature they move on because they no longer have the need for the same resources, though younger ones are always coming in to take their place. This is to be expected at a time when young folks are in a stage of transition to adulthood, and means that two or three years is a typical length of time for them to engage with the group unless they have found a real home there and become involved as helpers or wish to be part of the community more indefinitely, or are struggling and need longer term support. This does not automatically mean the end of a connection with Hot Chocolate:

- *In a city the size of Dundee it's not uncommon to encounter them in the street and they tell us how they are progressing. At other times they will phone or drop in – sometimes with a bit of good news, at other times it's because of a crisis. But we are glad they know they can come to us and this is evidence of the relationship we have built up with them.*

Continuity from one stage of life to another will always be a challenge for any who are trying to grow a community among young people, though that should not be allowed to detract from what is being accomplished here even over a relatively short (though crucial) time frame. What it does highlight is the urgency of establishing fresh expressions of church to which young adults can transition at this point in life.

**2.1.9** The staff of Hot Chocolate currently consists of four full-time and two part-time workers. The theological bedrock of this initiative (expressed repeatedly in initial conversations with them) is a firm belief in the *missio Dei*, though subsequent conversations with some leaders identified misgivings as to what this might actually mean in practical terms, with a concern to ensure that they would believe 'the right things' and 'worship' in ways that would be recognisable to traditional church practice, perhaps concealing an unstated expectation that, when all is said and done, God works in somewhat predictable ways. Notwithstanding that hesitation, though, the actual practice of Hot Chocolate reflects a flexible approach to the needs of the moment, which can

at times appear to be disorganisation but which the leaders would prefer to describe as an openness to the wind of the Spirit:

- *Most of what we do is informal on any regular weekday. We see our challenge as identifying 'where is God and how can we get along with what God's doing tonight?' Things happen 'in the moment'. What's happening this evening will play out this evening. It's not about preparing an evening's programme. Our plans might work, or not be the right thing for that day. Conversation might just come out of the blue which sends things in a different direction. That does not mean we are not 'prepared'. In fact we need to be better prepared in this context so that we can be fluid and move with the flow of what we believe God's Spirit is doing.*

Working in this way is both liberating and challenging, and highlights an acknowledged need for some structured mentoring process. But in what ways does it match the criteria laid down by the Emerging Ministries Fund, of being missional, ecclesial, and experimental? There can be no doubt that it is missional and it is also experimental in the most literal sense of that word. The nature of the people group which Hot Chocolate is reaching requires a mindset that is prepared to try different things and be quite open to the likelihood that failure will be as much a learning experience as success – and taking the time to be self-reflective and work through what that means. In the jargon of Practical Theology, this is very much a praxis-reflection approach to life and ministry. Is it also ecclesial? The leaders were ready for that question as it had already been the subject of some email correspondence with the administrators of the Emerging Ministries Fund. They responded with a further question: "What do they actually mean by "Are we becoming ecclesial?" It might come as a surprise to hear that, especially bearing in mind that its key leaders have some formal theological education. The follow-on highlighted the point of the question: 'We think we have different ideas of what we mean by ecclesial.' In teasing out the nature of church as it is understood and worked out here, the following comments and statements offer some insights:

- *I mean a community of persons who come together, who seek to worship and serve God. We wouldn't put too many tight prescriptions of how that looks. A gathering of Christian people.*
- *We're not into controlling what's happening, rather discerning what God's growing here.*
- *Hot Chocolate team has the potential to be real church already ... It already has become that for some, where they are being formed as disciples, and others are finding their way into this.*

No-one is going to deny that these are all characteristics of what it means to be authentically church. But in affirming that 'The mission needs to inform how the church will become in the future', they are not only reflecting some of the key insights of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report, but also highlighting one of the major difficulties facing any attempt



to combine the words 'missional' and 'ecclesial' in the same sentence. Historically – and still the case in all the Scottish churches, of whatever denomination or tradition – it is the nature of the church that is assumed to be normative, and which determines the permissible forms of what constitute mission. If mission is prioritised the agenda changes in subtle ways, not least because it can sometimes seem as if God is doing some things that the institution might disapprove of.

**2.1.10** To regard settled institutional life and new ecclesial expressions as mutually incompatible is clearly not the whole story, as can be seen from the experience of the Church of England with Fresh Expressions. But in the case of some of the Hot Chocolate leaders it reflects their previous experience of traditional church life as being unduly concerned with power structures and control mechanisms. Their stated philosophy is well expressed as follows:

- *An appropriate expression of church will need to keep changing and offer a space for learning.*
- *We seek to contribute to each other and learn from each other. We think the young people need to take a lead in planning what we're doing, because that will facilitate learning.*
- *Before every event we meet and eat dinner around a table – the whole team, young people, servers, whoever – and so the power dynamics go out the window because we're having a meal. This is now our owned culture, the way we relate to everyone, but sometimes it gets us into trouble especially in church circles where structures and position are considered important. This is not the case at Hot Chocolate. It's not that we have no specific roles but any young person can question us. If we're wrong we can say we're sorry. By contrast church has a more hierarchical way of relating, even in the way it's set up ... This is true of the church locally and nationally.*

This way of putting it is certainly an exaggeration, but it is an opinion that needs to be heard, for if this is the perception of 'church' held by those who are committed to it (and well experienced in its ways), we can be sure that in the wider culture there will be a similar perception, perhaps expressed in even more strident terms – and this is a missional issue, for who would wish to be part of something like that, however caricatured this description might be? One of the most important conclusions to be drawn from the experience of Hot Chocolate is that there is an urgent need for appropriate mentoring to enable leaders to grow in their own faith and to be enabled to explore some of these tricky questions more deeply:

- *I do think we need to be challenged as to how this is not just a Christian group for people but how can it become church and who is going to help us think through this?*
- *Our question is how can we frame this whole time (food included) to be an expression of church. Who is going to walk with us on this journey and help us?*

- *Creating a space that the young folk identify as home – can we turn that around to be coming 'home' to God?*

Overall, the leaders at Hot Chocolate probably have more answers to these questions than they realise, as exemplified by this description of their life together:

- *As soon as the doors open it's about building relationships, find out what their lives are like, walking with them, sharing our lives with them, getting to know their drink/drug habits, if they've dropped out of education, their home life, everything.*
- *All the time we need to be resonating, adapting, culturally contextual. We need to provide somewhere they can chill and not be judged.*

Such language has echoes of the missional practices that are both described and recommended in the four gospels of the New Testament. Could it be that Hot Chocolate is actually taking the ecclesial question and turning it on its head by asking us: in what sense was the ministry of Jesus ecclesial when judged by our preferred doctrinal formulations? And what might church look like, for the traditional as well as the new, if we were to take him seriously as our ultimate model for missional discipleship?

## 2.2 Citylife

**2.2.1** Citylife, based in Wester Hailes, Edinburgh, is unique among the projects identified for particular study by the Emerging Ministries Task Group, for several reasons. Unlike other enterprises being supported by the Emerging Ministries Fund, it is not new, and in addition its story has been well documented in a book written by its founder, Helene King, describing the vision and its implementation from its formal inception in 1996 to the point when she retired in 2009 – though her involvement with this community dates back to the 1980s.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, during the period when this research was being carried out it was in a state of flux and transition, which inevitably constrains the usefulness of whatever might be said about it here, as its journey in the early part of 2010 neither reflects what was accomplished in the past nor what might yet be achieved in the future. Had the research been carried out a year earlier, or a few months later, a very different picture might well have emerged and it is a credit to the maturity of its new generation of younger leaders that they were happy for this transitional stage to be featured in this report.

**2.2.2** Citylife describes itself as 'an agent for purposeful, beneficial and long-term change amongst inner city communities via a primary focus of caring for and befriending children, young people and their families' with the aim of:

- building self confidence, hope and purpose into the lives of disadvantaged inner-city children and young people:
- esteeming children and young people as valuable individuals and helping them reach their full potential

- demonstrating unconditional acceptance to children, young people and their families regardless of status, background or religion
- offering the best activities possible and making them accessible to low income households by providing services and transport for free

Throughout the early years of its existence, Citylife was largely the personal work of its founder, whose commitment was recognised in 2000 when Helene King won the BT Childline Award. In 2001 she established it as a charitable trust, and as such it has attracted funding from many different supporters representing a broad spectrum of interests in Scottish community life, including civic bodies as well as a number of high-profile individuals and trusts along with several churches in and around Edinburgh who share the same vision. The Christian basis of the project is clearly articulated, and is well summarised as 'letting children and young people know they are not a mistake but have a destiny, a purpose and a hope in God'. There was never an expectation that the project might develop into anything that could become a church in its own right, and Helene King's assumption had been that she would introduce those whom she met into her own congregation in a middle-class area of Edinburgh. That integration never happened, as the two cultures were so different from one another that there was a sense of mutual incomprehension from the start. As an unexpected consequence of this, she found herself pushed out into what was, for her, unknown territory, and Citylife subsequently grew organically into the shape and structure it has today.

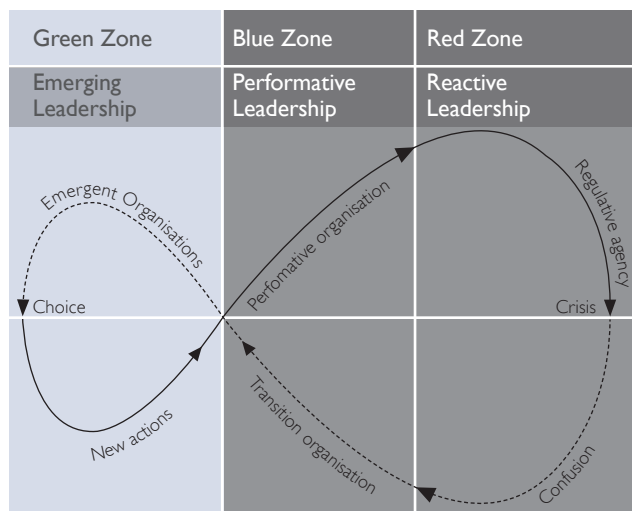
**2.2.3** Members of the community identified her as a person they could trust and relate to easily, and she soon found herself being invited to carry out functions that in other contexts would have been the preserve of the clergy, including marriages and funerals, as well as baptisms as people came to faith in Christ. Her philosophy was simple:

- *Just love the people and something will grow around you – then you'll be ready for the future.*

The work soon built up with support from a number of volunteers, who contributed their time as well as professional skills in ensuring that Citylife would flourish. When Ian Dyson was appointed as fundraiser and office manager in April 2007, and subsequently Sarah Lowe as a part-time project worker, it was at the end of a period of considerable expansion of the initiative. Helene King subsequently took the decision to step back from a leadership position and when she retired in September 2009, she decided to move to Cyprus for a period of several months so as to enable the project to establish a new identity without her constant presence, and this was the situation when this research project was initiated. Though Helene had clearly taken wise intentional steps to ensure a smooth succession, the transition turned out to be more disturbing than anyone had anticipated, and at the time of our first meetings with the leaders it was clear that they – and no doubt others who were involved both as volunteers and as clients – were working through the early

stages of an institutional grief process that can appropriately be compared with a sense of bereavement, compounded by the expectations of donors as well as the wider community that this highly acclaimed community project would continue to flourish. In addition to Helene's departure, two other significant couples were no longer able to be as involved as they had previously been due to changes in their own family circumstances, though continuing as casual volunteers, leaving a core group of seven people able to be fully committed. Not surprisingly those who were left struggled to know what to do next, with the stark choice of either giving up entirely or engaging with the challenges of this new situation. They chose to engage, something which they now acknowledge has been painful, but extremely worthwhile. Over the few months of this research project, a feeling of loss has been turned around and a refocusing on the core values has enabled the team to regroup and face the hard questions – something that in itself says a lot not only about the commitment but also about the leadership capacity of those who are now involved.

**2.2.4** The phenomenon of cyclical growth and decline in organisations is nothing new, and the experience of Citylife is well illustrated in Al Roxburgh's diagram depicting the relationships between what he calls emergent, performative, and reactive leadership. In its short life, this project has been through all three aspects of the cycle, and now has the potential to reinvent itself through new emerging leaders.<sup>58</sup>



One such leader who will be key to the future of the entire enterprise is Sarah Lowe, a part-time project worker in whose life Citylife has played a part from its earliest days – who can only be described as a natural reflective theologian and was one of the most inspirational people we had the privilege of meeting in the course of this entire project. As a person brought up in Wester Hailes, her experience can illustrate the ethos of the project very well. As a youngster she attended a Billy Graham event and responded to the invitation to follow Christ, where Helene King was assigned to be her counsellor. She followed her up, getting to know her family, and Sarah was one of those who accompanied her to her own church. When it became clear that it was not going to be possible for the group from Wester Hailes

to be accepted by that rather different type of congregation, Helene introduced them to Sonrise, an Assemblies of God church which had heard of Helene's work and subsequently invited her to be their youth pastor. Sarah stayed until her mid-teens, but then moved away from Edinburgh (and from faith) and it was not until some ten years later that she reconnected with Helene and Citylife. On returning to the city, she found that during her absence all her family had become Christians. She settled back in Wester Hailes and started volunteering to work with the Citylife team. Sarah's natural ability to relate to the community was soon recognised, and funding was secured for her to work part-time on the project – something that was clearly an inspired move, though Sarah admits that, as the only person on the team actually living in Wester Hailes, the notion of 'part-time' work is something of an aspiration rather than the reality.<sup>59</sup>

**2.2.5** In the past, Citylife events have found a home in various locations, including the local high school, but everything is now based in two industrial units which provide office space as well as a place to gather; though in the nature of things much of the work takes place in informal and unplanned encounters in people's homes and on the streets. In relation to more structured events, the team are at present consolidating existing programmes, evaluating them and seeing how they grow before inaugurating new ventures. At present, a typical week consists of the following activities:

**2.2.5.1** A Tuesday evening group for primary age children (effectively, those who are under nine years old), all of whom are collected from their homes, which is also an opportunity for conversations with their parents and wider families. A typical evening might include group games as well as an intentional time when significant themes such as friendship, heroes, and others of relevance to this age group can be explored from a Christian perspective, though bearing in mind that all these children are un-churched. Singing may occasionally play a part, but prayer – especially of a meditational, experiential nature – is central to the experience. There is some experimentation with having a meal at a table with these children with the aim of building up trust and friendship – which can be challenging and counter-cultural in a social context where many people would never eat in front of someone else.

**2.2.5.2** Wednesday evening sees a parallel gathering, this time for older children whose ages range from nine to fifteen. This provides an informal drop-in space where they can chill out on bean bags, visit the tuck shop for food, and just be with their friends. There is time for conversation in small groups, often focused around specific activities such as working at arts and crafts, playing games on Playstation or Wii, or for girls, connecting at nail and hair stations where there is plenty of time to talk and build relationships. There is also a more focused time of spiritual reflection on some particular issue that will take the same theme as the Tuesday group, though age appropriate for these older kids.

**2.2.5.3** On Thursday evenings, a group of adults and older teenagers (16+) meet. These are mostly individuals who have a long association with Citylife, and who are self-

consciously on a journey of discipleship. It is an opportunity to build community, share challenges, and equip one another for future service (some of those who attend are now volunteering to assist in the other groups working with younger children).

**2.2.5.4** On Sunday nights there is a gathering that, from a traditional perspective, could look more like 'real church', with songs, Bible reading and reflections, and so on. This attracts adults and older children, many of whom have a long-standing relationship with Citylife, often initiated by help being offered when they were moving house, or something similar. There is potential for these people to be involved in helping in the other groups (and some of them also attend on Thursday evenings).

There is also an ongoing programme of short courses. Under the title of **Get Active** the Laidlaw Youth Trust funded a series of outdoor activities, and a partnership with ngm (New Generation Music & Mission) promoted some highly successful Popschools (dance and DJ workshops) which expanded networks in the local community. Other recent activities have included esteem & confidence workshops in local schools, and a sailing trip around the Western Isles with Westward Quest, a charity based in Oban which, among other things, offers voyages especially tailored to the needs of young people. Over a two week period, fifteen young people went on these sails, which not only gave them a holiday they otherwise would never have had but also provided opportunities for talking about journeys, as well as a real-life background for Bible studies on the story of Jonah. In October 2009, a group of eighteen young people aged from eleven to twenty-one spent a weekend at Lendrick Muir; again engaging in a mixture of outdoor activities combined with time for personal and spiritual reflection about matters of faith and life.

**2.2.6** In addition to all this, there is the ongoing encounter with families that happens spontaneously. Living on the estate, Sarah in particular is always on call as people just turn up at her home. There might be intentional conversations with teenagers who are having babies and come looking for advice, while others could be looking for help with loading music into an iPod or just someone to talk to. Others will be communicating through Facebook. In a somewhat understated way, Sarah describes this work:

- A typical day for me is hanging out with them. I have 3 children and a husband. They come to the house and help me do the dishes or whatever I'm doing. We're just living there, it's spontaneous, natural. Whatever God gives me I pass it on.

Another (self-financed) part-time worker, Mark, operates in a very similar way – through relationships and tackling jobs alongside people. A meeting with David McLetchie, the local MSP, highlighted the importance of this sort of work:

- He asked how it is that so many young people fall between the gaps. We were able to explain that social work can do so much between 9 and 4, whereas Sarah



is here all the time. Also there's a mistrust of agencies or any authority figure, so when the government try things it's not going to work for the majority of people in these housing estates.

And the leaders have no shortage of ambitious ideas for the future.

**2.2.7** In terms of the definitions adopted by the Emerging Ministries Task Group, Citylife can certainly be described as a missional enterprise: its entire DNA is focused around living the Gospel, and in the process of that sharing God's love with others and modelling Kingdom values in a way that will open up new vistas of possibility to those who might otherwise live their lives with a sense of worthlessness:

- *It's important to just do life with each other seeing them as friends. We try to come into their environment rather than taking them into a different environment.*

It is perhaps less obviously experimental in the sense that the Task Group uses the word, as the model itself can be paralleled in other initiatives in community development – though in the more literal sense of experimentation which implies learning from tentative outcomes and allowing that learning to create new possibilities for the future, then it certainly would qualify. Almost from the start, there has been a need for those involved to try different approaches just to see what would work, not least because of the initial lack of support from some traditional churches.

**2.2.8** As with the other projects considered here, the thing that is harder to discern is whether Citylife is also ecclesial. One way of addressing that would be to look at the sort of activities that have taken place in Citylife, and from that angle it already has all the marks of a traditional church. Scripture is certainly central, the need for accountability is recognised through the structure of the charitable trust, and over the years the sacraments have been celebrated – indeed, it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that through Helene King's acceptance in the community she was regarded by many people as their *de facto* parish minister, baptising them, and being the person they turned to for occasional offices such as weddings and funerals. With her departure, the project has entered the equivalent of a vacancy, and the need for someone to function in that way is acknowledged. The current leaders speak for themselves:

- *We recognise we need leadership, a figurehead, who can give direction. We all have talents but we need someone to help us to bring out the best in each of us and develop our full potential.*

In order to be fully effective, in the first instance any future leader would probably begin work on a part-time, or even voluntary basis – partly because the entire operation depends on his or her relational skills and the need to be accepted within the wider community. Who that person might be is yet to be determined, and the future development of the project as an ecclesial community will inevitably hinge on the answer to that question.

**2.2.9** In the meantime, different (and sometimes conflicting) attitudes to regarding Citylife as church can be identified. The nature of what might be possible in worship changed at the point when the industrial unit was leased and the groups were no longer meeting in the high school lecture theatre – where, by definition, events were, in the words of one of the leaders, 'performance style from the stage'. This coincided with a realisation that some of those who attended had a relationship with what happened from the front, but little connection with one another, and intentional steps were taken to create gatherings that would be more intimate and interactive, though some left at that time to go to other churches whose style of worship was more theatrical. Others, however, find any form of existing church to be intimidating, often just because of the size and style of traditional church buildings and their lack of confidence in venturing into them:

- *Originally it was just work with children and it just grew. Many of these people struggle going into established churches, even the ones on the estate. They feel to go you'd have to know someone or be really confident – you have to feel like you belong there and most don't.*
- *Lots of people living in poverty feel impoverished and can't handle things which to others seem like normal social skills. We need to help them till they get to that point.*

For these people (who are the majority of those now connecting with Citylife), a small environment where they feel they can drop in and know they belong is much more attractive – 'a resource where they can come in and out without too much focus on them personally'. For those who attend on a Sunday evening, there is no question that this, for them, is their 'real church'. There is, however, a recognition that it would be a good thing for them to feel able to connect with other churches, not least because venturing into other spaces will help to develop their social skills with all the attendant benefits that could bring in relating to other contexts in life. In this circumstance:

- *It seems like this is a good place for healing, growing in confidence and learning about God. A place where you can also venture out and come back in and help.*

In many ways, what is being described here is what in other contexts would be regarded as a cell group, a comparison which is recognised:

- *Here the emphasis is on maintaining depth of relationship and that needs a small group. In big churches you get cells. On Sunday night we're like a cell: we live in community with each other. We do the hard stuff together. At a big church we wouldn't get that. This is where we are having to work out our faith together ... Church is about relationships. A group of people working out their faith together*

At the same time, however, 'we also need times of refreshing':

- *Sometimes you can feel isolated and we want to give people a broader picture of faith community. Also when*

*they hit seventeen or eighteen they need more friends to mentor them and guide them. Especially if we take them to a much bigger event they see there are a whole lot of people who are Christians and that broadens their horizons. There's also benefit in meeting with other people and broadening the teaching they're receiving.*

**2.2.10** Sarah helpfully compared the relationship between what goes on in Citylife and the wider Christian community to a domestic challenge that is familiar to any parent:

- *It's like a mum who hangs out with kids all the time, but then wants to talk to others and learn more.*

Sarah is herself a good illustration of the tensions this can create for people in Wester Hailes, who long for a bigger perspective but find it hard to feel fully a part of some other community:

- *This [Citylife] is my church but also I go to other places, but I don't know those people. I enjoy the teaching, I like talking to people who speak in a way I now understand, but I still don't belong there.*
- *Sometimes you need help from outside in order to come back in and help.*

The nuances of that statement highlight one of the biggest problems for mission today – and not just in Wester Hailes – with the mention of 'people who speak in a way I now understand', the implication being that for many people outside the churches some form of induction into its language is necessary before they can grasp what is actually being said, let alone understand it well enough for it to make a difference.

**2.2.11** The ambiguities in the ecclesial self-awareness of this group are probably shared by many lay people throughout the Scottish churches, who find themselves called to new missional activities that will inevitably lead to the emergence of new groupings of spiritual searchers – but who do not wish to set themselves up in competition with existing churches, and indeed recognise the value of being 'one, holy, catholic, and apostolic' through ongoing connections with the historic tradition. Given that it was Helene King's experience of resistance from her traditional church that led to the emergence of Citylife as a discrete community, it is a sign of considerable maturity that today's leaders still aspire to being a part of the wider church, while seeking to create a faith community that will nurture those who live constantly on the margins of conventional church culture. Today, the major challenge facing Citylife leaders in relation to other churches is the lack of understanding of what they are about – which in turn is probably a lack of understanding of what it is like to be part of a marginal community, with little comprehension of the lifestyle of individuals and families in that context and therefore the sort of faith community that can have integrity there. Whether a traditional church of any denomination can partner with them in ways that will be neither intimidating nor controlling has to be very much an open question. Some deeply ingrained attitudes would need to change first – a

lesson that the workers in Citylife have already had to learn for themselves:

- *If we don't change it doesn't work – we need to be open and transparent ... we've all had to change and go through a lot.*
- *We're all different and all have our issues, we need to honour one another. The inner work has to be done first. We're still working on this.*

It would be hard to think of a better description of the challenges that lie ahead as the church struggles to embrace the reality of a 'mixed economy'.

## 2.3 Fridays in Faith

**2.3.1** This initiative is based in Annan, and is a collaborative venture of Annandale Churches Together, an ecumenical group that includes Annan Old Parish Church, St Andrews Parish Church linked with Brydekirk Parish Church, Annan United Reformed Church, St John's Episcopal Church, and St Columba's Catholic Church. For more than ten years, Annandale Churches Together have run summer holiday clubs, attracting substantial numbers of children (typically 150 or more every summer), very few of whom had any other relationship with the existing churches. While the level of enthusiasm generated at these annual holiday clubs seemed to indicate that, at however superficial a level, there was a clear interest in the Christian faith, it was equally clear that the regular activities of the churches were not touching the lives of a majority of those who attended the holiday clubs. From the outset, there was an acknowledgement that the operational structures of the traditional churches was a major stumbling block. The un-churched people who found the more relaxed style of the holiday club attractive had never even entertained the possibility that regular Sunday morning worship might be anything they would connect with. They were not in any way against the church: there was an obvious willingness to explore faith, but this was not accompanied by an expectation that this would involve entering a church building. In spite of their spiritual interest, it was for most of them just a step too far to move from the interactive exploration of faith in an annual summer event into the traditional space of church life.

**2.3.2** Fridays in Faith was born out of this concern, motivated by a simple question: how could these people be enabled to move forward in the exploration of faith in an environment that would be both affirming and challenging? From the outset, all the churches gave this initiative their full support, and there was never any resistance either to the thinking behind it, or to its implementation. It simply emerged naturally out of the good relationships between the different churches, which have worked well together over a sustained period of time, creating an atmosphere of trust as well as a supportive network of people who are both willing and ready to become involved. Practicality means that the planning is the responsibility of the two key leaders, Pam Mellor and Deborah Steele, though the execution of their plans is well supported by others with particular skills in

presentation and organisation. Several older people from the various churches attend on a regular basis, while those who never attend express pleasure in the existence of Fridays in Faith, knowing that it gives people who would otherwise not connect with the church an alternative way in which to engage with spiritual concerns. Church people are not alone in appreciating the contribution it is making to the life of the town: it has also received free publicity from the council, as a direct consequence of support offered by Fridays in Faith to the community at the turning on of the Christmas lights in 2009 – a partnership that is now continuing, this time with the initiative coming from the local council.<sup>60</sup>

**2.3.3** In the two years since Fridays in Faith was first established, its core objectives have been carefully crafted so as to

- *provide a place where unchurched people can explore faith and grow spiritually, in a way that is accessible to them:*
- *allow people to identify with a faith activity who have not done so through a particular church*
- *enable people to experience a faith community, without the necessity or expectation that church membership or attendance will be a prerequisite for inclusion*
- *enable people of all ages and stages of life to come to know God*

And for all these things to be explored in a family atmosphere, with the emphasis on all ages working and exploring together:

**2.3.4** With a monthly gathering in Annan Academy, Fridays in Faith is clearly meeting a need within the community, and there are regular attendances of up to 100 individuals on any given occasion (Friday nights, hence the name).<sup>61</sup>

A typical group consists of people of diverse ages, with an expectation that all children will be accompanied by at least one adult, and as well as the family groups others from the wider church community attend in order to facilitate and be part of the activities of the evening. Key Christian themes – often following the seasons and Christian festivals – are explored through many different media that are carefully chosen so as to be inclusive of all the age groups represented. The way that Christian truth is integrated through such diverse activities is commendable not only for its creativity and imagination, but also for its theological sophistication, which is of a very high order indeed. What might on the surface look like a game played for fun can actually provide substantial food for thought and spiritual reflection.<sup>62</sup>

The concept for the gatherings is simple. Meeting from 7.00-8.30pm, everything begins at tables, with each table working as a team and moving around the different activities together throughout the evening, sharing conversations as they go with one another and with their table host, who has the responsibility for getting to know the families. A parish minister is one such host, but serves as an ordinary member of the helping team rather than being there in any official ministry capacity. Advance planning is a key component,

for all the hosts as well as for the two main leaders, and there is a regular meeting of hosts every three months to look forward to future events and to participate in all the different activities in advance, as well as taking time to discuss and pray together. The activities always include ‘a challenge, some crazy fun, and reflection space.’ The reflection space in particular has become a popular part of the evening, and consists of a gazebo that was originally borrowed but subsequently donated as a permanent fixture. The leaders’ own words are worth quoting here:

- *We always try to include something that people can take home and use, talk, and think about. Sometimes this is as a result of a craft project (they’ve made it themselves). We once gave a present of a book of prayers and people who hadn’t been at that event were asking us in the street if they could have one. We like to give “nice” things, it shows we value people and sends out the message that God values them.*

**2.3.5** Some particularly significant occasions are singled out by the leaders as being ‘true church’. The first was at a New Year celebration, when people were invited after reflection to come forward for hand washing:

- *Families came together. People talked about it in Annan for weeks after. You could see they were carrying burdens and wanted to let go as they held out their hands to have water poured over them. We did this in January, it was New Year, a new start. Some were in tears, yet there had been no mention of sin and no sermon was preached. The volunteers were deeply moved ... that was a moment of realising ‘this is real church’.*

On another occasion people were invited to let go of whatever was troubling them as they placed a pebble in water. One of the leaders followed three normally rowdy boys into the quiet space of the reflection tent, pondering the pictures around the space but also with an eye firmly on the boys, wondering what they might do next. One took so long that it seemed he was never going to leave his stone in the water, so she encouraged him by saying it was OK to let it drop. His response: ‘I’m not ready yet’. For the leader that was a moment she describes as ‘real church’ as this unlikely character was not only touched by some core Gospel values of repentance, change, and forgiveness, but was clearly taking it all seriously.

**2.3.6** A third memorable gathering took place at Easter 2010. Food had featured in the gatherings of Fridays in Faith right from the start, served midway through the evening and offering a respite from more energetic activities as well as a chance for conversation around the tables – and all of it provided as a gift by a team from the annual holiday club, that includes some who are not church people. Conscious that a supper lies at the heart of Christian celebration, the two leaders deliberated at some considerable length before they decided to have a sharing of broken bread. Given that many of those attending had no prior knowledge of either the Biblical story of the Last Supper or of Eucharistic celebrations in church, they felt it was important to separate

this sharing from the regular food so it could become a thoughtful reflection point for all who were there. Four loaves were placed on a table brought into the centre of the hall and people were invited to celebrate what was called 'the Gathering':

- We called it the Gathering, because we're people who gather round the table.

The words used to introduce the sharing of bread are worth including here, as an example of the theological depth and missional perception – not to mention ecclesial creativity – being shown by the two leaders:

- We have been thinking of a way of sharing the hope that comes through God's brokenness.
- We would like to break this bread and share it together.
- Brokenness/sharing ...
- The cross says, "I am here for you" ... This is for each of us here tonight.
- This is a simple act, open to every one of us. All are welcome ...
- Wherever you feel you are on your faith journey.
- You can bring your doubts and fears ... the good and the rubbish.
- We don't understand how the seed becomes the flower ...
- We don't understand all that went on at the cross,

BUT ...

- We can come and share this broken bread as a very simple sign of hope.
- All you need do is to break off a piece of bread, then pass the loaf on ...
- No words need be said ... just receive in the stillness.
- The only way we can share this bread is to break it (the loaves are broken)
- By the breaking of bread we are assured that in our brokenness there is hope.
- (the bread is passed on with the words, 'in our brokenness, there is hope')

This was not regarded as any sort of gradual introduction to communion,<sup>63</sup> but emerged from the theme for that evening which was 'Gaze and Wonder' – a way of reflecting on the Easter message that would be equally accessible and meaningful to a toddler and a 70-year-old. Images

of brokenness, some showing deep anger and emotion, including themes of reconciliation from Coventry cathedral, were shown on a big screen and formed the subject for conversations around the tables. There were some remarkable divine encounters in a way that, in the broadest sense, might tend to identify this experience as 'sacramental':

- *Deborah broke the bread and started to pass it round and others joined in. It was quiet and you could hear people whispering to one another and then sharing it. In the midst of doing this there was a mum breaking her heart. I put my arms round her, she was like a child as she unburdened herself. So rather than saying 'you can come only when you are ready', by taking part they were changed. We were aware of not saying, 'pick yourself up first then you can come and experience God'. Sometimes you want to say more, but giving them one moment to encounter God – that says something more ... Afterwards, sharing bread somehow encouraged people to ask their own questions. Perhaps they are asking these questions because they are having an opportunity. We've been thinking, 'let's take something that's safe for you and enable it to grow'.*

**2.3.7** By any reckoning, *Fridays in Faith* is not only fulfilling its own stated aims and objectives, but is one of the most strikingly original examples of a fresh expression of church anywhere in the UK. Using the criteria set out by the Emerging Ministries Task Group, it is clearly missional, ecclesial, and experimental – and (something that does not always accompany pragmatic missional initiatives) it is theologically sophisticated to a very high degree. Within a more conventional Reformed definition, the Word is certainly being proclaimed, discipline (accountability) is clearly being delivered via Annandale Churches Together, and whether sacrament is being celebrated is the only question – and the answer to that could depend on one's definition of what constitutes a 'sacrament'. Likewise, in terms of the more comprehensive definition of a Fresh Expression that is at the heart of the Anglican initiative, *Fridays in Faith* is undoubtedly 'a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church [operating through] principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples [and with] the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.' Indeed, judged by some recent discussions of the nature of maturity and how that relates to 'the enduring marks of the church' as being one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, *Fridays in Faith* might be regarded as already mature and, if it was in the Church of England context, would probably be an obvious candidate for full recognition under the provision of the *Bishops' Mission Order* statute.<sup>64</sup>

**2.3.8** There can be no question that this is largely down to the two leaders, Pam Mellor and Deborah Steele, who spend a day each week in preparation and thinking about the monthly event, in addition to which they always take the Thursday before *Fridays in Faith* as a retreat day – not for tweaking the programme, but as a time to reflect, pray, and take time out by going for a walk or a good meal, Carlisle cathedral being a favourite venue which has also



provided inspiration through offering access to resources that otherwise would not have come to their attention. These two work intuitively with each other, usually in one another's homes, though they are aware of the importance of training up others who can, in due course, work alongside them and perhaps take over at some future date. There is a clear sense of a need for strategic planning to ensure that the faith journeys of those who are being reached will continue to develop, especially at transition points in life, whether it be children transferring from one stage of school to another as they enter adolescence, or parents reinventing themselves as their children move on. The leaders' entire approach is rooted in their own sense of commitment and their openness to God taking them into new territory. As one of them commented, 'if you'd asked us a year ago, we'd never have thought we'd be here'. In spite of their outstanding accomplishment, they question what they are doing in ways that reflect the lack of open dialogue about fresh expressions in the church hitherto, and which highlight some key issues that need urgent attention:

- *We think it would be good to give them communion, then the questions kick in: are they ready, are they committed enough, should they join the church first? But what about people who turn up in church once a year for communion? Are they ready, are they committed enough? ... it's not about 'getting' to the real thing, we already are having a priestly role - we're taking on a ministerial role in a new kind of church ... Now we're trying to accept it, we're afraid ...*
- *There's a sense of feeling unqualified. I know I should be doing it but always the question, How much am I allowed to do? When am I treading on the Church of Scotland's toes? ... does God think I'm qualified to do it – and who judges?*
- *The head of a church is the minister – but who are we? We don't have a label, and this question came up when people asked us what our role was? Maybe we are a leadership team! We know in our hearts that's who we are – we believe it.*
- *We have affirmation through Annan Churches Together, who meet every 3 months – so that's from all the churches. But in the Church of Scotland we're asking, 'How does the session and the presbytery relate to us? Are they just there if problems arise? Or to sanction us if people didn't want Fridays in Faith to happen?'*
- *What about sacraments? What happens when someone comes to a stage of faith where they say 'I would like to be baptised', or 'We want to have our child baptised'. Will we have to find a real person? Wheel someone else in to do the magic stuff?*

This is clearly an initiative with a huge amount of potential:

- *So far it's beyond, it's exceedingly, abundantly, beyond whatever we've expected. We won't be able to measure its impact in this life. People are being transformed – and that includes us!*

## 2.4 The ARK ('Actively Reaching Kids')

**2.4.1** The ARK is a joint initiative of Coltness Memorial Church and Bonkle Church (a linked charge in Newmains, Lanarkshire) and developed in response to a recognition that churches which once had significant work among children and young people were struggling to attract families to the traditional Sunday services, with a consequent decline in the attendance at Sunday School. Like many churches, these two congregations organised occasional holiday clubs and other groups for children, but came to realise that maintaining contact with them beyond primary school age was increasingly problematic, and the chances of seeing any of them attend church on Sundays, either alone or with their families, were minimal. Conversations with some families who had occasional connections to the church through other activities, but who did not attend on Sundays, identified significant obstacles to their further integration into a community of faith, even for those who might wish to have some identification with the churches. Chief among these obstacles was the times when Sunday services were held, which were counter-cultural in relation to people's lifestyles and their other commitments on Sundays.

**2.4.2** Recognising the reality of this, those church members with a particular concern for work among children and families came together with the explicit encouragement of the minister and kirk sessions to consider how best to address this situation. At the conclusion of a successful holiday club and Alpha course, The ARK was launched in January 2008, with the stated aims of being

- A safe place where kids and their families are valued simply for who they are. Within this supportive setting, kids are encouraged to build relationships and to ask questions.
- A place where kids can learn about God, explore faith and become the seeds for change in their community.

Right from the start, there was an intention of establishing an ecclesial community whose core members would be children of primary school age, though the age range was expected to expand each year to ensure that older kids would not be lost (so that in the second year of operation it would be P1-S2, then subsequently P1-S3 and so on). The main gathering takes place on a Tuesday night (6.00-7.30pm) and an average attendance is between seventy and eighty individuals, consisting of 40-50 young people, 10-15 adults, four trainee leaders, together with the staff and helpers. The format continues to evolve in relation to changing needs, though things typically begin with a gathering activity for the first twenty minutes or so, as children arrive and congregate in smaller groups where leaders engage in conversation with them about anything that may be of relevance and interest to their lives on any given occasion. The shape of the groups has changed from time to time in relation to the needs of the children who attend, and though age-specific groups might seem the ideal it has proved to be beneficial to incorporate

older and younger children together; not least because the older ones are encouraged to take responsibility and those who may present challenging behaviour are more engaged and less likely to misbehave in a context where they are helping younger ones. From 6.30 to 7.00pm there is a time of corporate worship activities that might include teaching, reading, prayer, multi-media presentations, quizzes, and so on. Following that, there are snacks and some discussion or response in small groups with all the conversations being brought together in the final ten minutes, which might also include an opportunity for response in hand washing, the lighting of candles, or other creative activities.

**2.4.3** The adult group follows a similar pattern, gathering at 6 o'clock for a cup of tea before engaging with the same teaching subjects as the children, though at an age appropriate level. They normally also meet in a different space from the children, though there are regular 'Family Nights' when everyone meets together. Numbers in this group (known as OASIS – 'Of All Shapes and sizes In Scotland') average around fifteen, and as well as parents of children some church members are also regular attenders.

**2.4.4** In addition to the gatherings on Tuesday nights, other activities that connect with the same constituency include an after-school puppetry group, as well as short-term projects such as a choir for a Christmas production, or a course on children and bereavement that has been offered in the local primary schools. In summer 2010 there was an event held twice a week over a three week period, offering workshops on various practical skills within the context of a specific theme for the day, much of it resourced by specialist tutors from the wider community. Apart from one day when there was what one leader described as 'a sort of mini-ARK', there was no explicitly religious content, though the same leader insisted that 'we were still very much about what we are – unconditional acceptance', which some might well consider to be one of the core values of the Gospel. These events were attended by about twenty children each time, mostly new children with no previous contact with the church. Meanwhile, there are grand visions for further developments. A grant from a charitable trust enabled a community survey of the needs of the community to be undertaken, and three key areas have been identified: a need for after-school childcare; a similar need for holiday provision; and a family mediation service. It is anticipated that in the next seven or eight months funding will be in place to appoint new full-time staff, including a project manager who will develop this community work as well as facilitate the ecclesial development of The ARK. It is also hoped there may be two half-time posts to work with children in the P5-6 and P6-S4 age groups.

**2.4.5** The development of The ARK has clearly enhanced the ministry of the two churches and fulfilled their aspirations in relation to reaching children and their families who would not otherwise connect with either of them. There was a conscious effort from the start to implement a mixed economy model in which The ARK could be a 'real' congregation in its own right without denigrating or being in competition with the traditional congregations.

This ambition has already begun to identify some further questions. For example, a number of the adults have come to faith and expressed a desire to be baptised and be full members of the church, something which is obviously good news for the churches that have encouraged and supported The ARK, though it has also proved to be an institutional challenge. When people who have come to faith through The ARK express a desire to 'join the church', what does that mean? To put it simply, which church can they join? As presently constituted, they would have to join either Coltness Memorial Church or Bonkle Church, as there is no facility whereby they can join The ARK as a church, even though that actually is their church and some of them would have no intention of ever being a part of either of the congregations that meet on Sunday mornings. This has obvious practical implications in relation to the development of their personal discipleship and nurture in the faith. It also raises questions for the ongoing viability of The ARK, as explained by one of the leaders:

- *If they join an existing Newmains church, they are then responsible to Newmains to tithe their time, talents and money. But if ARK's their real church, how will it ever grow and become a sustainable community if everything's invested in an existing parish church?*

**2.4.6** Even something that should be as joyous as the baptism of new adult converts raises similar practical questions. Where and when should they be baptised? The default expectation from some within the institution would be that these people should be baptised on a Sunday morning in the parish church. But for those being baptised, it would be more natural for it to take place in an environment where they feel at home, and at a time and occasion when they would feel confident in inviting their friends. At the time of writing this report (September 2010), it looks as if the aspect of these conversations that concerns baptism is likely to be resolved, and they will be baptised at a joint evening service for the ARK and the two Sunday congregations, and which will be celebrated as a significant event within the wider community with refreshments at the end – an arrangement that has been welcomed by the individuals concerned, who wanted to be baptised in the place where they had come to faith. But the questions over membership will still be outstanding. Meanwhile, other issues over baptism have arisen as a consequence of some of the children also wishing to be baptised – some having been baptised already as infants (in which case there might be a need for some other ritual of significance to mark stages in their faith journey), while others have not already been baptised, but whose requests are highlighting other questions about their understanding of faith and of the church's thinking on baptism.

**2.4.7** There has already been a celebration of communion, which presented some other difficult challenges. The kirk sessions expressed concerns that children should not receive communion without the explicit permission of their parents, which meant that advance organisation was complicated and time consuming, as signed permission slips were required. When they knew it was to take place, two families whose

children were among the most regular attenders, and had shown significant signs of spiritual maturity, withheld permission, telling the leaders that in their own childhood attendance at communion was such a scary experience that they would not want to inflict anything like that on their own children. In the event, those children who were present showed considerable understanding of its significance, and it was deemed to have been worthwhile, though everyone involved acknowledged that it was a cumbersome road to travel.

**2.4.8** The communion just described was led by the parish minister. But in the more informal context of team leaders' gatherings, bread and wine are shared on a regular basis, albeit on the understanding that this is an agape feast and not technically communion – even though similar words might be spoken, and the style of celebration can be much more akin to a traditional celebration than the event in the ARK. One question highlighted by the leaders here was the matter of lay leadership, not only in relation to the sacraments, but more generally of any sort of ministry that might conceivably receive formal approval from the Church. The following statements highlight the practical challenges in this regard:

- *The Church of Scotland is so steeped in history, tradition, and expectations – ours and others' – that to break out of the box that is 'church' is difficult.*
- *Whether nationally or locally the Church of Scotland is not ready to have a fresh expression that's lay led. It blows their mind – they have no paradigm to compare.*
- *You are never really real church – there's always another hoop to go through and not even sorting out the sacraments will fix that.*

**2.4.9** In comparing these perceptions with the Church of England's warm embrace of Fresh Expressions, Church of Scotland systems were described as being too remote to be able to address the local needs in informed ways:

- *In the Church of England, control is nearer to home – for instance through the bishop – and not just this mythical body that exists in some far off place.<sup>65</sup>*

Someone with wider experience of the workings of the Church of England might well have seen it differently, and in any case it is important to note that statements such as those just quoted are not made out of any sense of malice, but out of a genuine frustration with the way the Church is organised, and the person who made them also emphasised that 'I've never felt called out of the Church of Scotland: I have a heart for the national church', while adding somewhat ruefully that

- *There's something about being embraced that gives you more capability to change it, an endorsement which gives credibility with the wider church, rather than being seen as a person who bangs on in the corner all the time.*

Similar sentiments have been expressed in different ways in all the emerging initiatives surveyed here, and reflect the

ambiguous situation in which many of these people feel themselves to be: called to the missional task in creative and innovative ways, and in that sense being well approved of by the establishment, but at the same time being held at arm's length (perhaps implying some level of disapproval?) because they are not ministers. Some of these people would find something like the Church of England's Pioneer Ministry an attractive calling, though with reservations about the nature of the training that might be required of them:

- *I would go for it if there was an opportunity for pioneer ministry without testing in multiple other ways than I've already done ... the Church of Scotland is good at creating niches but then setting up a whole pile of hoops to jump through.*

The ARK clearly meets the three criteria of being missional, experimental, and ecclesial, and in some respects is more obviously 'ecclesial' by inherited definitions than some of the other initiatives covered here, as exemplified by its practices surrounding the sacraments. But even here some significant questions are arising over the legitimacy of different models of faith community, and their potential for full recognition within the existing structures. As with the insights gained from other groups, perceptions of what is already possible and permissible within the existing legislative framework are not always accurate, though the fact that the wider institution is perceived to be restrictive rather than all-embracing is a reality that cannot be avoided and will need to be addressed in more depth.

## 3 Reflections

### 3.1 Lessons from the four initiatives

**3.1.1** In many respects, it could be said that the ecclesial communities emerging in these Scottish missional experiments are a rediscovery of the sort of community spirit that once pervaded not only churches but the wider society. With some qualification, it could be argued that they are simply reinventing for a new generation the ideals that historically have inspired parish ministers and elders. In days gone by, church and community were two sides of the same coin, with church blessing an already existing community. There is, however, a key difference between then and now, for that was not only in the days before increased mobility fragmented traditional communities – it was also in the period of Christendom when it was taken for granted by the civil authorities that the Church would have a central place to play not only in the lives of individuals and families but in the wider life of society. The emerging groups are under no illusion that things have changed, and that Christians cannot assume the right to speak into people's lives, but need to earn that right – something that only happens through a long-term commitment to a community and a willingness to engage with others at their own self-chosen points of connection rather than trying to do so on terms laid out in advance by the institution. Sarah Lowe of Citylife is a striking example of someone who invests deeply with people simply



by being available to them, open to conversations about all manner of things, and engaging in such a way that faith in Christ integrates naturally with the rest of life. Though she would be surprised to hear it, she is offering a model of missional pastoral care that in essence reflects those values that have always characterised best practice in ministry – the major difference in her case being that she is not doing this as a professional calling but is very much one of the people, living incarnationally in that context, and being aware of what she cannot accomplish as well as what she can.

**3.1.2** The importance of nurturing community is a continuous thread running through these narratives, and for all the initiatives researched here (including a majority of those which were only contacted through the questionnaire) shared food in one way or another is central to what they do. In the past, community was static, and it was therefore the case that those who gathered for worship on a Sunday were in most respects already a community. People knew one another because they worked together throughout the week and lived alongside one another. These emerging initiatives are also characterised by a recognition of the fragmentation of traditional community and the potential for the creation of new shapes of community in diverse circumstances. The story of Hot Chocolate exemplifies the way in which people who hang out together in the street are already creating their own community – often in ways that might cause consternation to traditional church members, but revealing a deep and committed set of relationships among young people who generously share what they have with one another in the face of much social adversity. In this context, the challenge is not so much to help build community as to be with the existing community to listen, learn, contribute and bless. In the case of Fridays in Faith and The ARK, both of which are relating to what might be regarded as more mainstream communities, the need for community building focuses more on the family, and acceptance of many diverse forms of family life. But the approach is the same. As someone said:

- *Folk who come here speak about anything and everything. God's always listening. And one of us is always here to listen too.*

The leaders of Fridays in Faith and Citylife were at pains to emphasise that the ways in which their very different initiatives have developed was an organic process in which all the stakeholders, whether Christian or not, had a full part to play, and if they had been only a top-down programme devised by Christians things might have looked very much different – and have been much less appealing. Though none of them were familiar with the work of Raymond Fung, they were operating on precisely the principles he proposed in his groundbreaking book, *The Isaiah Vision*.<sup>66</sup>

It is also a characteristic that Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger found to be central to the life of those emerging churches which they studied: 'at the heart of the Kingdom practice of Jesus is the practice of inclusion.'<sup>67</sup>

**3.1.3** It is perhaps on this question of inclusion that the emerging initiatives struggle most obviously in relation to

institutional expectations, for whereas the institution tends to operate with a model that began historically as an open set (where all members of the community were automatically assumed to be members of the church), though more recently has moved toward the bounded set (where key questions focus on who is in or out in relation to doctrines and confessions of faith), these other groups favour the centred set (where the key question is about values and life orientation)<sup>68</sup>.

Here, faith is very much understood as an ongoing process of exploration and discovery, in which there will generally be less concern with formal concepts of membership than with the journey and the process. Moreover, all the leaders of these emerging groups who were interviewed see a similar discontinuity between their own ministries and what the church is able to recognise as 'ministry', with mixed messages being received and a consequent uncertainty on the part of these leaders in relation to their own status *vis-à-vis* kirk sessions, presbyteries, and other formal structures. Yet at the same time, they are in many ways more faithful to the need to be 'reformed and reforming' than some traditional churches, living happily with the reality of constant change – not for its own sake, but as a recognition of the fluidity of life as well as the unpredictability of the divine Spirit.

**3.1.4** Another key characteristic of these emerging initiatives is their holistic approach to learning and teaching, in which Scripture is central though the means whereby it is encountered and reflected upon are exceedingly diverse. A Bible study at Citylife would be radically different in style from a similar exercise at Fridays in Faith, but the one thing they both have in common is the utilisation of different media and a recognition that the Gospel can be effectively encountered through all the senses. All these initiatives take seriously the Biblical exhortation to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30) and are intentional in ensuring that the Gospel is communicated as more than words and ideas and that teaching and learning should be activities of the community rather than something to be delivered by specially qualified individuals – which in turn means that significant insights into scripture are as likely to come through the insights of a child as through the sermons of a trained preacher. Not only does this reflect some key New Testament passages but it is also very much in line with cultural trends, and illustrates the way in which Gospel and culture interact in the development of missional communities. It is some twelve years since the appearance of Mitchell Stephens' book, *The Rise of the Image, The Fall of the Word*,<sup>69</sup> and the evidence of its central argument is now all around us, with significant consequences not only for the way we take in information but also for the way we relate to others and describe what we mean by ecclesial communities. Writing of the Pentecostal movement, Professor Walter Hollenweger identified the importance of what he called 'oral theology', and his description of this parallels what is happening in the emerging initiatives examined here:

Oral theology operates ...

- not through the book, but through the parable

- not through the thesis, but through the testimony
- not through dissertations, but through dances
- not through concepts, but through banquets,
- not through a system of thinking, but through stories and songs
- not through definitions, but through descriptions,
- not through arguments, but through transformed lives.<sup>70</sup>

**3.1.5** A similar approach to worship also characterises the ecclesiology of these communities. While the specifics of what passes for worship in these different initiatives might vary, their understandings of what worship is, and how it might best be facilitated, all emerge from an organic approach to community building and therefore community celebration. Their style, as well as the underlying philosophy of worship, reflects what Jonny Baker describes in his book *Curating Worship* – where the role of the worship ‘leader’ is to create a space in which God can be encountered with authenticity and unpredictability, much like the curator of an art installation.<sup>71</sup>

Indeed, insofar as there is a model for worship in emerging contexts (and not just in Scotland), the art gallery is it, with extensive use of prayer stations of various kinds – albeit with ‘prayer’ also being understood in multiple diverse ways. A creative example of this would be the road to Emmaus game at Fridays in Faith, which offered multiple entry points into worship and spiritual reflection and where the meaning of the worship was located in the shared faith journey of the participants rather than arising out of the directions of a ‘worship leader’.<sup>72</sup>

This understanding of worship might well be one of the most distinctive marks of emerging ecclesiological practice, and presents as many challenges to the charismatic worship leader as to the more traditional liturgist, as control is vested not in the leader but in the worshippers – or, one might say, in the Spirit of God, who blows in unpredictable and unexpected directions (John 3:8).<sup>73</sup>

## 3.2 Signs of Emergence

**3.2.1** Another way of reflecting on lessons learned from these groups is to compare them with recent thinking on the nature of emergence. In his book *The Complex Christ: Signs of Emergence in the Urban Church*, Kester Brewin identifies five marks of emerging systems:<sup>74</sup>

- They are open, in the sense of having constant interaction with other networks, operating as partners in their social context, with the expectation that the cross-fertilisation of ideas and understandings will have beneficial consequences as all the stakeholders learn from one another and evolve into different shapes as they do so.
- They are adaptable, recognising that one size never fits

all, and a way of being that suits one social circumstance will not necessarily be transferable as it stands into a different context, even one that geographically might be adjacent.

- They are learning systems, reflecting on the relationship between faith community and the wider environment, and their ways of being arise naturally out of these relationships. In theological terms, one might say they follow the methodology of Practical Theology (an inductive model where reflection emerges out of praxis) rather than that of Systematic Theology (a deductive model, where praxis follows reflection).
- They operate through distributed knowledge, in which spiritual wisdom and understanding is the shared discovery of the community rather than being the preserve of a single leader who is the omniscient embodiment of all knowledge.
- The distributed nature of knowledge will be positively celebrated, as it will prevent the collecting of power into small male-dominated pools, and thus protect people from the abuses that that power would bring. In turn, narrow preaching of Scripture will be avoided and understanding of it will become a shared project.<sup>75</sup>
- They model servant leadership, a Gospel term which has also been embraced by complexity theorists in science. Using insights drawn from studies of the community organisation of insects such as bees and ants, Brewin describes servant leaders in the church not as browbeaten Uriah Heap caricatures, but as individuals who resource others in such a way that real power for change resides within the community.

**3.2.2** All these characteristics can be identified to varying degrees in the initiatives surveyed here. Openness to the social environment has been central for all of them, along with the adaptable mindset that puts the *missio Dei* at the heart of discipleship rather than preconceived notions of what ‘church’ is supposed to look like. Praxis is clearly prioritised as well, with many of the individual leaders having a well developed capacity for self-reflection and in some cases embarking on demanding courses of further study in order to enhance that skill. There is evidence of some struggle with Brewin’s other characteristics, which is largely born out of a widely held perception that the existing institutional structures of the church are, if not actually opposed to distributed knowledge and servant leadership, not unequivocally supportive of such stances. That perception may or may not match the reality as it is understood by others, but since this perception (whether accurate or not) is itself the reality, it is clearly an issue that would merit some further reflection and action.

## 3.3 Back to the Future

**3.3.1** Historically, missional and experimental initiatives have regularly had a high profile in the life of Scottish Christianity. In the early years of the twentieth century, many towns

had at least one mission hall, often founded and led by individuals who owed their formative faith to the Church of Scotland or other mainline denominations but who then felt themselves to be unwelcome and unwanted by the institution and consequently found it easier to fulfil their calling independently. Both their experience and the models of Mission-Shaped Church that they developed have some unexpected similarities to what today would be described as emerging churches or fresh expressions.<sup>76</sup>

**3.3.2** They originated with a recognition that certain people groups were unreached with the Gospel, and a desire to create communities of faith that would speak meaningfully into the life situation of such individuals. A hundred years ago, one of the major unreached people groups consisted of manual workers in the heavy industries that then dominated the Scottish economy: shipbuilding, steelmaking, coal mining, and so on. In many respects they were the equivalent of the poor, working class males identified as the most unreached people group in today's Scotland by the leaders of the Lion Rampant initiative that is currently being supported by the Emerging Ministries Fund. For most industrial workers, church simply never featured in their lives except for the traditional rites of passage, and even then their engagement with the church owed more to the civil conformity of the Victorian and Edwardian eras than representing any deep commitment to Christian faith and practice. There was a widespread perception among working class people that what went on in traditional churches was the preserve of a different class of better off person. Not all traditional churches were like that, of course, and the most obvious exception would be the work of George Macleod and what became the Iona Community among industrial workers in Govan, but the uniqueness of that enterprise itself tended to prove the rule that innovation and experimentation would generally have to take place outside the parameters of traditional church. The significant part played by these independent missions in the life of Scotland is acknowledged by their inclusion in the exhibits at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow, where they have a gallery to themselves.

**3.3.3** There are some striking parallels between the novel characteristics of those missions and the sort of experimentation that is now evidenced in the initiatives being supported by the Emerging Ministries Fund:

**3.3.3.1** A realisation that, unlike the churches of Christendom, they could not speak into people's lives unless they first earned the right to be heard: that service in and solidarity with the community was just one side of the coin whose other side was mission.

**3.3.3.2** An awareness that the church should be taking the message into the marketplace, rather than waiting for people to come to the church building. In their day, this was through open-air gatherings (a practice common to the Salvation Army, with whom many of the independent missions made common cause).

**3.3.3.3** A strong conviction that the Gospel is a

holistic lifestyle and not merely about church attendance, combined with the practical realisation that relationships would be key to the creation of meaningful Christian community, and that was the context in which discipleship might effectively be nurtured. In line with the lifestyle patterns of the day, Sunday worship was still central, but supplemented by a whole series of midweek gatherings that were regarded as of equal importance.

**3.3.3.4** An embrace of different musical styles combined with less structured forms of worship (something learned from the example of Moody and Sankey, who visited Scotland three times, in 1874, 1882, and 1891 and demonstrated how the Gospel might be contextualised in the culture of the music hall). It would be anachronistic to apply the term 'altworship' to the missions, though in the context of their own day that is what they were.

**3.3.3.5** An acceptance and affirmation of the leadership of lay people, including women and men working together as equals, and recognition of the spiritual wisdom of those who had not been theologically trained in any conventional way.

**3.3.3.6** A sense that they were on the fringes of mainstream Scottish church life, and quite probably disapproved of by the more traditional churches, combined with a conviction that this was something they were doing in response to a clear divine calling, often followed at considerable personal cost.

**3.3.3.7** A feeling that inherited denominational structures were unsuited to a missional purpose. Today's use of the term 'post-denominational' would not have been in vogue, but similar sentiments were expressed – at the same time as new networks of association were emerging among the independent missions for mutual support and encouragement.

**3.3.3.8** A continuing awareness of cultural change: almost all these independent missions disappeared when the circumstances that brought them to birth no longer existed. Significantly, many of them closed down intentionally in order to launch new ministries that would be more appropriate to the new cultural environment.

**3.3.4** There are also some remarkable similarities between these characteristics and the common features of Fresh Expressions identified in *Mission-Shaped Church*, which lists them in the following way:<sup>77</sup>

- Small groups as central to discipleship and relational mission.
- Gatherings typically not being on Sunday mornings, but at other times related to people's lifestyle.
- Groupings of people who relate to particular networks ('people groups').
- Post-denominational, with members who may have

come from a variety of different traditions, but more especially 'In churches where the non-churched are coming to faith, then members will typically have a fairly slender denominational identity.'

- 'Some of these churches may have a connection to one or more resourcing networks, including Soul Survivor, Holy Trinity Brompton, New Wine, Reform and St Thomas Crookes in Sheffield.'

Though it is easy to imagine that the Scottish independent missions existed in splendid isolation from mainstream church life, the reality was more nuanced than that. Notwithstanding their difference from traditional church – or perhaps precisely because of it – they had a magnetic attraction for regular churchgoers, many of whom would attend their own service on a Sunday morning but would then head off to a mission for a very different worship experience on a Sunday evening. And what was true of ordinary church members was also the case for elders and ministers, who found themselves drawn to these irregular forms of church by a sense that something was happening there that was lacking in their own rather more predictable forms of service. More recently, involvement with parachurch organisations such as Scripture Union or Youth for Christ, as well as other local enterprises and networks, has had a similar effect. At the same time, the official line was always that these 'alternative' groups were somehow not 'real church' when judged by the historic canons of authenticity – something that was paralleled by the stated intention of such groups themselves who, though manifesting many of the historic marks of church, generally resisted being identified in that way.

**3.3.5** This is not a report on Scottish church history, though the parallels between this relatively recent period and what is emerging today are sufficiently striking to be worth some comment. There will always be a danger that what starts out as a missional initiative becomes a home for Christians who are seeking something different than they experience in their traditional churches. That not only exposes such initiatives to a form of spiritual voyeurism, but also in the long run is bound to dilute the missional orientation and turn them into just another gathering space for those who are already Christian. At the same time, the fact that a significant number of committed church activists now seem to be so dispirited by traditional church is a warning signal that can hardly be ignored.

At first glance it can seem as if the criteria for support from the Emerging Ministries Fund offer a space in which such initiatives can flourish.<sup>78</sup>

- They must be missional, which is defined as 'to help reach out beyond the local congregation'
- They must be ecclesial, that is, 'to help establish new church groups'
- They must be experimental, 'to help us learn what models of church life touch the needs of our cultures'

Judged on that basis, the historic missions of the past would certainly qualify. Yet some of the key issues uncovered in this research have barely changed in the decades since the independent missions were at the height of their popularity. The major reasons why it was so difficult for the institutions of the day to embrace them are still with us today, foremost among them being the following issues:

**3.3.5.1** What are deemed to be irregular ways of meeting, whether that be in terms of time and place or the content of what takes place in such meetings. How can something that doesn't look and sound (and in many cases smell) like traditional church gatherings possibly be the real thing?

**3.3.5.2** The leadership of 'unauthorised' people: an issue which generally comes down to the question of ordination but also often emerges as an educational question about training. How can those who have neither degrees in theology nor formal authorisation from the institution possibly be engaged in 'real' ministry? And so, for example, even if things that in most respects are indistinguishable from the regular sacraments of the church take place, how can they in any sense be 'real' sacraments?

**3.3.5.3** A consequent clash of cultures, as the institution struggles to find a place for such irregular ministries, while those who are exercising them feel that they are being held at arm's length by the church yet clearly called and equipped by God, and therefore the only course open to them may be to establish their own identity independently of the mainstream of church life.

**3.3.6** As far back as the Bible itself, the prophets have always found themselves on the margins of the very institutions that would benefit greatly from their insights and energy. Some visionaries prefer to be on the periphery, and while one of the 27 emerging ministries mentioned here appeared to want to distance itself somewhat from the traditional church that was by no means a common feature. It would not be appropriate to offer more detail here regarding the particular issues raised by that one group, except to note that acceptance of a mixed economy model of church and a recognition that good things are happening in traditional ways of gathering is something that a minority of emerging leaders in Scotland find to be threatening (and, in our opinion, need to be challenged about). Far more typical are the sort of comments offered by the leaders of Fridays in Faith and The ARK, expressing a clear aspiration to be affirmed and embraced by the central institutions of the Church, while appreciating the significant changes that might need to take place before that could happen in any formal sense. At the same time, the adoption of a mixed economy model of church suggests that the institution is open to engage with this conversation, and in that regard we may well be at a *kairos* moment of particular opportunity. Yet the message can still be somewhat ambiguous even when it is intended to be encouraging. The leaflet produced jointly by the Ministries Council and the Mission and Discipleship Council to promote the Emerging Ministries Fund is a case in point.<sup>79</sup>

It is always hard to know how much care goes into the choice of terminology used in a leaflet intended for mass circulation, but it is perhaps significant that in each case the outcome of the three stated aims of being missional, ecclesial and experimental is described as offering 'help' (by implication, presumably, to the church in its existing traditional form) in the exploration and understanding of the many challenges that have been identified already in this report. Likewise, the application form for funding from the Emerging Ministries Fund describes these groups as 'initiatives' – which is a stage better than calling them 'projects', but still tends to create an impression that they will be initiatives designed to assist existing churches, especially when other questions go on to ask about their relationship to kirk sessions and the likes. Whether or not the words are being used with that degree of precision or intentionality, it is not hard to see why some activists should assume that the agenda is for new ways of being church to 'help' existing ways by being the contact point that will direct newcomers into traditional Sunday morning worship, with all the implications of dependency and ecclesial immaturity that such a relationship might imply. That is certainly the way in which some emerging groups understand their place in relationship to existing patterns of church life, while knowing that it will never happen: the people whose lives they touch are unlikely to fit into the culture of Sunday church, which in the end means they will be regarded as, at best, an ambiguous addition to the regular life of the church with no assured status or, at worst, find themselves marginalised as an unwelcome embarrassment. Unless this ambiguity is addressed, some of the very people who could make the sort of missional difference that the Church knows it needs will simply become disillusioned with the institution and, with a sense of regret, will continue their pioneering work independently of the institution that, in most cases, has nurtured their own spirituality. This, of course, is by no means a challenge unique to the Church of Scotland, and the *Mission-Shaped Church* report recommended that

- The national Church [of England] should be concerned to ensure that fresh expressions ... should really be church, and should encourage all attempts to gain recognition and full involvement with the structures and life of the wider Church ... [rather than being kept in a sort of ecclesiastical limbo] in which their maturity has been implicitly or explicitly questioned.<sup>80</sup>

**3.3.7** In order to address this challenge – and hopefully to stem the flow of talented and enthusiastic people from the Church, there will need to be clear thinking about the nature of such emerging initiatives. Graham Cray offers a further explanatory commentary on the definition of a Fresh Expression:

- A fresh expression ... is not a new way to reach people and add them to an existing congregation. It is not an old outreach with a new name ('rebranded' or 'freshened up'). Nor is it a half-way house, a bridge project, which people belong to for a while, on their way into Christian faith, before crossing over to 'proper' church. This is proper church!<sup>81</sup>

He continues:

- ... the marks of the church have been listed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. But maturity will not mean they become like the churches which planted them. They must remain relevant to their cultural context.

Though the leaders of these emerging initiatives in Scotland are all but unanimous in the opinion that what they are creating is indeed 'proper church' the ambiguities and discontinuities continue to haunt them, if only because the traditional structures currently have no way in which to recognise them as such, something that was highlighted most clearly by the questions over membership that surfaced when new converts wanted to commit themselves fully to The ARK.

### 3.4 What is 'church'?

**3.4.1** Underlying all these questions is a much more fundamental one, namely what does it mean to be church? Or, to put it somewhat differently, where does the church feature in terms of divine priorities? In his magisterial work on mission, the late South African missiologist David Bosch documented the way in which ecclesiology had always taken precedence over mission in the context of Christendom, as a consequence of which the church was seen as the primary starting point, with mission in effect being defined as a means of recruiting people for the church – hence the notion that the church organises 'missions' in order to attract newcomers. Tracing various ecumenical conversations between the old churches of Christendom and the new churches of the global south, Bosch went on to describe the emergence of a fresh theological understanding of the nature of mission itself and one which is now widely embraced, most especially by those who are active in the circles represented by the emerging church and Fresh Expressions – namely, that mission is first and foremost the work of God.<sup>82</sup>

Throughout scripture God is in mission, and discipleship is primarily a matter of recognising where God is at work and making a conscious choice to identify with that. The Latin term *missio Dei* ('mission of God') is now widely recognised as the starting point for any theologically faithful understanding of what mission might be. The *Mission-Shaped Church* report utilises this insight in order to clarify the relationship between church and mission, with a short quotation from Tim Dearborn (who in the early 1990s played an active role in the life of the Church of Scotland). It is worth quoting him at somewhat greater length than *Mission-Shaped Church* does:

- God's church falters from exhaustion because Christians erroneously think that God has given them a mission to perform in the world. Rather, the God of mission has given his church to the world. It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world. The church's involvement in mission is its privileged participation in the actions of the triune God.<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, this emphasis on the *missio Dei* has at least two



further consequences for the understanding of mission in relation to church. When we speak of God the Holy Trinity we are inevitably evoking a relational image, highlighting the importance of community as being at the heart of the Gospel. And when we reflect on the missionary activity of this relational God, it implies a grand transformational vision that, while including the church, is far more extensive than that:

- God's missionary purposes are cosmic in scope, concerned with the restoration of all things, the establishment of shalom, the renewal of creation and the coming of the Kingdom as well as the redemption of fallen humanity and the building of the Church.<sup>84</sup>

That understanding of mission, as a global transformative encounter with the Triune God expressed in new forms of human relationships, is clearly reflected in the aspirations of all the emerging groups surveyed here.

**3.4.2** In the foreword to *Mission-Shaped Church*, Rowan Williams defined 'church' as 'what happens when people encounter the Risen Jesus and commit themselves to sustaining and deepening that encounter in their encounter with each other' with the unifying factor holding these diverse encounters together consisting only of 'ways of identifying the same living Christ at the heart of every expression of Christian life' – an understanding that leaves 'plenty of theological room for diversity of rhythm and style'<sup>85</sup>

What looks like a somewhat minimalist definition does, of course, carry within it some more extensive implications for the identification of an appropriate ecclesiology, not least because the expectation that 'the same living Christ' will be identified in every true manifestation of church assumes a sense of continuity between the church of all times and places and what is emerging today in Fresh Expressions – something that is affirmed through the terminology of the 'mixed economy'. Nevertheless, such a definition of church creates the opportunity for many activities that in the past would have been regarded as discrete missional enterprises now to be recognised as ecclesial communities in their own right, without a need for those who come to faith through such endeavours to connect with traditional parishes. It also makes it possible for entirely new forms of faith communities to be created and sustained outside traditional parish structures but with full recognition as true manifestations of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.<sup>86</sup>

This ancient fourfold definition of the nature of the church has recently been the subject of reflection and redefinition in the light of the lived experience of Fresh Expressions, and one conclusion to be drawn from this is the understanding that to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic is itself a broad enough concept to be able to embrace radically different manifestations of church life, reflecting as it does a set of **values** that are rooted in the Gospel, rather than a set of **activities** or **structures**. If church is defined by reference to values, then there will be any number of ways in which they can faithfully be reflected and practiced, whereas if church is defined in relation to either activities (such as a Sunday morning service) or structures (decision-making processes) there will always be little or no room for diversity, because

not only will there only ever be one proper way to do things, but the nature of those things that are approved will also be severely constrained.

**3.4.3** The Reformers adopted this ancient understanding of the church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, though they also spelled out a more precise definition of what that might entail. In Calvin's words

- Wherever we see the word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence, since his promise cannot fail, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' (Matthew 18:20)<sup>87</sup>

The reference there to the dominical teaching is not so very much different from Rowan Williams's statement about the church being wherever Jesus is encountered, and though the reference to word and sacrament might appear to be more prescriptive it leaves open the possibility that the word could be preached in any number of different ways, with **attitude** ('sincerity') being the defining value, while the statement about the sacraments is open to any number of different possibilities.<sup>88</sup>

Judged by these standards, the emerging ministries surveyed here are, in varying degrees, conforming to Calvin's expectations. They are all certainly communicating the Gospel in ways that are being 'sincerely heard', and people are coming to faith. Some are, again in different ways, celebrating the sacraments, though there is more ambivalence about this, which is largely due to uncertainty about how it might be received by the institution. Of course, word and sacrament are only two of the three institutional legs of the Reformed tradition, the third one being the exercise of discipline. It might be wondered whether an over-emphasis on discipline, motivated by the laudable desire that things be done 'decently and in order' (1 Corinthians 14:40), has not over the course of time squeezed the lively diversity out of both word and sacrament in such a way that it has come to be assumed that there is only one way to preach the word and celebrate the sacraments with integrity. There is certainly a tendency in the Reformed tradition to define church by reference to activities (what things are allowed to be done and how they are to be carried out) while the more contemplative tradition found within the wider catholic church tends to place rather more emphasis on 'being' than on 'doing' as a key mark of mature discipleship. Of course, the two are by no means mutually exclusive or incompatible, but if specific activities take precedence over values, then we have a problem. Activists in the initiatives sponsored by the Emerging Ministries Fund tend to lay most emphasis on having the right core values, with the assumption that if Kingdom values are at the heart of things then appropriate activities will follow from that and emerge out of creative encounter between Gospel and culture. There is a perception that the institution, because of its insistence on due processes of discipline and an accompanying concern for orderliness, is looking at things from the other end, and may even be more interested in insisting that things happen in the

'right' way rather than ensuring that the right things happen. The late Prof Ray Anderson (a one-time student with T F Torrance and with wide knowledge of Scottish church life) expresses it succinctly with his insistence that 'It's about the right gospel, not just the right polity'.<sup>89</sup>

**3.4.4** It may eventually turn out to be the case that there are real differences of understanding between the institution and the emerging activists regarding the nature of the Gospel and therefore of the church, though no evidence of that has been identified in this research. What has clearly emerged, however, is a sense of mutual incomprehension, with the institution often being unable to see how anything other than a conventional Sunday service can possibly be 'real church', and emerging leaders being unable to grasp either the theological or cultural rationale for such a conviction. It has been illuminating to have conversations with emerging leaders in Scotland and at the same time to be speaking with the institution. It is clear that both participants in this conversation have almost identical aspirations, and wrestle with the same questions about faithfulness to the gospel, continuity with the past, the nature of the mixed economy, and so on. There is an enormous amount of common ground and goodwill on all sides. Yet it is as if two parallel conversations are taking place, and with no simple way of connecting the two because there is no shared language. Those who are well versed in the systems and structures of the church may be surprised to learn that to others who have not been socialised within this environment the church can seem to express itself in ways that are hard to fathom if not self-defeating. This is not a comment on any substantive issues, but on the actual language that the church habitually adopts. In today's world, a word like 'discipline' evokes images of judgment and punishment. This was a major reason why one of the groups found it so challenging to collaborate with this research – because for them, any enquiry from the institution was always going to be regarded as negative from the start, with the assumption that in a disciplinary context questions are only asked when something is not only going wrong, but when someone will be blamed for it. This impression is reinforced by reference to 'the courts of the church', terminology that again conjures up a picture of culpability and punishment, while even a word like 'governance' can sound heavy-handed and controlling. At the same time, accountability is well understood and appreciated, and is in evidence in relationships within the groups as well as in their dealings with external civic and legal bodies. On a personal level, emerging leaders as a whole tend to live in more accountable ways than many more traditional clergy, through the use of spiritual directors and life coaches. Though it can seem insignificant and trivial, the potential for misunderstanding over the use of language may turn out to be one of the most significant outcomes of this research. The arcane and culturally outmoded jargon – not to mention the adoption of multiple acronyms – used in church documents and conversations is intimidating to those who would not naturally use it, and is contributing to confusing what could otherwise be a fruitful conversation.

**3.4.5** Given that the Reformed understanding of the church has always been provisional, and therefore the church is not,

and never will be, complete and unchanging, there would appear to be no intrinsic reason why the sort of innovation represented by the emerging church cannot be embraced. In principle, and by way of contrast, one might have expected an Anglican ecclesiology to be far more resistant to change than a Presbyterian one – and it is undoubtedly the case that some hard work remains to be done in the Church of England especially on the question of sacramental celebration, though the introduction of Pioneer Ministry has gone a considerable way to addressing that and other related issues.<sup>90</sup>

The only discernible difference between the two traditions is that under the leadership of Archbishop Rowan Williams, the General Synod of the Church of England has grasped the nettle of institutional reorganisation that is required in order to address the question of continuity between the heritage of the past and the missional needs of the future. Recent years have seen much reorganisation within the Church of Scotland, so there is already an acknowledgement that the structures of the Church are reviewable and revisable. However, such reorganisation has tended to be based on financial and managerial considerations rather than missional concerns, and with little self-consciously strategic planning for a future that is bound to be very different from the past. All the evidence seems to suggest that for the existing emerging ministries to contribute effectively to the future of the church beyond Christendom, it is not so much the theological heritage of the Reformed tradition that needs to change, but the organisational manifestation of that within the present institutions of the church.

**3.4.6** The Church of England (like the Church of Scotland) is a national church, with an obligation to provide Christian ordained ministry across the whole of England on a geographical basis through historically determined parishes, and in both contexts the possibility of maintaining one stipendiary full-time ordained minister looking after one parish with one church building and congregation came under growing pressure during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such that in many places it is no longer sustainable as a viable form of ministry provision. In the English context, financial constraints limited the number of stipendiary clergy who could be employed, and the consequent reorganisation tended to produce piecemeal mergers that were more the result of geographical convenience than of any strategic thinking, with parishes and churches grouped together into teams under a single full-time stipendiary priest – a pattern that had a particular impact in rural areas where the individual churches remained largely autonomous even though they might have tiny congregations. Noting that such arrangements were having the effect of inhibiting engagement in meaningful witness and mission, Robert Warren, who was at the time the Church of England's National Evangelism Officer proposed a shift in thinking that would move away from the notion that church = priest+stipend+building to a model in which church = community+faith+action. This thinking has clearly influenced the *Mission-Shaped Church* report, as well as informing more recent discussions on the nature of ministry. Of particular interest in the Scottish context, and in relation to possible ways in which the existing institution might embrace fresh expressions, is the way this



has been developed in the Diocese of Exeter, which is a largely rural county and where the concept of the Mission Community is making a notable difference not only to the ongoing life of the traditional church but also to the emergence of new initiatives, for this is the diocese which saw the first network parish to be authorised under the *Bishop's Mission Order* provision. When Dr Michael Langrish became Bishop of Exeter in 2000 he initiated fresh thinking with a report entitled *Moving on in Mission and Ministry*, the outcome of which has been a process that led to the grouping of parishes and church congregations with the express purpose of providing sustainable local geographical units to offer a meaningful Christian presence focused around witness and mission. The benchmarks of viability and sustainability were defined as a combined minimum of 150 adult church members and an annual income of £50k, though in the event some flexibility has been exercised according to local circumstances such as geographical spread, the number of existing church buildings, and so on. More interesting, though, is the use of the term 'Mission Community' to describe this new arrangement. Building 'community' in this context means that previously autonomous parishes have come together in an active partnership which the original report intentionally called *koinonia*. But in addition, the clear focus of such partnership is to further Christian mission on the ground at local level.<sup>91</sup>

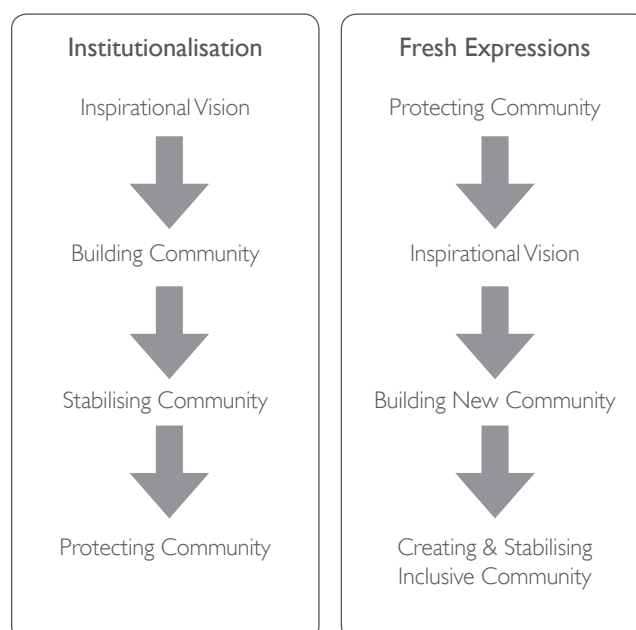
The mission communities that have emerged have not been created randomly, but take account of the historic alignments and preferred spiritualities and churchmanship of the existing parishes, so that (for example), the Culm Valley Mission Community has a broadly evangelical feel to it, while the Thorverton Mission Community reflects a more Anglo-Catholic tradition. While this is still very much an experiment in process, the establishment of such intentional communities that both affirm the past while also taking full account of the missional challenges of the present and future, has enabled old and new to exist comfortably alongside one another and has already given birth to a number of Fresh Expressions as well as engendering new ecumenical partnerships. One of the keys to this is the ability of larger communities to reflect strategically on their situation in a way that individual parishes would not have been able to do – none of which would have been possible without a move away from the understanding that a church consists of a minister with a building and a congregation (or with multiple buildings and congregations).

**3.4.7** Another rather different way to recognise a missional community is highlighted by the story of DNA Network Church in Colchester; which is led by Janie and David Beales who, following a sabbatical in 2000, shared their desire to initiate a missional church planting movement based in Colchester and hopefully extending throughout East Anglia. They formed a charitable trust and enlisted some of their like-minded friends to be trustees, and the Bishop of Chelmsford agreed to licence them as 'Public Preachers', a function that can be traced back to the time of the English Reformation but not, as far as we have been able to establish, one that is widely used today, so offering an interesting example of a bishop reinventing a traditional office to meet the needs of a different cultural context. Within a very short time, multiple mission networks evolved among different

people groups in and around Colchester.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.5 Formatting the Church for Mission

**3.5.1** It is easy to imagine scenarios that could lead to a more missional focus for the Church, and just as easy to downplay the significant cultural readjustment that will be required in order for emerging ministries to be accepted as full partners in the institution. In reality, the inevitable outcome of this conversation will be a thorough reimagining of the church, with significant implications for its future shape. The normal process of institutionalisation is well understood, starting with a charismatic leader and an inspirational vision,<sup>93</sup> leading to the emergence of a community of like-minded people which then stabilises in the second generation as a framework for membership is formalised, and then in subsequent generations much of the energy goes into protecting the structures and belief systems so as to ensure their continuation. Viewed from this angle, the entire movement stemming from the Church of England's *Mission-Shaped Church* report looks like a conscious effort to reconstruct the institution by reversing what social scientists would regard as the inevitable processes of formal rationalisation, by harnessing the energies of visionary pioneers so as to safeguard the future of the existing institution. It would be disingenuous to deny that this initiative began from a realisation that the traditional church was struggling in the face of cultural change and a concern to protect the existing (historic) community. The aspirational pattern of church renewal represented by the development of Fresh Expressions therefore stems from a desire to protect the community (the final stage of institutionalisation), but seeks to incorporate within that the inspirational vision (the initial growth point of mass movements) in such a way that it will lead to the building of a new community, with the end point being the creation and stabilisation of an inclusive ('mixed economy') community. These two contrasting trends can be illustrated diagrammatically:



Attempting such a shift is undoubtedly a risky process, and there are no previous church models to guide us. On the other hand, the Gospel is all about taking risks, and the challenges faced by the church throughout Western society are now so extensive and far reaching that this is definitely a time for risk-taking. We are faced with two choices: either we do nothing, in which case the church as institution has an uncertain future and whatever future it does have is likely to be beyond our control, or we recognise that change is an inescapable part of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we commit to becoming agents of change by taking initiatives that will ensure that whatever change takes place will always reflect the values of the Gospel.

**3.5.2** The big question, of course, is how to enable this to happen in life-giving ways that will neither devalue the faith and practice of those at the traditional end of the mixed economy spectrum nor inhibit the creativity of those whose inspirational vision lies elsewhere, while recognising that each can learn from the other and both can be missional because this diversity within the church is actually representative of the mixed economy that is the wider population. In practice, we need to work out how this fledgling movement of emerging ministries can be nurtured in a way that releases the energy of all sections of the church, and not just those who may be called to do church differently. One way of looking at this that has been widely adopted in recent years is sociologist George Ritzer's McDonaldization thesis.<sup>94</sup> His original work made no mention of the church, but focused on exploring why so many of our institutions are no longer working, and he traced this malaise back to the adoption of an over-rationalised way of being, which he illustrated by reference to the processes of the fast food industry (hence the term 'McDonaldization'), characterised by efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. This is not the place to explore the argument in any greater depth, though the damaging influence of these four marks of McDonaldization on the life of the institutional church is now well recognised.<sup>95</sup> In reality, both discipleship and mission are messy categories, something that is well reflected in the initiatives being supported by the Emerging Ministries Fund, to the frustration of others within the institution who are impatient to know how it will all work and what the likely outcomes will be – specifically what benefit (calculability) might be in it for existing parishes. Speaking in May 2010, and reflecting on what had been accomplished through Fresh Expressions in its first five years, Archbishop Rowan Williams emphasised that the growth of disciples cannot be forced into this sort of straitjacket and it will take a much longer time than many people are inclined to allow before they are likely to see anything that might be regarded as 'results', not least because spirituality and discipleship cannot be appropriately measured using any sort of statistical categories.<sup>96</sup>

**3.5.3** One way of thinking about the sort of attitudes that might be required in order to facilitate the emergence of a truly 'mixed economy' of church is to take these four marks of McDonaldization and identify the values that would be the opposite of them. *Efficiency* might be displaced in favour of *creativity*, which is not only a hallmark of contemporary culture<sup>97</sup> but is also the primary characteristic of God, who

before anything else is the creator. Moreover, creativity is not limited by age, economic or social standing, ethnicity, gender, or any of the other categories which tend to divide rather than unite people, so a church characterised by creativity would be accessible to everyone. *Calculability* tends to value things and people by reference to the perceived rewards and returns that can be obtained, something that has a tendency to alienate individuals who feel they are being used, if not manipulated, when their talents are valued only insofar as they fit a preconceived system or way of doing things. Might *relationality* be the antidote to calculability? It is certainly a Gospel value, rooted in the Holy Trinity and the recognition that true human community finds its inspiration and model in God. *Predictability* might find its opposite in attitudes such as *adaptability*, *flexibility*, *sustainability* and *inclusivity*, highlighting the reality that a mixed economy of church will by definition be exceedingly diverse and instead of presenting a monochrome version of faith any given local manifestation will be drawing on the resources and experience of the whole church of all times and places in such a way that the resulting mixture will be quite unpredictable – which is not a way of saying that anything could happen, still less that 'anything goes', but a reflection of the reality of the work of the Spirit of God, which like the wind 'blows where it chooses ... but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes' (John 3:8). *Control*, of course, was the quintessential characteristic of Christendom in all its forms. Centralised control works tolerably well in a stable culture, but in a rapidly changing culture – particularly one in which the change is discontinuous from what preceded it – the opposite is the case. Maybe *proactivity* is the antidote here, for whereas control requires us to look backward, proactivity has an eschatological dimension to it, opening up new possibilities of what might be rather than imprisoning us in what is – another core Gospel value (Acts 2:17). And – this is a truly ecclesiological question – could these four values of creativity, relationality, sustainability, and proactivity – form the basis for a renewed understanding of what we mean by saying that the church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic? One, because creativity is arguably the only universal human characteristic that is shared by all as a reflection of a key attribute of God. Holy, because relationality is at the heart of faith in a Trinitarian God, and who or what could be more holy than the divine? Catholic, because a faith that can connect with multiple people groups and affirm the integrity of their diverse understandings of worship and witness is the only sort of movement that is sustainable. And Apostolic, because proactivity – taking the initiative, going out to find the lost wherever they might be – is the fundamental calling of every disciple, following the admonition of Jesus himself to the original band to be sent into the world as he himself was sent, to seek and to save that which was lost (John 20:21)<sup>98</sup>

**3.5.4** An image that has been especially helpful in communicating this sort of vision to more traditional church people is Phil Potter's concept of 'The Lake and River Church', which was initially articulated in relation to his own parish, St Mark's Haydock (near Liverpool).<sup>99</sup> As well as regular Sunday worship, this church has developed multiple ecclesial communities that include New Creations (a craftmaking church), Famlegh First (all-age, in a school in an

area called Famlegh), Dream<sup>100</sup> (for 'spiritual searchers' who dislike 'religion'), Stepping Stones (the oldest old), T.A.N.G.O. (social concern community, including gatherings around meals), Riverbank Cafe Church (for all comers), River Force (Merseyside Police), Walkout Cluster (walkers' church on the move). Most of those have multiple groups within them, and each has its own recognised leaders who are either ordained or formally recognised as lay pastors. The concept of Lake and River is described in the following terms:

- Lakes tend to form in settled places, where they become an oasis to the life around them. In the same way, we want our parish church to be an oasis and source of life to the community. As well as offering a full range of worship services, we also provide an extensive range of community services where people of all ages can connect and enjoy a quality of life that flows directly from our faith and our God-given values.
- Then there's the river; that is still a part of the lake and connected to the source, but as it flows it can move into many more and different places wherever the ground gives way. Over the years, St Mark's has increasingly become a pioneering church. Its life has been flowing far beyond its doors, encouraging life in other places and seeking to bring new life to other parts of the church.

So welcome to 'the lake and river church', a community that still honours and cherishes all that it has inherited from the past, but also wants to embrace and pioneer the new future that God in His love is offering a struggling world.<sup>101</sup>

## 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Emerging leaders and the institution

**4.1.1** In reflecting on what actions might be appropriate for the Church to take in relation to the findings of this research, one factor stands out above all the others. To echo a Biblical phrase, many of these emerging communities (and not just the four that were studied in detail) feel that they are 'in the Church but not of it'. Overwhelmingly, conversations with leaders from the initiatives studied here, as well as feedback from the questionnaires submitted by the wider group, identified many missional activists who find themselves more on the fringe of traditional church life than they would wish to be. While the input of financial resource is important, what these groups would most value is recognition of their work, and particularly a practical demonstration of the lived reality of a mixed economy church, in which they could take their place as legitimate expressions of 'real' church alongside the existing traditional parishes. If this were to be accomplished, it would almost certainly be to the benefit of both traditional and emerging.

**4.1.2** As has already been noted, there is an existing model for this in the Church of England's *Bishop's Mission Orders* which is allowing the recognition of such non-traditional groupings as 'real' parishes, based on networks rather than

geography. While it is still early days in England, that initiative has not led (as some might fear) to a mass exodus from traditional churches by people looking for a trendier way to worship. On the contrary, it has added new people to the overall numbers of the Church of England, and far from being divisive, is also creating situations of crossover between different ways of being church, as people find that their desire to worship in particular styles can vary depending on other things that are going on in their lives. Long before the creation of Fresh Expressions, traditional parishes had already discovered the benefits of diverse forms of worship and witness. One of the earliest examples of this was St Mary's Parish Church in Thame, Oxfordshire, which more than trebled its membership just by establishing new missional congregations, each with their own style and very much along the lines of a mixed economy church, even before that phrase was in widespread use.<sup>102</sup> Now, some ten years later, that is still the dominant pattern of Fresh Expressions, as traditional churches catch a new vision and come to terms with the reality that even those people who might wish to identify with the Christian faith are unlikely, for a variety of reasons, ever to relate to traditional Sunday services. That recognition is what has inspired all four of the groups studied in detail here, as well as a majority of the other initiatives currently receiving support from the Emerging Ministries Fund. Some of them will almost certainly find a niche within the life of the parishes that started them in the first place. But others (and especially new developments that have no prior connection with an existing congregation) will be unlikely to find a place within the institution without some structural adjustments to the way in which church is currently defined and understood.

**4.1.3** Of course, some emerging leaders believe that too close an engagement with traditional church will be detrimental to the life of new faith communities, and should therefore be resisted. Recognising that such groups are 'finding ways of challenging, not just how the church looks at a cosmetic level, but how the church functions in terms of ecclesial structures', Pete Rollins expresses the hope that they

- *will choose not to enter into a more well-defined relationship with the church but actually embrace a less defined, more ambiguous relationship. Attempting to find a place from which they can speak to the church as a whole rather than being embraced into any one part of it.*<sup>103</sup>

In a context where substantial resources have been poured into a particular initiative, that might seem to be an over-cynical reaction to overtures from the institution, and we certainly found no evidence of such an attitude in the course of this research. At the same time, though, integration of emerging faith communities and the existing institution would have implications for change for both of them. The comments previously noted from some of their leaders expressing mystification about the ways in which the institution currently operates are unlikely to be addressed effectively just by offering better explanations of the present workings of the system. There is a clear need for a more extensive conversation about these issues throughout the Church. It was noted above at 1.6.6 that,

while we were unable to schedule formal interviews with parish ministers or presbytery representatives, we did have informal conversations with several such individuals, and one thing that emerged from those was an awareness that, while the General Assembly had affirmed the use of the mixed economy terminology to describe the future shape of the Church of Scotland, few people at local level have any real idea of what that might actually mean in practice. They are neither for it nor against it: they simply don't know what it means.

**4.1.4** It is a cliché, though none the less true for that, to say that we are today living through a cultural paradigm shift of massive proportions, conventionally expressed as the move from modernity to post-modernity. This is not the place to be more precise about what that entails, except to note that so-called post-modern people tend to do things differently because they begin from different premises. Just because emergent leaders struggle with the inherited structural ways of being does not mean that they are embracing disorder and unclarity: it is, rather, that they have a different understanding of order and clarity. There will need to be a two-way listening process for the institution and emergents to hear one another, and learn from each other, without the prior assumption that the inherited way is the best one in the present circumstances. Emerging leaders will point out (as some of them did) that it is the traditional institutional way of being that appears to have brought us to the present precarious situation, and though the decline in church allegiance is the outcome of many different factors, it is certainly the case that the way we now do things has been ineffective in facing the challenge, and might well now be compounding the crisis. What converts from an un-churched background are, in effect, saying is: 'If I am to follow Jesus, I wouldn't do it that way'. It is easy to describe this as if it was only a difference within the community of faith, but in reality it is a clash of cultures that is manifested in many other areas of life. At the present moment, two fundamentally different worldviews are operating alongside one another. The inherited modernist worldview likes order and structure, on the assumption that being highly structured and predictable ('McDonaldised') is the way to get things right. That worked tolerably well in a stable environment where everything else worked that way and in which change happened in generational increments and was continuous from one era to the next. But in a world of rapid and discontinuous change, fixed order and structure can actually stand in the way of institutional effectiveness, and it is in this context that the leaders of emerging initiatives are asking more fundamental questions about the purpose of structures, and especially in this context, what sort of structures might now reflect the values of the Gospel. The traditional approach begins from an expectation of what church will look like, and then asks what people need to be like in order to belong, whereas the emerging approach begins with the experience of people as they work out what it means to follow Jesus in today's world, and on that basis asks what a meaningful community of faith might look like. That process is very clearly exemplified by almost all the emerging initiatives. One person expressed it succinctly with the comment that 'Rather than trying to put across a set of beliefs, we learn from what's already

happening and ask what God might be doing through that.' It is important to take note of this distinctive approach to the relationship between discipleship and the institution of the church, as it means that merely bending the existing rules or reordering things in some way to incorporate emerging groups will not ultimately be the answer, as they are inviting us to a far more radical reimagination of what it means to follow Jesus in today's rapidly changing culture.

## 4.2 Expanding the Structures

**4.2.1** That journey of radical reimagination has been embraced by the Church of England, following the lead of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is under no illusions regarding the far-reaching change that will ultimately follow in the wake of Fresh Expressions. Without his strong leadership, it is doubtful how much of this would have happened, and a similarly inspirational leadership will be necessary if these emerging initiatives are to be fully embraced by the Church of Scotland. There is no particular reason of principle to prevent such an embrace in a denomination which is 'always reforming', and which in recent years has been engaged in a process of more or less continuous change as one restructuring has followed another. The test will be whether that appetite for organisational restructuring can be matched by the same level of enthusiasm for creative theological reflection on the missional imperative now facing us. As things stand, while there could be some exceptions, it is not easy to imagine the present presbyteries being able to include these new ventures, even if that might technically be possible within the legal framework as it currently exists. There is of course an existing model for something along these lines in relation to the framework within which New Charge Developments have taken place. But these emerging ministries are of a very different order, not least because of their responsiveness to the faith journeys of those who connect with them, and the impossibility therefore of predicting what shape their communities might take in the future. The one thing that is certain is that the gestation period will be much longer and it will be neither wise nor realistic to set a time limit within which such groups will meet structural targets.

**4.2.2** In the long term, something similar to the Church of England's *Bishop's Mission Order* legislation could be one way forward, enabling presbyteries not only to recognise but to actively pursue the establishment of network parishes. Or, thinking more radically, the establishment of a trans-local presbytery with national rather than regional responsibility to nurture such groups – something that might not be as impossible as it sounds, given that there is a widespread recognition of the unsustainability of the system in its present form. If the concept of a mixed economy church is to be taken seriously, then one of those options should certainly be aspirations, though a more practical short-term way forward might be the establishment of a more formal network of experimental initiatives with a view to seeing what evolves in an organic way.<sup>104</sup> This, in effect, is how Fresh Expressions has grown, and it is significant that structural institutional arrangements like the *Bishop's Mission Orders* were not the first thing to be put in place but emerged out of a



growing need, which then ensured that once the statute was approved there were actual groups available to be recognised under it. It could be self-defeating if some similar framework were to be put in place in the Church of Scotland, only for there to appear to be no immediate demand for it. A recent development in England is the establishment of what are now being called Fresh Expressions Area Strategy Teams (FEASTS), bringing together ecumenical resources in order to address more coherently the diverse needs for mission in different cultural contexts (both geographical and networks). This is a direct consequence of the unexpected success of the *Mission Shaped Ministry* course and an awareness that, since the entire purpose of the course is not to offer learning for its own sake, but to equip people to create missional communities, its success will simply store up problems for the future if all these people are offered no outlet for their enthusiasm and newly developed skills. The same challenge is already beginning to present itself in Scotland, with the growing enrolments in the course, and while the establishment of area teams here might not be so practical, a national network which was fully recognised as a part of the church's ongoing concern for the establishment of missional faith communities could be a first step. There is already an existing embryonic framework for this in the series of conferences for Emerging Ministries that have been held over recent years, though to be effective the future development of this would need to be less dependent on high profile speakers and centralised gatherings and more deeply rooted in the need for a mentoring programme – something that was repeatedly identified as an urgent need in many conversations during the conduct of this research project.

**4.2.3** Citylife is a special case, and has developed its own ecclesial way of being over the course of its history. Most of the other initiatives currently being funded are nowhere near to becoming fully ecclesial communities in a way that the Church could currently recognise. Of those given detailed consideration here, The ARK and Fridays in Faith are the clearest examples of such, and in the short-term at least, both of them could easily be recognised as congregations of the respective churches which sponsored them in the first place, though some adjustment to legislation would be required in order for that to happen in a way that would address the questions raised in The ARK, where new converts are wanting to join the emerging group but there is currently no technical way in which this can happen. But that will not be a long-term solution. In the final analysis, if people whose only 'real' church is an emerging group are then required to become members of traditional churches, this is not only a denial of the ethos of the mixed economy church but is also a recipe for ensuring the non-sustainability of emerging groups, and for those that begin without the support of an existing parish, the question will be more urgent still. In those cases, if no action is taken to enable their existence to at least be given some sort of formal recognition and approval, then there is a likelihood that they will follow the advice given by Jesus to the disciples (Luke 10:10-11) and move on to another space where doors might open more readily.

**4.2.4** The need for new structures that can embrace emerging groups is only one aspect of the challenge for

the existing institution. The other relates to the nature of ministry, which in practice comes down to the sacraments and therefore ordination, though with further implications for training (for the skills required to 'curate' worship are quite different from those needed for a traditional ministerial role). The practice in three of the four groups studied here (Hot Chocolate being the exception) is that things that look like sacraments to the average attender are already taking place, whether it is the celebration of baptism and communion with the full involvement of a parish minister in The ARK, the lay-led 'Gathering' at Fridays in Faith, or Helene King carrying out all the functions of a parish minister through Citylife in response to requests from the wider community. Of course, the leaders of The ARK and Fridays in Faith make appropriate statements as to what they think they are doing (which is well within the constraints of current Church practice), though it is doubtful that the previously un-churched people they are reaching would know the difference between what they experience there and the more technically correct celebrations in a traditional Sunday service. Though probably none of them realise it, from the perspective of the un-churched they are following in the footsteps of John Wesley, who regarded communion as 'a converting ordinance' rather than something reserved only for the faithful. This is not the place to engage in a more extensive discussion of the nature of sacraments and ministry, though it is undoubtedly the elephant in the room in this conversation. A recent essay by Jonathan Clatworthy, general secretary of Modern Church (formerly known as the Modern Churchpeople's Union), defines the issue in a way that goes to the heart of the matter for all Christian traditions and which applies to baptism as much as to communion:

- What are the effects of valid sacraments? What real difference is there between the effect of a valid sacrament and an invalid one? If I receive Communion from an invalid Eucharist, and you from a valid one, what will happen to you which does not happen to me? ... How were the conditions of validity established? Are they imposed by God – in which case, what theology of God do we have which would explain why God is so picky? Alternatively, are they imposed by the created order of nature – in which case, what is the evidence for them? ... Our minds are fuzzy about what sacraments are, what conditions are needed to make them work, what effects they have, and how we would know whether the effects have been achieved.<sup>105</sup>

He goes on to propose that

- A century ago these questions were coherently answered within a worldview which few today accept. Today we live in a society with a very different worldview. From the perspective of Christianity it is the best one western society has produced for many centuries. We do not know how long it will last, but why not make the most of it? We no longer need the strained, counter-cultural special pleading which we once needed to defend our faith. Life is full of sacramental processes. We can afford to spend less time defining them, more celebrating them.



Those challenges will not easily be addressed within the frame of reference of current church practice, though in principle it ought to be easier for the Reformed tradition than one with a more catholic heritage. In the meantime, the leaders of all the groups mentioned here are, in one way or another, following his advice and placing more emphasis on celebration than on definition, and would welcome some affirmation by the Church of the ministry they are already exercising, at whatever level such affirmation can be offered with integrity.

**4.2.5** There is a bigger conversation waiting to happen here, on two levels. On the one hand is the question of how – if at all – the Church might wish to affirm those lay people who are already engaged in such work. And secondly, how – if at all – will the Church engage with the urgent need for ministers who will primarily be missional pioneers rather than pastors to existing congregations? Ways of addressing this within the Church of England have included the creative resurrection of long forgotten traditions, as exemplified by the appointment of Janie and David Beales in Colchester to be 'Public Preachers' – as well as the recognition of Pioneer Ministers. Or the creation of new spaces: at St Mark's Haydock (mentioned above in 3.5.4) the first service on a Sunday is usually lay-led and called 'Breaking of Bread', to distinguish it from 'Holy Communion'. The same church has created a network of 'lay pastors', using terminology with no previous history within the tradition and thereby creating a space in which something new can emerge without a need to ask whether it is meeting historic expectations. To address the issues raised here in any adequate fashion would require another extensive report to itself, though it is not impossible to imagine that an answer to some of these questions might be found somewhere in a redefinition of the role of elders and/or readers who, after all, are already understood to be members of the wider ministry of the Church.

### 4.3 Needs and Opportunities

**4.3.1** Some matters raised here clearly constitute major issues in relation to current church practice. But some aspects could be addressed right away and would make a significant contribution to the life of these emerging initiatives.

**4.3.1.1** One of the big success stories of Fresh Expressions and Pioneer Ministry in the Church of England has been the encouragement of greater flexibility in clergy deployment within the context of the deanery.<sup>106</sup> Deaneries are the smallest groupings within a diocese, typically consisting of not more than a dozen parishes that are often working on a team ministry model. As mentioned in 1.3.3 above, many deaneries are now taking initiatives to call Pioneer Ministers with the specific remit of starting Fresh Expressions. A typical example might be a deanery with ten stipendiary ministers, three of whom are not allocated to any existing parish but are appointed as pioneers to create new forms of ecclesial community. There seems to be some difference of opinion as to whether or not existing structures would allow presbyteries in the Church of Scotland to take a similarly strategic missional approach to ministerial deployment, but either

way the model would certainly be worth sharing as an example of good practice that is working elsewhere.

**4.3.1.2** In the course of our interviews with leaders of these various groups, they all without exception expressed a desire for companions who would journey with them in what they are now doing. One of the assurances they were given was that they could see what has been written about them here prior to its dissemination more widely. At the time, it was anticipated that the feedback offered in this way would correct mistaken impressions or factual errors, and for the most part that is what happened. However, one of the groups found this to be a challenging process, and insisted that references to what we regarded as significant strengths in their work should be removed because they believed (mistakenly in our opinion) that this would be likely to provoke scepticism and negative comments from the wider church (the so-called tall-poppy-syndrome, 'Who do they think they are? They're getting above themselves'). Within the same group, individuals who by any definition are clearly the inspiration for the entire work, and without whose vision and energy the initiative would be significantly diminished, expressed similar hesitations in relation to being identified as a leader out of fear that it might offend their co-workers.<sup>107</sup> One might think that being in receipt of substantial funding from the Church would itself be regarded as a strong affirmation of the work, and certainly not an indication that the wider Christian community is opposed to this particular initiative. But none of that seems to outweigh the sense of insecurity felt by these particular leaders (whose concern, it has to be said, was not identified in any other group). This is not the place to speculate about the reasons for these particular concerns, except to note that they are symptomatic of a wider need for the sort of mentoring that goes beyond functional management. It is a strange and sad state of affairs when individuals who are engaged in the work of the Kingdom resist affirmation for fear that this will in some way backfire and stir up resentment within the institution, if not outright opposition. This is more of a spiritual malaise than an organisational issue, and highlights the need for mentors who are equipped to nurture the spirituality of such emerging leaders at the same time as working with them on the theological reflection that will be necessary if their various initiatives are to flourish and grow. Almost from the outset, our conversations with all four groups tended to operate on two levels, beginning very much in research mode, but then later moving more into mentoring and reflective mode simply because, as one of them said

- No one from the Church of Scotland has come alongside us and said 'have you looked at this or that?'

The following are some typical comments:

- There seem to be lots of things happening across Scotland and the whole of the UK but no one's joining up dots. This would help us.
- We need help to process what's happening.

- At one point we got tired – we wondered how we could go on – we need a mentor – someone who's outside the situation and could see the bigger picture and link us more widely across the UK, take the theological journey with us.
- Someone who can be a voice for us within the institution to explore the big questions, be an advocate.

Formal training is unlikely to be on the agenda for most of them (though some are now enrolled in the *Mission Shaped Ministry* course). The various conferences that have been organised by the Emerging Ministries Task Group have been highly valued, though the following comments also identify some shortcomings there that would not be too difficult to remedy:

- *After the conference with Graham Cray and Stuart Murray Williams we felt we'd been put through a mangle squeezing out all our ideas. But no one's followed it up and helped us unpack it or helped us process all our learning and experience.*
- *What would have been most helpful would be to meet again, say every three months. It doesn't need to be in a posh hotel. It could even be half the group, to give people an option of where to gather most easily. A church hall with coffee and take your own food and share your progress and challenges. Sharing of each others' questions and stories and in addition some input?*

There is a need not only for effective mentoring for such people, but also for high profile leaders and advocates of these emerging ministries – people who can be the equivalent of Steven Croft or Graham Cray, theological heavyweights rather than administrative officers. Something along these lines would be relatively easy to establish as a key part of the sort of formal network proposed above in 4.2.2, and would not necessarily have extensive staffing implications. The traditional mindset tends to think of such proposals as needing full-time paid employees to administer; but there are some who, given the right vision and the freedom to pursue it, would potentially offer their services as volunteers, or on an expenses-only basis.

**4.3.1.3** Elements of misunderstanding between the emerging initiatives and the Emerging Ministries Task Group have already been identified, and it was suggested that much of that was an unintended consequence of the arcane language used to describe so many church functions. But one other aspect of such communication problems can also be identified in the fast-moving shape of the Task Group itself. In the period between 20 June 2007 and 17 March 2010, minutes indicate that there were eighteen meetings of the Group and a total of some 28 people who, at one stage or another, were members of the Group. Of them, only two persons were recorded as being present at every meeting, with a further two being in attendance at fourteen meetings, another person at eleven, and three others at ten – with all other members

attending no more than six, and (according to the minutes) three individuals never attending at all. The reasons for this erratic attendance pattern are not entirely down to lethargy or disinterest among the members of the Group, but stem from what appears to be a perpetual turnover of members being appointed from different committees and Councils for relatively short periods of time. This constant turnover of personnel (which can be paralleled elsewhere within the institution) is hardly conducive to the development of any long term strategy, and it also means there can be a tendency to unnecessary misunderstandings and a continual revisiting of the same questions, which not only wastes time but also introduces too many variables into the equation. This lack of continuity contributes to the creation of a muddled and fragmented vision, which is then not easily communicated to the wider church and can look like a group of enthusiasts pursuing their own ever-changing agenda. In organisational terms, there is a striking contrast here with the sustained vision of Fresh Expressions through the Lambeth Partners, and their consequent ability to present a shared story that has become both inspirational and empowering not only for the Church of England but also for the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

**4.3.1.4** Another idea that came up in conversation relates to the role of religious orders in promoting creative initiatives in the Church of England – groups that operate on the edge, but are embraced by the institution.<sup>108</sup> The nearest we come to that in Scotland would be parachurch groups of one sort or another, though their connection to the institution might be somewhat tenuous. One such initiative that has been particularly effective in England is the College of Evangelists which was established by the Church of England's House of Bishops in 1999.

- It exists to recognise and affirm evangelists whose ministry is nationwide or at least beyond the confines of any diocese. It is not an academic institution but a support and resource group for its members.<sup>109</sup>

Something of the breadth of its appeal across all traditional divisions of the church can be gauged from a sampling of its members, who include Roly Bain, Michael Green, Jeffrey John, as well as a number of women, and several bishops, notably Jonathan Gledhill, Stephen Cottrell, Paul Bayes, John Saxbee, and Lindsay Urwin. It would be hard to imagine a more eclectic and diverse group of individuals, all of them united by their common commitment to effective missional engagement with the culture.

**4.3.1.5** One of the glaring omissions in the initiatives currently being supported by the Emerging Ministries Fund is the absence of anything like a fresh expression for older people. Wider conversations within the church suggest that there is a good deal of complacency on this subject with an assumption that, since the traditional churches are largely populated by older people, there is no need for new thinking in regard to mission among the over-sixties. The reality is quite different. Though it is often imagined that the post-modern way of doing

things is age related, that is far from the whole story, and the difference between conformists and experimenters is almost certainly related to temperament and life experience rather than stemming from any deeply rooted intellectual convictions. There are many older people who find traditional church difficult to relate to, and those who find it most amenable to their preferences are increasingly not just older, but the oldest old (people in their eighties and older). Today's pensioners were kids in the early 1960s, and in varying ways have been part of the emerging culture throughout their lives. The Beatles and Rolling Stones are now pensioners: what would church for Mick Jagger look like? There may not be many Mick Jagers in Scotland, but there are plenty who were raised in the same cultural environment. So far, the Emerging Ministries Fund has operated in response to applications submitted from various groups who already have an action plan. It could now be opportune for the Fund to take a more strategic approach by highlighting some of the gaps, most notably for work among this kind of older person, and perhaps other people groups. If the emerging initiatives are not seen to be all-embracing across all sections of the population, there is a real danger that the whole enterprise will come to be regarded as children's work in a way that will push it to the margins of church life.

**4.3.1.6** There is a need for some guidance for traditional churches in how to encourage and nurture these emerging ministries. The experience of The ARK in relation to the celebration of communion illustrates this well. The two kirk sessions struggled to find ways to orchestrate this that would not create problems either within the wider institution or in the cultural context. The solution they came up with was to obtain written permission in advance from parents whose children would be likely to attend. Two things contributed to this: an awareness of the local context and its sectarian history, and a concern to maintain what the sessions understood the good order of the kirk required of them. In reality, current church legislation required no such thing, but in the absence of guidance on matters such as this the default mode will always be caution, which in the end is incompatible with the ethos of the mixed economy church.

#### 4.4 Attitude and Ethos

In order to progress any of these things, there will need to be an open conversation among interested parties. Leaders in more than one of these groups contrasted the openness they had with one another, and indeed with those they meet in the wider culture, with what they experienced in traditional church gatherings:

- *This then makes it hard to relate to the rest of church culture where this openness is not the norm.*

For reasons that are not altogether easy to identify, Scottish churches in general (and not just the Church of Scotland) seem to have become more resistant to innovation than churches in other parts of the UK. Aspects of the wider culture feed into this, for at the same time as we can be welcoming and open to people who are not like us, we can also as a nation exhibit a tendency to be suspicious of other people's ways of doing things.<sup>110</sup> If the concept of a mixed economy church is to take root in any meaningful way, there will need to be greater openness with and tolerance toward those who might be different. The Church of England has always been able to embrace diversity within the concept of a broad church and the notion of a mixed economy is to some extent just more of the same, articulated in a slightly different way. The Scottish churches exhibit a tendency to promote inclusivity in civic social policy, while being uneasy about it within the church. A good example can be found in the way that the charismatic movement was treated differently in Scotland and England. In the 1970s, the Revd Tom Smail found himself so ostracised in the Church of Scotland that he resigned and became a priest in the Church of England, where he had a distinguished ministry both as a pastor and a theological educator, as well as being a key leader in the Fountain Trust, which at the time was at the forefront of the charismatic movement. A decade later, Graham Cray was at the forefront of the Anglican charismatic movement as rector of St Michael-le-Belfrey in York, and far from being pushed to the margins, he found his ministry warmly embraced within his own church, moving on to be a theological college principal and then Bishop of Maidstone before becoming team leader of Fresh Expressions and a key mission adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Fresh Expressions, and the emerging church movement more generally, is decidedly not charismatic (indeed is often described as post-charismatic), but there is a danger that, without a change of mindset, history could well repeat itself here. The Spirit of God blows in unpredictable ways, some of which fly in the face of inherited ecclesiastical polity. To determine whether the emerging church is one of them will require a serious engagement with spiritual discernment, as well as meetings of church committees that spend as much time in prayer as they do in discussion – something that was noted as long ago as 1997 when the Panel on Doctrine advocated 'a far greater openness to the Spirit than has hitherto been evident in the Church of Scotland'.<sup>111</sup> The late Don Browning offers a hint as to what might be involved in taking this seriously:

- When a religious community hits a crisis in its practices, it then begins reflecting (asking questions) about its meaningful or theory-laden practices. ... Eventually, if it is serious, the community must re-examine the sacred texts and events that constitute the source of the norms and ideas that guide its practices. It brings its questions to those normative texts and has a conversation between its questions and these texts ... *What happens*

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*next depends on how open and self-critical the religious community is.<sup>112</sup>*

This report has identified some reasons for the crisis and has offered reflections and proposals based on the texts – both Biblical and cultural – as well as presenting the questions that might now need to be addressed. What happens next is a question for those who receive and read it.

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7. *Emerging Churches*, 28.
8. Dave Tomlinson, *The Post-evangelical* (London: Triangle 1995).
9. John Drane, 'Editorial', in *The International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6/1 (2006), 3-11.
10. See Steve Taylor, *A New Way of Being Church: a case study approach to Cityside Baptist Church as Christian faith 'making do' in a postmodern world* (unpublished PhD thesis, Otago University, Dunedin, 2005).
11. Indeed, that is one of the major criticisms levelled against the emerging church by one of its leading detractors, D A Carson: that it represents a sell-out by evangelicals who have come to embrace what he regards as a 'liberal' form of belief and practice. See D A Carson, *Becoming conversant with the emerging church: understanding a movement and its implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2005).
12. Roman Catholic cross-cultural mission thinking has had significant input into many of these conversations: as well as these writers, Vincent Donovan has been especially influential: see his *Christianity Rediscovered* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (London: SCM 2001)
13. See, for instance, Robert Webber's books promoting an 'ancient-future' theme: *Ancient-Future Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 1999); *Ancient-Future Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2003); *Ancient-Future Time* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2004); *Ancient-Future Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2008). And, from within the Fresh Expressions movement, Steven Croft & Ian Mobsby (eds), *Ancient Faith Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the sacramental tradition* (Norwich: Canterbury Press 2009).
14. Church of England General Synod, *Mission-Shaped Church* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (London: CHP 2009), 26-27.
15. *Mission-Shaped Church*, 43.
16. 'The Church of England ... professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in every generation'. *Mission-Shaped Church*, 34.
17. Steven Croft, 'What counts as a Fresh Expression of Church?', in Louise Nelstrop & Martyn Percy (eds), *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: explorations in emerging church* (London: Canterbury Press 2008), 5.
18. For a full explanation of all this, see <http://www.sharetheguide.org/section1/mixedeconomy>
19. *Mission-Shaped Church*, v.
20. Most eloquently, Andrew Davison & Alison Milbank, *For the Parish: a critique of Fresh Expressions* (London: SCM Press 2010).
21. *Towards the Conversion of England - Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Evangelism* (London: Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly 1945).
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23. This is not just a hypothetical list: there are actual fresh expressions in all these categories, and indeed in many more besides.
24. *Mission-Shaped Church*, 131.



25. Published as Steven Croft (ed), *Mission-Shaped Questions* (London: CHP, 2008).
26. A representative list would include Steven Croft, *Transforming Communities: reimagining the church for the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (London: DLT 2002); Steven Croft (ed), *The Future of the Parish System* (London: CHP 2006); Paul Bayes & Tim Sledge, *mission-shaped parish* (London: CHP 2006); Sally Gaze, *mission-shaped and rural* (London: CHP 2006); Susan Hope, *mission-shaped spirituality* (London: CHP 2006); Ian Mobsby, Danielle Welch, and Gareth Powell, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?* (London: Moot, 2007); Louise Nelstrop & Martyn Percy (eds), *Evaluating Fresh Expressions* (London: Canterbury Press 2008); John Drane, *After McDonaldization: mission, ministry, and Christian discipleship in an age of uncertainty* (London: DLT 2008); Angela Shier-Jones, *Pioneer Ministry and Fresh Expressions of Church* (London: SPCK 2009); Steven Croft, Ian Mobsby, and Stephanie Spellers (eds), *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Traditions* (London: Canterbury Press 2009); Steven Croft, *Jesus' People: what the church should do next* (London: CHP 2009); Stephen Cottrell, *Hit the ground kneeling: seeing leadership differently* (London: CHP 2009); Martyn Atkins, *Resourcing Renewal: shaping churches for the emerging future* (London: Epworth 2010); Steve Hollinghurst, *Mission Shaped Evangelism* (London: Canterbury Press 2010); Graham Cray, Ian Mobsby, and Aaron Kennedy (eds), *New Monasticism as Fresh Expressions of Church (Ancient Faith, Future Mission)* (London: Canterbury Press 2010);
27. L J Francis, M Robbins, A Williams & R Williams, 'All are called but some are more likely to respond', in *Rural Theology* 5 (2007), 23-30.
28. This would certainly appear to be the case in relation to the formal councils of the church, though some individual Scottish theologians have contributed a good deal to the wider discussions of such matters.
29. *Transcendence* is the brainchild of Revd Sue Wallace, in partnership with the Dean and Chapter of York Minster. Until recently she was the leader of Visions alternative worship arts collective, which is a ministry of St Michael-le-Belfrey parish church. See [www.transcendenceyork.org](http://www.transcendenceyork.org) and [www.yorkminster.org/worship/transcendence--an-ancient-future-mass](http://www.yorkminster.org/worship/transcendence--an-ancient-future-mass)
30. There are of course ongoing conversations in the Church of England, and not everyone is wholeheartedly in favour of what is happening – see most notably Andrew Davison & Alison Milbank, *For the Parish: a critique of Fresh Expressions* (London: SCM Press 2010). But the picture painted here is a reasonable depiction of the mainstream life of the church. Steven Croft notes that while 'there are still debates to be had and ecclesiological questions to be asked and answered', those discussions are now taking place in a context in which 'most of the Church of England and the Methodist Church are reasonably at ease with the language of fresh expressions of church' ('What counts as a fresh expression of church?' in Louise Nelstrop & Martyn Percy, *Evaluating Fresh Expressions*, Norwich: Canterbury Press 2008, 14).
31. Ministries Council minutes MC06 (2005-06), item 73
32. Ministries Council minutes MC-01 (2007-08), 27 June 2007.
33. Ministries Council minutes MC01 (2007-08)
34. *Building for the Future*, Ministries Council Report to the 2008 General Assembly, section 2.2.3.0.
35. Ministries Council minutes MC02 (2006-07), 20 Sept 2006; MC03 (2006-07), 25 October 2006
36. Record Note of the Emerging Ministries Task Group, 20 June 2007, item 5
37. This list is an abbreviated and paraphrased version of the complete job description for this post.
38. Emerging Ministries Task Group minutes, 5 March 2008, item 70.
39. Joint Report of the Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils on the Emerging Church to the 2009 General Assembly, 3.1.4.
40. The Lambeth Partners is a charity and association that raises money to support particular aspects of the vision of the Archbishop of Canterbury - and Fresh Expressions is the main part of this. The partners are made up of influential people who support and donate money to a charitable fund to enable a vision to become a practical reality. Their funding enables the promotion, planning, resourcing, and leadership training for Fresh Expressions within the Church of England and the Methodist Church in England.
41. Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2006); D A Carson, *Becoming conversant with the emerging church: understanding a movement and its implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2005).

## References

42. On emergence theory, see John H Holland, *Emergence: From Chaos to Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000); Steven Johnson, *Emergence: the connected lives of ants, brains, cities, and software* (New York: Penguin 2001); Richard Pascale, Mark Millemann & Linda Gioja, *Surfing the Edge of Chaos* (New York: Random House 2001).
43. Michael Moynagh identifies some distinctive practical advantages of using emergence terminology: it conveys the notion of emerging *from* something, thereby forging a link to the existing tradition; it is provisional, a process rather than a programme; it is a dynamic term, reflected in the use of the present participle; and it is imprecise, opening up space for genuine experimentation. (*emerging church.intro* (Oxford: Monarch 2004), 14-15).
44. The term 'initiatives' is used to describe the emerging groups throughout this report, as that is the term favoured by the Emerging Ministries Fund on its application form.
45. [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk)
46. The model adopted here is that advocated by Don S Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1991). See also Ray S Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2001); Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology: resources for contextual theology* (London: Mowbray 2009). And for practical examples, Matthew Guest, Karin Tusting & Linda Woodhead (eds), *Congregational Studies in the UK* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2004); Martyn Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2005); Helen Cameron, Philip Richter, Douglas Davies & Francis Ward, *Studying Local Churches* (London: SCM Press 2005); Elaine Graham, Heather Walton & Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press 2005); Helen Cameron, *Resourcing Mission: Practical Theology for Changing Churches* (London: SCM 2010).
47. For more on this, see David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 1993); Carolyn Ellis & Arthur P Bochner (eds), *Composing Ethnography: alternative forms of qualitative writing* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira 1996); Norman K Denzin, *Interpretative Ethnography: ethnographic practices for the 21st century* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 1997); David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research: a practical handbook* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 2000); Colin Robson, *Real World research 2nd ed* (Oxford: Blackwell 2002); John W Creswell, *Research Design* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 2003).
48. Hans G Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed & Ward 1981), 272.
49. *Truth & Method*, 358.
50. Mark J Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press 2003), 45.
51. L J Francis, M Robbins, A Williams & R Williams, 'All are called but some are more likely to respond', in *Rural Theology* 5 (2007), 23-30. More recently, a similar study based on a larger database has been carried out on churchgoers in Australia, with a similar pattern emerging: see Leslie J Francis & Mandy Robbins, 'All are called, but some psychological types are more likely to respond: profiling churchgoers in Australia', forthcoming in *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*. See also M C Rehak, 'Identifying the congregation's corporate personality', in *Journal of Psychological Type* 44 (1998), 39-44; L J Francis, C L Craig, T Horsfall, & C F J Ross, 'Psychological types of male and female evangelical lay church leaders in England, compared with United Kingdom population norms', in *Fieldwork in Religion* 1 (2005), 69-83; L J Francis, *Faith and psychology: Personality, religion and the individual* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd 2005).
52. See [www.hotchocolate.org.uk](http://www.hotchocolate.org.uk); [www.citylifeonline.org](http://www.citylifeonline.org); [http://web.me.com/erwagner/The\\_ARK/Home.html](http://web.me.com/erwagner/The_ARK/Home.html). Fridays in Faith does not have a dedicated website.
53. For a brief account of these early days, see Jo Pimlott & Nigel Pimlott, *Youth Work after Christendom* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press 2008), 78-9.
54. In urban slang, moshers are generally identified as fun loving individuals who dress in darker clothes, often wearing baggy jeans and chains and enjoying heavy metal music – in contrast to 'townies' who dress in skimpy clothing, showing as much flesh as possible, and who are more likely to follow Robbie Williams than AC/DC.
55. The contrast between this relational and open way of working, and the more conventional niceties of ecclesiastical discourse appears to have led to some crossed wires in communications with the officers of the Emerging Ministries Fund, as well as with some individuals within the Steeple Church. This is not unique to Hot Chocolate, and is one point at which research into personality types would almost certainly shed some light on the different ways of working preferred in fresh expressions of church when compared with traditional structures.

56. One of the other big questions arising from this and other research is the realisation that a significant number of people would wish to follow Jesus, with all that implies in terms of lifestyle and discipleship – but would resist being described as ‘Christians’, because for them that word itself carries the same negative connotations as the word ‘church’. In this research, we have not distinguished between this desire to be a disciple and being a Christian, though the ambiguity needs to be kept in mind in future dealings with these emerging groups.
57. Helene King, *One Voice* (Edinburgh: AuthorHouse, 2009).
58. Al Roxburgh, *The Missional Leader* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006), 40-60.
59. In addition to Sarah Lowe, there is one other part-time worker, who is self-funded.
60. An event which took place on the same night as the planned Fridays in Faith, which could have been seen as competition, but instead became a significant point of growth when the Fridays in Faith team offered to provide soup and snacks to those attending the Christmas lights. When the crowd went to the Academy, they found not only ample supplies of food but also that piles of cardboard and sticky tape had been turned into a model of the little town of Bethlehem. A great example of appropriate collaboration with civic life somewhat reminiscent of the model offered by Raymond Fung in *The Isaiah Vision* (Geneva: WCC 1992).
61. On some occasions when the Academy was unavailable, meetings have been held in a church hall, which tends to disguise the ecumenical nature of the project, as well as being a more restrictive space. In the light of all their experience, the leaders are convinced that a neutral third space is much to be preferred.
62. An example on a night when we visited would be a game played on a big table laid out in maze style as the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus, with the couple represented by two ping-pong balls which participants blew along the road, one player on each side of the table. Conversation was naturally engendered about the Bible story itself, but the twists and turns on the journey, and the possibility of one person not collaborating with their partner and blowing the balls off the table, offered many opportunities for reflection on the precarious nature of the journey of faith, as well as the need for community support and an ability to work together –
- not to mention further explorations that took place, of the nature of God’s Spirit as a wind blowing from many different directions.
63. Though the sharing of bread alone was nearer to a traditional Roman Catholic practice than any of the leaders realised!
64. See the chapter, ‘What does Maturity in the Emerging Church look like?’ in Steven Croft (ed), *Mission-Shaped Questions* (London: CHP 2008), 90-101.
65. Had the interviewee been more knowledgeable about Church of England structures, deaneries might also have been mentioned, as small localised clusters of parishes able to make decisions about such things in response to their own circumstances.
66. Raymond Fung, *The Isaiah Vision* (Geneva: WCC 1992).
67. Eddie Gibbs & Ryan K Bolger, *Emerging Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2005), 117.
68. On this terminology, see Stuart Murray, *Church after Christendom* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press 2005), where he distinguishes between the open set (Christendom: all members of the community are also members of the church), the bounded set (church membership is concerned with belief systems, confessions of faith, and the likes), and the centred set (faith emerging from values and lived experience).
69. Mitchell Stephens, *The rise of the Image, the fall of the word* (New York: OUP 1998).
70. Walter J Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers 1997), 196. See also Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2002).
71. Jonny Baker, *Curating Worship* (London: SPCK 2010).
72. For more on this game, see above, page 48, footnote 61.
73. For more on the matter of control, see below at 3.5.2 and 3.5.3.
74. Kester Brewin, *The Complex Christ: Signs of Emergence in the Urban Church* (London: SPCK 2004), 69-93.
75. *Complex Christ*, 86.
76. The most striking example of this would be the Tent Hall in Steel Street, Glasgow, built in 1876 as a direct consequence of the work of Moody and Sankey, that

## References

- also led to the foundation of the Bible Training Institute – and whose work is continued today in the shape of the International Christian College.
77. *Mission-Shaped Church*, 43.
  78. Note the difference between this and the *four* key marks of Fresh Expressions, which are defined as 'missional – serving people outside church; incarnational – listening to people and entering their culture; educational – making discipleship a priority; and ecclesial – forming church.' See <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/about/whatis>
  79. A leaflet produced in 2009, with no obvious title but a quotation from Isaiah 43:19 on the front cover ('Behold, I am doing a new thing ...').
  80. *Mission-Shaped Church*, 126.
  81. <http://freshexpressions.org.uk/about/introduction>.
  82. David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: paradigm shifts in theology of mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis 1991), 389-393; and for some recent discussion of the topic, *The International Review of Mission* 92/3 (2003).
  83. Tim Dearborn, *Beyond Duty: a passion for Christ, a heart for mission* (Monrovia: MARC 1998), 2. See *Mission-Shaped Church*, 85.
  84. *Mission-Shaped Church*, 85, quoting Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: laying foundations* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press 1998), 31.
  85. *Mission-Shaped Church*, v.
  86. For more on the challenges to traditional structures, see Steven Croft (ed), *The Future of the Parish System* (London: Church House Publishing 2006).
  87. *Calvin Institutes* 4.1.9
  88. The key phrase here being 'according to the institution of Christ'. Does this limit the sacraments only to the Eucharist, since Christ never practiced baptism? Does it mean the Eucharist should be an annual celebration, given its origins in the Jewish Passover festival? Does it require an ordained person to administer the sacraments, given that Christ was neither ordained nor in any sense approved of by the religious authorities of his day?
  89. Ray S Anderson, *An emergent theology for emerging churches* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity 2006), 77-95.
  90. Backed up by the provision of adequate resources: see [www.centreforpioneerlearning.org.uk](http://www.centreforpioneerlearning.org.uk).
  91. 'The working party spent a long time looking for what we felt would be a good enough term to describe the local church in all its variety in different places and social contexts. We came up with the term "mission community". "Mission" because the calling of the Church is to mission, to look beyond itself and make disciples of Christ. "Community" because of the richness of that word itself, related to the New Testament word *koinonia*, fellowship, sharing, participation, being in common: it refers both to our own common life in Christ, and drives us outward to the human communities in which we participate and among which we live.' (*Moving on in Ministry and Mission*, para 6.4).
  92. For the full story see <http://www.emergingchurch.info/stories/dnanetworks/index.htm> and the DNA network church website, <http://dna-networks.blogspot.com/>. DNA = 'Dynamic New Anglian' Networks.
  93. 'Charismatic' here is being used in a sociological sense as an inspired individual who naturally gathers followers, and not with any theological implication in relation to the 'charismatic movement'.
  94. George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society* 5<sup>th</sup> ed (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press 2007).
  95. John Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church* (London: DLT 2000).
  96. <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/training/lincoln>
  97. Cf Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Classes* (New York: Basic Books 2002).
  98. For more on this, see John Drane, 'Resisting McDonaldization: will Fresh Expressions of church inevitably go stale?' in Viggo Mortensen & Andreas Osterlund Nielsen (eds), *Walk Humbly with the Lord: Church and Mission engaging Plurality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 150-166; and John Drane, 'What does maturity in the emerging church look like?' in Steven Croft (ed), *Mission-Shaped Questions* (London: CHP 2008), 90-101.
  99. <http://www.stmarkshaydock.org>
  100. <http://www.dream.uk.net>
  101. Phil Potter & Mark Cockayne, in *Pioneering a New Future in the Lake and River Church* (Haydock: St Mark's Haydock 2008), 1. Phil Potter is Director of Pioneer

- Ministry for the Diocese of Liverpool and Mark Cockayne is vicar of St Mark's and area dean of St Helens.
- I 02. For the story of this church, see George Lings, *Thame or Wild, Encounters on the Edge No. 8* (Sheffield: Sheffield Centre 2000).
- I 03. Pete Rollins, 'Biting the hand that feeds' in Louise Nelstrop & Martyn Percy (eds), *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: explorations in emerging church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press 2008), 83.
- I 04. We hesitate to propose something that might look like a discrete Scottish version of Fresh Expressions, as that would simply be reinventing the wheel. But the fact is that the churches that have partnered under the Fresh Expressions banner now have more than five years of experience and significant structural change behind them, which is not paralleled in the Scottish scene (including those denominations which are members of Fresh Expressions and also have a presence in Scotland). There may be good reasons for the Church of Scotland to become a full partner in Fresh Expressions, but that would not automatically lead to the adoption of all its insights overnight, as the Fresh Expressions journey has been, as much as anything, a spiritual exploration led by renewed commitment in discipleship, which preceded the emergence of new structures. The consistent emphasis on structure and order in the Reformed tradition can tend to create an impression that changing the structures is what counts, whereas the experience of Fresh Expressions suggests that is a natural outcome of a prior change of mindset, which includes not only theological understanding but a renewal of faith discipleship.
- I 05. Jonathan Clatworthy, at <http://www.modchurchunion.org/resources/clatworthy/2010-4.htm>
- I 06. *Mission-Shaped Church*, 136-7.
- I 07. Paradoxically, one of them was identified as 'executive director' on their application to the Emerging Ministries Fund, which on the face of it implies a much more structured set-up than the more generic term 'leader' might otherwise suggest.
- I 08. Two of the organisations most closely identified with Fresh Expressions – the Church Army and CMS – are in the process of redefining their purpose as mission orders.
- I 09. [www.collegeofevangelists.org.uk](http://www.collegeofevangelists.org.uk)
- I 10. Cf Tom Brown & Henry McLeish, *Scotland: a suitable case for treatment?* (Edinburgh: Luath Press 2009).
- I 11. *Report of the Panel on Doctrine to the General Assembly* 1997, 10.
- I 12. Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1991), 6.



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