

Questions for Midweek Groups – Lent 2010

Week 5 - A missional church or a church in mission?

Bible reading: Acts 2:36 – 47 cf Acts 4:32 – 37; Genesis 22:15-18; Jonah 4:10-11; John 10:14-16; John 12:20-33

N.B. There is an extra sheet attached that explains some differences.

‘Start with the Church and the mission will probably get lost. Start with mission and it is likely that the Church will be found.’¹

Questions to answer....

- 1 Look at the questions in the boxes on the sheet and ask them about the church/es you attend.
- 2 In Knaphill and Brookwood does God have a ‘church with a mission’ or a ‘missional church’? Discuss this in detail.
- 3 In what ways are this group and the activities you are each involved in shaped by our Church mission?

Share your experiences of the action point from last week.

What have you learnt from those experiences?

What will you each do differently in the future because of those experiences?

Discuss together what differences the revelations in this course has made to you as:

- a) Individuals
- b) Your small group
- c) The church in Knaphill and Brookwood as a whole.

From the above, write down the 3 most important things you would like to say to the whole church and hand it in to Nick.

¹ Archbishops’ Council *Mission-shaped Church* (London, CHP 2004) p116

Church in mission vs Missional church

At first glance one may be mistaken in thinking there is very little difference between these two phrases but in fact there is a 'mind shift' involved that means the motivation and out working of these churches will have very different values and motivations for what they do. Does mission shape the church from its very core or does the church decide to adopt mission as an approach and adapt itself accordingly?

[A picture from Nick that may or may not be helpful – there's a difference between buying a family car, stripping it out and taking it motor racing, and designing an F1 car with the sole purpose of winning a Grand Prix]

Basically, a Church in Mission and a Missional Church are both interested in doing mission but the second works outside the church building with no expectation of bringing people in rather building 'Christian community' amongst those it chooses to serve, whilst the first works hard to reach its local community by doing or offering services/courses etc that will entice people into their way of worshipping. Both have their place but need a different approach and attitude.

A church in mission

A church in mission is the kind of church that most evangelical Christians would be familiar with. Church members are interested in helping unbelievers become believers. They look for opportunities to connect with those who do not come to church and through a variety of ways they hope, pray and encourage people to engage with the person of Jesus and join the church family.

A church in mission will be keen to run courses for those who do not usually attend church e.g. Alpha, Emmaus and Christianity Explored. They may also be 'open' to encouraging people to use church premises for secular activities or non-religious programmes set up by church as a way of encouraging outsiders to experience a bit of church life, usually with a view to getting them to come to a worship service at some point.

Reaching out to people outside the church and encouraging them to come and take part is at the essence of a church in mission.

A church in mission will ask itself questions such as:

- ◆ Who is missing from our church and how can we serve them better so they join us?
- ◆ What courses/programmes/services could we put on for those who don't yet attend our church?

Missional Church

Being 'missional' is a shift in mindset. Ed Stetzer and David Putman *Breaking the Missional Code* (Broadman & Holman, 2006) see the shift like this...

- From programs to processes
- From demographics to discernment
- From models to missions
- From attractional to incarnational
- From uniformity to diversity
- From professional to passionate
- From seating to sending
- From decisions to disciples
- From additional to exponential
- From monuments to movements
- From services to service
- From ordained to the ordinary
- From organizations to organisms

Being 'missional' means thinking outside the box! Some of the things it means include...

- Exploring and rediscovering church vocation and identity as Jesus' 'sent people'.
- As a church family being ready to be Christ's people outside of church buildings – and STAY THERE!
- Recognising that we need to be involved in cross-cultural, contextual mission that will take us out of our comfort zones.
- Being engaged with culture without being absorbed by it.
- The missional church doesn't view its purpose as bringing God into the culture or taking individuals out of the culture to a sacred space but meeting God **in** the culture.
- Missional church recognizes that it does not hold a place of honour in its host community but sees itself as salt and light for God in that community.

A Missional church is...

- less interested in how many people attend services and more interested in how many people they serve.
- Does less about building the church and more about building the kingdom of God in new cultures and contexts.
- Not simply interested in how unified our local church is, but how unified is 'the church' in our neighbourhood, city and world?

A Missional Church will ask itself questions such as:

- ◆ To what extent is our church a 'sent' community in which we work together in influencing and being influenced by our neighbourhood/s, workplaces etc...?
- ◆ How is our church being changed by the mission God has called us to engage in?