

expressions: the dvd - 2

Transcript - chapters 5-9

Dialogue and time-codes for chapters 5-9.

5: Being Mission-Shaped

05:00:09:12 Horsley

A mission-shaped agenda is really important for churches because church is like any other institution, left on their own will turn inward and think about themselves most of the time. And the church was commissioned by Jesus to look outwards, to go and make disciples. And so if the church is going to fulfil that commission, then we need to be continually refocusing ourselves outward because the drift is always to look inwards.

05:00:31:19 Kovoov

A church exists for mission in the same way a fire exists for burning. So if you don't have mission at the very core of what the church is, then I'm afraid it cannot be called church. It's probably a museum of some kind.

'We need to be continually refocusing ourselves outward because the drift is always to look inwards.'

05:00:46:02 Male

I think being mission shaped is so important in our world today just purely because actually the majority of people don't come to church and the majority of people aren't particularly interested in coming to church. And so we really need to be thinking about ways that we connect with people who are way outside the church. So I think there's a pragmatic reason for thinking that way. But I think probably even more importantly is the fact of who God is, that God himself is a missionary and wants to then send us out as his people, into his world to help him in his mission. And we see that above all in Jesus himself, coming into our world and entering it. And God calls us in a

sense to come into the world that he's created to enter it to where people are at and to enable them to connect with his son.

05:01:35:14 Tomlin

We go through a time it seems to me where the forms of culture and therefore the forms of church are changing quite a great deal. And anytime when culture changes, church has to change with it.

05:01:44:13 Croft

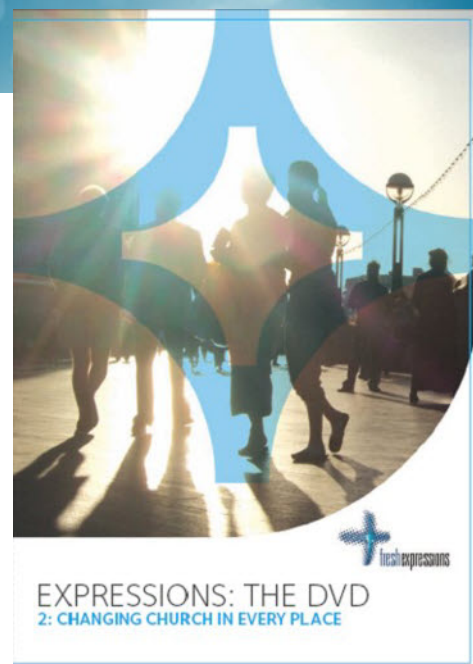
For many, many years we've been used to the church to saying 'come to us, come to our worship services and do church our way'. And that's great and it's still working for a proportion of our society. Maybe 40 percent, maybe those who are older, more than those who are younger, but we really have got to begin now to go to where people are to be with them, to listen to them and to try and shape the new communities in those places.

05:02:10:16 Lings

I think it is sometimes hard for the existing church particularly if they've got reasonable numbers, to think 'why do we need to do something?' A simple exercise might be to say, well count up, even on your best Sunday and including your midweek services, how many have you got? And then compare that to the total parish and most churches will find, maybe they've got two, three percent. It makes you think.

05:02:33:23 Savage

We have to understand where people are coming from; how they understand the world; what kind of God makes sense in that world view; what kind of values makes sense in that world view and what their aims and hopes as human beings are.



05:02:54:01 Hollinghurst

Who says you necessarily have to have a building? Who says you necessarily have to have fulltime ministry? Who says you have to have all the accoutrements that normally go with worship, or PCC structures, all these kind of things? And sometimes I think a sort of a travelling light really helps within all of this. I think there's also the constant ear to what's going on in the world around you. Keeping that mission focus sharp, so that actually you're always looking for how you'll adapt to the next challenge rather than kind of resting on the laurels of where you've been in the past.

05:03:26:01 Cottrell

There's nothing new about fresh expressions of church. There's nothing new about mission shaped church. This is always the way from the New Testament onwards that the church is operated as we encounter the challenges of a new context and a new culture. So we say how does the church and the Gospel find expression within that culture?

05:03:47:13 Atkins

The mission shaped church agenda is fluid enough and open enough and

broad enough and contextual enough to bring about the values of mission shaped church in a whole variety of different contexts. And that's why will work far more profoundly than many of the other kind of more wooden tools that we've leapt on and leapt through over the last 20 years in the church. I'm more optimistic about this than any other pattern that I've come across simply because it's not a magic remedy.

05:04:24:12 CUT

6: Listening for mission

06:00:10:05 Carter

There are various ways of listening to the community around. You can do a community audit, and actually find out what's going on. A lot of churches don't actually know what's going on in the community around them, they've become so isolated. Find out what the needs are. Go to places where people are. Go to pubs, social clubs. Talk to people at work. Talk to people as you're shopping. There are all sorts of ways of listening to the community. I think those who are in a church leader position are also in a good position to do that listening because they, very often, have an open door to talk to people in leadership roles in the community around them.

06:00:51:19 Male

One of the best things we ever did was to get some people round to a pub. We paid for a meal for them, a group about 10 people; and we just asked them simple questions about if they went to church what would they like church to be like? You know, when would be a good time? What would be the kind of things they would find valuable? That's just a very simple way to listen to a cross section of a community of how church could connect with them in real and relevant ways.

06:01:19:14 Cottrell

What is our mission field? And I think the simplest way of discovering that is actually to ask the question 'Who do we have contact with who at present are on the edge or outside of Christian community?' And most of us as individuals, and certainly as church communities, have such contacts. When we've discerned what that area of contact might be, that group of people, we need then to ask 'How can we serve them? How can the gospel first of all be experienced as good news for those people's lives?' So a simple question that I often encourage myself and others to ask is 'How can my church, my life be a blessing to those with whom I live?'

06:02:00:14 Savage

As a social psychologist, I would recommend some of the tools of my trade, and some of those tools are good social research. And you can do that in a very friendly way. 'What do you need? What are you looking for? What kind of events would appeal to you? When would be convenient for you? What kind of situation would you feel comfortable coming into?' Doing that kind of research, it's deeper than market research, but it covers some of those areas. And then once you start from listening to what people need, that's an ongoing process. But it's a dialogue, you never let go of what you know the redemptive work of Christ is meant to be in people's lives. But it's a matter of making those two ends fit together.

06:02:49:18 Croft

Simply paying attention to what's going on and primarily to what God is doing within a particular community and context. But also listening to yourself, to the church community to what's going on there, to the gifts that you have. And as people do that listening all around them, we've started talking about 360 degree listening now within

Fresh Expressions, as people talk about that listening, so new calls and new directions become clear.

06:03:17:11 Lings

A listening to an area I suppose is kind of shorthand, it is partly listening, quite literally, in terms of conversations, what are the, what are the issues that local people have? Some of it is watching what's happening to our areas, who's moving in? I mean a very simple thing is simply looking at the For Sale boards outside houses. Those would be two beginnings. And you begin to feel some sense of what are people's issues around here? What do they think's important? How do they spend their time? That's a beginning.

06:03:54:14 Keith

On one hand if you're just going to start with where you are, you might totally miss what God's doing outside of the church. But on the other hand if you just listen to all the voices and all the needs, you can get totally bogged down. I think we find it's a case of actually listening and, and doing that honestly. But then thinking strategically what can we actually do and what has God called us to do?

06:04:19:20 Atkins

Your congregation already has certain gifts and graces that God can use more fully than are there, but you need to tune them, and you need to develop them, just like a weightlifter would need to do some training to be fitter. And to bring a consultant in, or to bring a facilitator into that, into a local church setting, is not to admit defeat because you can't do it on your own, it's actually to release all kinds of giftedness in the church and to facilitate possibilities that are really quite exciting.

06:05:18:03 CUT

7: Starting

07:00:09:22 **Potter**

I think when it comes to fresh expressions, small is beautiful, you can start very, very small. And certainly some of our most successful projects have started, literally, with one person who's had a passion for their particular context. And then seeing that grow very, very quickly. So I've got increasing confidence now to go to a very small struggling church and being able to spot where the fresh expression potential maybe. But equally, I think, on the other hand, this is an incredible challenge to larger churches and almost the larger and outwardly more successful the church maybe, the bigger the challenge, because of course the temptation is to think if you have a full church, we don't need this.

07:00:50:18 **Tomlin**

I think the first step that you need to take in starting a fresh expression has to be prayer. It has to be giving a long time to reflecting upon the scriptures, to praying together, praying as individuals, just really seeking God's wisdom and the Spirit's guidance as you start something like this. So I think that has to be the starting point.

07:01:10:07 **Male**

I think when you start a fresh expression, the most important thing probably is 'What is the vision of this church?' and 'Are the people that you want to be part of that sharing that vision?' That vision needs to be worked out with others, but it does need to be clear so that people coming in really know what this church is about, who are the kind of people that the church is trying to reach? What kind of style of church it's going to be, all those questions are vital.

07:01:41:22 **Maclaurin**

Ask God to show you who the people that he wants you to reach, and give

you both a vision and a calling for that. I think then the next priority is to call a team to you, people who are going to follow you and therefore probably get on with you. Don't, at this point, call the most difficult people, but make sure that there's a variety of people in your team.

07:02:03:04 **Baker**

Practically, you know, where something's starting, I think there are certain things that can help it. One is if the people doing that have a set of relationships people to accompany them on the journey, I suppose, where they can talk about what they're doing, share ideas, share struggles and pains. And, from a practical point of view, support from a church or a network of church relationships that's kind of encouraging and helping them on that journey. I mean I think those are pretty basic things, but actually they can make an awful lot of difference I think.

07:02:38:06 **Tomlin**

There's a quite important distinction I think between fantasy and vision. Fantasy I think is when you have an idea about the future but you don't really want to share it with anybody else because you think they might just laugh or just be crazy and they'll think you're stupid, and it's something that is slightly outlandish, you just keep it yourself, you don't share it with anybody else. Or when you do share it with someone else, they just say 'Just forget it'. But then there's vision which I think is something which you are passionate about but you do want to share with other people, and when you share it with other people they say 'Yeah, that could be right, that really could be the right thing'.

07:03:13:10 **Croft**

I have been re-reading recently the letters sent by Pope Gregory to Augustine when he sent him to bring the gospel to England again, hundreds

and hundreds of years ago. And Gregory as a very wise piece of advice to Augustine said that if you're going to climb a mountain, it's many small steps, not one great leap. And I think in developing fresh expressions of church, you need to be prepared for a journey, a journey like the Exodus in the Old Testament, where different things come into place at different stages, and you're looking for gradual growth and development.

07:03:51:09 **Savage**

You need a leader who first of all is comfortable with, and good at team work. That means comfortable with letting other people develop their gifts and skills, not threatened by the fact that you're not the great leader in charge of everything with all the truth and all the answers and all the authority. So relationship skills are vital. But you do have to be a strong leader because things can get out of hand, things can go pear shaped very quickly.

07:04:19:22 **Horsley**

Is the starting point thinking 'Well the sort of worship we have in our church is really good for me, but my neighbours actually wouldn't respond to that. What sort of worship would they respond to, and how can we do that? Do we have a group of people who might put on that sort of worship event to which I can invite these people with more confidence that I might to a traditional Sunday service?' But perhaps the approach isn't through worship, it's more a question of 'There's a real need in the community, let's just get alongside people and share our resources to help meet their need, so that we're demonstrating the love of Jesus in, in all sorts of practical ways'.

07:05:18:12 **CUT**

8: Sustaining

08:00:09:23 Horsley

If you're thinking about how to make a fresh expression a really healthy expression of church, and not just a new worship service to which you attract some people for a while, and then the flavour of the month changes and they go off somewhere else, then I think you have to think very seriously right from the beginning what it means to be church. In the Methodist church we've very helpfully got what we call our calling which is the four dimensions of what we're called to as church. We're called to worship God. We're called to learn together and care for one another. We're called to be good neighbours and reach out to serve our neighbours and to challenge injustice. We're called to do evangelism, to encourage people to become followers of Jesus. And I think most fresh expressions start off in one of those four dimensions, but they don't usually have all four of them in place very quickly.

08:00:56:08 Kovoov

Try, explore, be innovative, be creative, experiment - but always keep your eyes on Jesus, he is the role model of our faith. Always be open to the creative holy spirit of God.

08:01:11:20 Keith

I think because we felt quite weak in what we've been doing, we haven't really felt like 'Oh are we going to go and start this thing?' We've not had an agenda or a strategy. But, we've been ourselves, and we've been ourselves outside of the church. And, as you live out your faith, God's at work so stuff happens.

08:01:40:10 Hollinghurst

I think the sustainability question is really quite crucial. And in many ways I think it comes down to understanding

what it is to be a healthy Christian community. And one could be very Anglican about it actually and almost quite traditional and talk about one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, but within those ideas I think are really important things. Firstly the idea that we're called to a unity that welcomes the diverse in that oneness. So not to be frightened of diversity, but know that we actually have to have strong relationships in the way that you could imagine relationships in God the trinity. The whole catholic idea is very important and often missed. Not so much that everything has to be uniform, but that actually whatever expression of church you plant, it's part of the wider whole. It needs to be connected to other churches locally and nationally. And that's really, really important that people can have that kind of support and also the kind of acceptance and back up that can provide. Then obviously there's the whole growth in holiness. People want to be becoming more like Christ. And you need to be working to make that happen. And then the apostolic dimension is very important - that it doesn't become a thing in itself, but actually it's continually focused on mission.

08:02:57:19 Potter

In five or 10 years' times the whole thing may have changed shape again. Or the people within it have transitioned and moved in to another area. So I think increasingly, you know, networks is very much about going with the flow, and not having this sort of traditional sense of planting permanent features. And, yes, it's very important to see them grow and mature and flourish, but also important to see that, in God's economy, things come and go and ebb and flow and you know, and that there's a season for this now. We've also got to be just as astute in realising when that season's coming to an end, and when the new thing is bubbling up in another area.

08:03:42:04 Cottrell

If it's still a sexy, fresh expression in 10 years' time, the chances are it's still very, very fragile and may not last. If it just becomes that rather ordinary thing that happens in the life of the church, then probably you've built some really good foundations for its sustainability into the future. So, therefore, I think a lot of it comes about an attitude of mind. About are we building something which is going to be just part of who we are, or is this only the exciting project of a few very keen people?

08:04:16:03 Maclaurin

We're not looking for fresh expressions to go on and on and on and on. We're expecting an organic life cycle for them. And we're expecting that as part of that life cycle that some will multiply, some will die, some will be passed on to new leaders who will bring new vision to it and take it into a new phase of its life.

08:04:34:11 Tomlin

It does need to have, if you like, a sort of spiritual sustainability. Because doing church planting, fresh expressions, or doing more pioneering entrepreneurial work is quite exhausting. It does draw on your resources and, and so on. So I think a key thing both for leaders and for those who are part of the core group or something, is to find a set of spiritual disciplines, a set of spiritual resourcing, which can keep you going long term, which isn't going to make you dry up spiritually and lose your passion pretty quickly.

08:05:06:01 Croft

I think the most important thing for denominational leaders is to encourage what's happening and to bless it and to be involved. And not be worried or afraid by new developments. When the church in Jerusalem heard about new things happening in Antioch, that went

beyond the boundaries to a new community of Hellenists, they sent Barnabas to look at what was going on, and Barnabas had the capacity to come and see a new thing happening and to rejoice and affirm and encourage it, and then bring in very important practical support. And I think that's absolutely vital for denominational leaders. These fresh expressions of church are not on the whole flourishing without that kind of blessing and support. But where it's given, the potential for fruitfulness is very great.

08:06:28:24 CUT

9: Discipleship

09:00:09:14 Maclaurin

Jesus said to the disciples 'Go and make disciples' and because they made disciples, we're here now. So that original gospel instruction from Jesus means that all of us have got that permission to go and do it.

09:00:23:09 Carter

Within the context of growth to maturity of faith, and maturity of following Christ's way, while accepting the 'pick and mix' attitude, I think people who genuinely are unable to follow Christ are challenged with that commitment. The 'follow me' that Christ demands is a constant one. It's no good - anyone who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God. And we need to encourage and enable people to take that challenge on board.

09:00:54:04 Kovoov

I actually prefer the word 'student' of Jesus. I am a student of Jesus. What does a student do? A student learns. A student learns. And they learn all the time, they learn from anyone. They are prepared to learn. So in other words they are not only teachable, they're available and usable. And so the church

is that community that comes together to learn together that they may grow together in the knowledge and love of God.

09:01:26:21 Atkins

I think that the disciple making of historic churches over the last hundred years or so leaves an awful lot to be desired. I know as a pastor and I'm not being critical of anybody, any particular person here that you can pastor somebody who can attend church for 15, 20, 25 years, and then something happens in their life and it's as if none of the 25 years of being in church, attending worship or whatever, seems to have taken root in their lives. They don't seem to have become earthed as a Christian disciple. It seems as if some forms of historic church has had a neutral, at best, or a nominal effect in creating deep disciples in terms of the lifestyle and what gets their head and their hearts deeply rooted in Christ. I actually find quite the opposite in fresh expressions, I find that discipleship almost happens at an accelerated pace.

09:02:20:01 Savage

Discipleship is going to have multiple streams. Some of that is going to be just good old bible study. And let the bible studies be good and creative. But let them be historical and contextually accurate. There's no getting away from that. Theology's important, what kind of framework of understanding are we applying? What's our interpretation of these gospels? And to be upfront about that. We also need to know about what's going on in the world. What is science saying about the world? What is science saying about the kind of universe we live in? Let's not create in fresh expressions another sub-world.

09:03:00:17 Tomlin

Try and find forms of discipleship that really do key into the, the areas of the local culture in which you're trying to

place your fresh expression. So if you're signing up a fresh expression of Church and you want to do the process of listening to your local culture, what are the issues in this area? What are the particular sort of pressure points for people? What are the issues that really do um occupy people's minds day-in/day-out? And it's within that context that discipleship needs to be worked out. So, for example, if you're doing a fresh expression in an area where it's actually a pretty wealthy area, there's a lot of money flowing around, one of the crucial issues in discipleship is going to be how you use money.

09:03:40:13 Male

I think discipleship and commitment go together and are important that they stay together. Certainly one of the dangers is that people can just come in and in a sense be consumers of something that is going on in a fresh expression. And I think it's important that people who are within a fresh expression see that they're being called to be disciples of Jesus, and part of that is about belonging to a community. It is not about coming in and consuming services that a fresh expression provides.

09:04:10:15 Baker

I recognise a real seriousness to following the way of Christ. I can think of communities that have been inspired by some of the monastic communities so they're drawing up a rhythm or a rule around which they're seeking to follow Christ in a set of practices and hold, you know, loosely holding each other accountable to that. They'll meet weekly for a meal and read the Bible and study it together. So I think there is a real sort of seriousness about wanting to follow in the way of Christ but perhaps the ways in which discipleship is happening, some people looking in from the outside say 'Well where's the discipleship going on?' Because they're looking for something

that perhaps was part of a different framework, a way of thinking.

09:04:56:23 **Keith**

Are we committed to being disciplined ourselves? And are we committed to disciplining other people? And within this kind of consumer culture of kind of taking bits and taking the bits you want, actually are we committed, to people and to seeing discipleship through with people?

09:05:18:18 **Croft**

The pattern of discipleship we're seeing in fresh expressions of church is a challenge to a discipleship which goes on for the whole of our lives, learning and growing. And which is also about the whole of our lives, not just the part of our lives which we spend within the Christian community. So it's actually about how we do our work, how we engage with our neighbours, how we serve the society around us, what we become involved in, in our community. Whole life discipleship, not sucking all of the energy into the Christian community.

09:05:59:10 **CUT**