



Developing our Church Vision – part 4

(October 2016)

Out: developing our relationship with God's world through mission

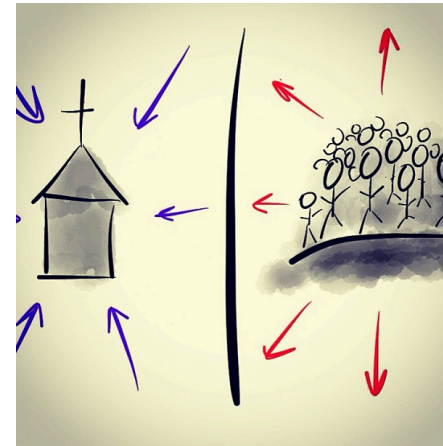
Our local area has a particular demographic profile and its own unique needs that we want to respond to. In no particular order, they are:

- **Youth** – because there are a lot of teenagers in our area, including two secondary schools, a sixth form college and a private school. Josh (our youth worker) and Buzz focus on this area.
- **Shirley High Street** – because a lot of local people use the High Street who wouldn't easily walk up Church Street and into St James' by the Park, and because the High Street draws in people from beyond Shirley as well. Table (the High Street café project) is focusing on this area.
- **Those facing financial hardship** – because parts of our parish are in the bottom 10% of wards nationally, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation; and because more and more people are feeling a financial squeeze as state welfare provision diminishes. The Beacon focus on this area, running CAP Money courses, delivering food parcels, having drop-in meals etc. We also support the Basics Bank, SCRATH and SAFE as a church.
- **Older people** – because our society is aging, and there will be increasing numbers of older people living locally over the coming years. We have various ministries to older people – Evergreens, Luncheon Club, services in local Care Homes, Sunday @3 etc.
- **People from overseas** (whether economic migrants or asylum seekers) – because our area is becoming rapidly more multi-cultural, and we have a biblical responsibility to welcome the stranger in our midst. We have two cell groups focusing partly on this area of mission.
- **Children and families** – because we live in a part of Southampton which has a high proportion of school-age children. Lena (our schools' worker and children's worker), Superstars, the Ark, Allsorts and Play and Pray all focus on this area.
- **18-35s** – termed the 'missing generation' by the Church of England, we are blessed to have a good cell group focused on this area, who can support each other through the particular challenges of entering adulthood.

We may yet develop other focused areas of local mission, for example focusing on those with learning difficulties, or focusing on the environment, or focusing on the NHS (as a major local employer). But we need to recognise that whilst the possibilities for local

mission are endless, our resources (people and money) are limited. So we would only develop further areas of mission if enough people come together with a similar passion.

Developing a 'blended approach' to mission



In years gone by, many churches did 'church-shaped mission' – that is, the way they did mission was shaped by the way they did church. It was primarily an 'attractational' model of church. The Church of England (and other churches) are now moving towards a 'mission-shaped church' – where our mission shapes how we do church. That will produce very different ('emerging') churches – it's a journey that won't always be comfortable!

We want to develop a blended approach to our local mission, incorporating attractational, engaged, emerging and church planting mission.

Attractational mission – where we invite people to 'come and see'. Our 10.30am, Encounter and Live services at St James' by the Park continue to draw new people, especially through events like baptisms, carol services and school visits. Through regular youth and adult Alpha courses, we also invite people to come and see who Jesus is.

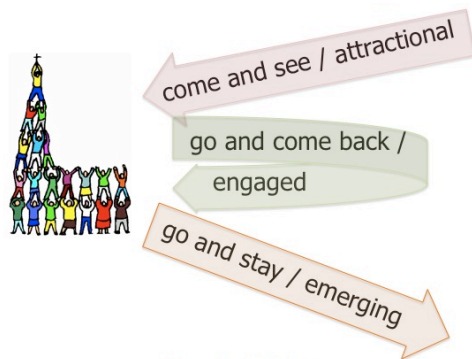
Over the coming years:

- We will hold regular Sunday services (eg for infant baptisms) which are more geared towards visitors, where they can hear something of the gospel message and invitation explained
- Our central gatherings (eg Sunday services) will be better at enabling and encouraging us in our daily mission – at home, at work and in the community
- Our more 'typical' Sunday services will still be attracting newcomers and those who aren't Christians, and we will seek to use those opportunities to point people to Jesus

Engaged mission – where we engage with people's needs on their terms, and then as we build up relationship, encourage them to other events to consider Jesus. The Ark (for parents and carers of babies and toddlers), Evergreens / Luncheon Club (for older people), and the CAP Money course (for those struggling to manage their finances) are some of the ways we do this.

Over the coming years:

- Our existing mission groups will be seeing people come to faith in Jesus, their fringe networks will have grown, they will be working out what discipleship looks like in their particular field, their leadership will have grown.
- We will have established links in the local secondary schools and / or sixth form college, encouraging our young people to do engaged and emerging mission there
- The mission group to Older People (previously the Seniors Umbrella Group) and the international cell groups, through trial and error, will have developed new or modified ways of engaging with the last, the least, the lonely and the lost in our local area, beginning to draw new people into our community
- Other cells and groups within our church community will have begun to come together occasionally to harness the potential of the cluster-sized group for mission to their networks



- We will have partnered with 1 or 2 other parishes to help facilitate fresh growth in their parishes

In addition

- Individual Christians in our community will feel more equipped and emboldened to be witnesses and ambassadors in their workplaces and other frontlines (the school playground, their street etc)
- We will have discerned and trained more leaders for mission
- We will be offering genuine pastoral care to people outside our church community, as an expression of our mission
- Cell groups will be actively partnering in mission with local mission activities or organisations, or with mission partners further afield, by prayer and encouragement
- Our mission partnerships further afield (ie in the rest of the country and overseas) will be more genuine partnerships, with us learning about mission from them, and them receiving encouragement and deepened prayer from us, as well as finances
- We will be using Alpha and a variety of other mission tools (eg Omega for older people; Puzzling Questions for those not yet ready for Alpha; Life Explored) in small group settings
- We will see the Holy Spirit at work in unchurched people's lives in transforming ways

Emerging mission – where we build up relationship with people in a neutral venue, and through that, establish a completely new form of church where people can be discipled. This is a key part of our plans for the High Street café (Table). Superstars (for children and families) may also develop into a church in its own right over time.

Over the coming years:

- The High Street café project (Table) will be up and running, moving towards profit, with a fresh expression of church emerging there
- Superstars will be making real progress with discipling children and their families, seeing families coming to faith and being baptised
- We will have discerned another opportunity (or 2 or 3) for a fresh expression of church to develop, and we will be working prayerfully towards that

Church-planting mission - The diocese will also be looking to us, as one of the larger churches in Southampton, to play our part in resourcing other, struggling local churches through church planting. That might be sacrificially sending a few people with particular gifts as a 'turn-around' team; it might be sending a larger group to start a fresh service in a different parish.

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