

## MISSIONAL WAYMARKS

### MISSIONAL

Being *missional* means, in part, being sent by God in the divine mission to the world. “It is not that the church has a mission for God in the world, but that the God of mission has a church in the world.” (*Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission, Tim Dearborn. p. 2*). The call of God in a missional effort is that, more and more our world more closely resemble the reign of God (aka the Kingdom of God) everywhere, always among all. The signs of that reign are as hard to define as the reign itself.

Yet to discern if an effort should be (or continue to be) funded, the church **must** have ways to gauge if significant enough progress is being made, lest we throw good money after bad. That is true of new initiatives as well as the inherited model. Still, too often “mission-shaped initiatives end up becoming church-shaped because church-shaped is all we know how to do” (*John Hull, U. of Birmingham, UK*). Fresh Expressions must always ask, “Are we being missional?” This document is intended to provide our diocese and Fresh Expression and church planting practitioners guidance along that journey.

### BENCHMARKS VS WAYMARKS?

Most Fresh Expressions of church are planted from, and contained within, the parish of an existing church. Relational and structural accountability is expected to be spelled out and held between the pioneers, incumbent and / or Bishop (Dalpra). Since 2009 the Fresh Expressions Working Group, in consultation with those making proposals, has set appropriate missional benchmarks for “large ticket” (over \$50k) Fresh Expression projects funded by the diocese. However, the term “benchmark” may be misleading as its primary current usage is within the corporate world where market share and fiscal bottom lines are the main benchmarks of success. Those are not what the church is ultimately about.

Fresh Expressions follow a disciplined approach called the Formative Journey: “formative” for the unique form a particular work will take; “journey” for the process of *experimental* discovery with its course corrections. A “waymark” is a marker along a path, such as the large crosses at intersections in rural Quebec so you can find your way. In current usage, waymarking identifies points of interest for GPS users. “Participation in waymarking leads some to become more knowledgeable of their own areas and to become interested in local history” (*Wikipedia*). It is that urgency to be knowledgeable of and interested in what God is up to on our journey that commends the language of waymarks to us.

A Missional Waymark is a point along a journey that can still give our institution adequate tools to gauge accountability for funding in both purely qualitative markers and also with quantifiable aspects. The Formative Journey all Fresh Expressions are encouraged to follow is,

**Listening**

**Starting Relationships**

**Developing Spiritual Community**

**Building Christian Community and Worship** (that is, *ecclesiat* becoming “church”)

**Creating Missional Disciples**

Note: this order is not rigid and may not apply in a linear way in every Fresh Expression. For example, listening, in one form or another, happens at all stages. In some efforts a Christian community may need to gather first to listen and discern or may need to start relationships together rather than a single planter. No one list will be perfect for every Fresh Expression, and no Fresh Expression is perfect. Space must be provided for them to stumble, to learn and to grow.

Still, the sample purposes below for each stage of the Formative Journey may help chart progress. The inspiration for the following format – as well as many of the purposes provided and also many of the questions - came from “*Five Phases in Building Fresh Expressions*” by Steve Hollinghurst, of The Sheffield Centre, Church Army, UK. Other of his materials have also been called upon. Claire Dalpra, also of The Sheffield Centre, connected us to most of the material in the sources consulted list. Their input and that of others credited at the end was crucial in framing these Missional Waymarks.

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### PHASE 1 - LISTENING - start to 6 – 9 months (or longer by negotiation)

#### *Purposes:*

- Finding where the people you want to reach actually are and seeking to meet them
- Building relationships over a length of time
- Allowing relationships to develop naturally
- Choosing a few places or networks to concentrate on
- Hanging around listening and discovering
- Adopting where possible the lifestyle of those you are building relationships with
- Ensuring that those who are backing you understand what you are doing.
- Having someone to laugh and cry with, a spiritual director, coach, prayer support, training, etc.

### **PHASE 1 - WAYMARKING PROGRESS IN LISTENING**

#### QUALITATIVE

**What do you sense God is up** to in you and among the people you seek to reach?

What are you hearing among them? Among the non-churched?

What identifiable trends are there among them?

#### QUANTIFIABLE

How many meaningful conversations have you had? Describe some significant ones.

Where do they hang out? Be specific. How do they receive your hanging out with them?

Describe some varieties of non-churched people in your area. Be as specific as possible.

How have you researched the region you are interested in? What does that research tell you?

Who have you interviewed? Summarize what you have heard.

Who of those who are backing you understand what you are doing? How well?

Who has joined your team? Who is from the local area?

*[Note: As a team, resist launching public projects or worship before you know the people.*

*Worship set up prematurely often attracts the churched rather than the non-churched.]*

### PHASE 2 - STARTING RELATIONSHIPS 6 months – 1 year

#### *Purposes:*

- Spending time with people on their territory
- Continuing to listen and beginning to learn the language and the culture
- Looking for “what God is up to” in people’s lives
- Seeking an answer to “What good news does Jesus have for *these* people?”
- Letting others in the area know why you are there
- Keeping a report / journal of what is happening
- Creating partnerships with Christians and non-Christians who share your vision
- If one has not already developed, the support / ministry team should be forming.
- Possibly joining with local partners in community and mission who do similar or related work.
- Communicating what you are doing to the wider church

### **PHASE 2 - WAYMARKING PROGRESS IN STARTING RELATIONSHIPS**

#### QUALITATIVE

**What do you sense God is up** to among you and these people?

Describe some of the significant relationships that have been formed.

#### QUANTIFIABLE

How many people are you in on-going conversations with?

What needs have you identified among them? How might these people be served?

What efforts have been made to serve them and how have you been received?

What other insights or significant experiences have you put in your report / journal?

Who among those people have you begun to form community with?

Who has become part of the team (both churched and non-churched)?

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Name five ways people react when you talk about Jesus, the gospel, Christian faith, etc.

Anticipating developing spiritual community,

what are the financial resources of those you are called to serve?

what sized initiative can they sustain and for how long?

what other resources might be available from the wider Body of Christ and for how long?

### **PHASE 3- DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY 9 months -3 years**

#### *Purposes*

- Sharing spiritual experiences and journeys with those open to that as an area where all learn
  - Seeking to disciple people on their faith journey remembering you are also a disciple
  - Modelling spirituality in personal life and exploring appropriate spiritual events / places
- Christian community develops with the non-churched typically in one or more context:
1. Places the non-churched gather where those on mission can listen / build relationships
  2. Meeting points, not Christian, per se, where relationships deepen & issues are explored
  3. Establishing specifically Christian groups for worship and discipleship (Hollinghurst)
- Ensuring that spaces are found where relationships deepen and issues are explored

### **PHASE 3 - WAYMARKING PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY**

#### QUALITATIVE

**What do you sense God is up to** among you and these people?

What does becoming a disciple of Jesus look like for these non-churched people?

What are the most important aspects of that discipleship?

Describe their spiritual longings. What are their dreams? Paint a picture.

What signs do you see that these people can share their spiritual views freely?

Which aspects of institutional church life are most problematic for them? most attractive?

What have been the biggest obstacles to communicating the gospel effectively?

#### QUANTIFIABLE

List group attendance including

first timers,

those who come back for more

and regulars

Tell in detail about any groups that have formed where spiritual conversations are happening.

What exciting opportunities / experiences have you had in communicating good news?

### **PHASE 4 - BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND WORSHIP 3-5 years**

#### *Purposes*

- Creating space / places for Christian community to develop among those coming to faith
- Ensuring the other contexts for developing relationships remain strong
- Exploring discipleship and public worship with new Christians to form church with you.
- Building Christian community / worship **with** not just **for** those have come to faith
- Having recognized leadership rise among those who are being reached
- Seeking a healthy **fresh** expression of church, not just reproducing another's model
- Discerning fruitfulness in the four signs of church: one, holy, catholic and apostolic or, if you prefer, "In with each other" "Up with God" "Of the historic church" and "Out in mission"
- Maturing your growing community by developing in the four "selves":

### **PHASE 4- WAYMARKING PROGRESS IN BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

#### QUALITATIVE

**What do you sense God is up to** in your community and among the people near you?

What is your community's name?

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### QUANTIFIABLE

List your continuing priorities for community engagement.

For what proportion of those involved is this their main expression of church?

What does church / worship look like for these people?

What specific roles have you identified in how your community works?

Who is taking up leadership?

Who may be emerging as potential wardens?

What signs are there of this becoming one, holy, catholic, and apostolic (“In” “Up” “Of” “Out”?)

How are you becoming

self-governing? Be specific about how this is taking shape. Are you identifying future wardens and other members of a canonically approved Vestry ?

self-reproducing? self-theologizing? self-financing?

How is this community doing in becoming self-sustaining?

When do you project it will be able to stand on its own without diocesan grants?

When will it be able to carry its own diocesan assessment?

Track your cumulative community impact

(lives God has touched), new people vs. the launch team

Team percentages

who has joined recently?

who is coming back to talk?

who is just coming to events?

who is coming to worship,

who is involved in neighbourhood justice projects, etc.?

Show the annual sum of all

small groups, missional cells, and community attendance

overall attendance at the key elements of your efforts

### **PHASE 5- CREATING MISSIONAL DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES** -ongoing

#### *Purposes*

- Keeping new followers of Jesus in their culture and in mission in their own community
- Following Jesus’ pattern who sent the twelve and the seventy two, thus enabling new mission
- Continuing to be creative and flexible, focusing on relationships and planning ahead
- While honouring those who have been at this a while (the “story tellers”) also developing new leaders, inducting them into the culture and letting them challenge and change the community’s ministry
- Planning for this well in advance
- Seeing that new leaders and this emerging Christian community are developing in each of the four “selves” and are being recognised by and have good relationships with the wider church

### **PHASE 5 - PROGRESS IN CREATING MISSIONAL DISCIPLES - BECOMING CHURCH**

#### QUALITATIVE

What do you sense God is up to now?

What signs do you see of people maturing as followers of Jesus?

What spiritual practices have you taught? Which have they developed well in?

What do they find rewarding about being disciples? What do they find challenging?

How will this Fresh Expression be viable during the length of its life-span?

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### QUANTIFIABLE

Who are they themselves making into disciples? What processes to do that do they find most helpful?

### WAYMARKING CREATING MISSIONAL DISCIPLES PROGRESS

The following is shortened and adapted from “12 Empirical Indicators of a Missional Church” from the Transforming Congregations Toward Mission project of the Gospel and Our Culture Network (p. 31-32), Sept.1998; thanks to the Rev. Canon Dr. Andrew Sheldon for directing us to this.

- 1. Missional church proclaims the Gospel.** *How is the story of God's salvation faithfully repeated in a multitude of ways in your Fresh Expression of Church?*
- 2. Missional church is community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus.** *How do people describe their discipleship?*
- 3. Missional church holds the Bible as normative.** *How are the people in your church reading the Bible together to learn what they can learn nowhere else?*
- 4. Missional church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.** *How is your church seeking to conform to the reign of God instead of the multitude of cultures in which it finds itself?*
- 5. Missional church seeks to discern God's vocation for it and all its members.** *How is mission your top priority? How are they seeking to be and do what God is calling for?*
- 6. Missional community is indicated by how Christians behave toward one another.** *What acts of self-sacrifice for one another are found in your church and locale that characterize the generosity of the community?*
- 7. Missional community practices reconciliation.** *How is the church moving toward a heterogeneous community in its racial, ethnic, age, gender and socio-economic make-up?*
- 8. Missional community holds itself accountable to one another in love.** *What time do your members spend with one another watching over one another in love?*
- 9. Missional church practices hospitality.** *How are strangers welcomed into your midst?*
- 10. Worship is the central act by which the Missional community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future.** *What meaningful engagements in communal worship reflect and address the culture of those who worship?*
- 11. Missional community has a vital public witness.** *What observable signs are there in the transformation of people's lives, in society, and in human relationships?*
- 12. Missional community knows it is an incomplete expression of the reign of God.** *How do you see your church growing toward more faithfully lived life in the reign of God?*

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### *Notes on Sources and People Consulted (In addition to those sources noted above)*

The inspiration and outline for this format and also quite a lot of the text itself came from “*Five Phases in Building Fresh Expressions*” by **Steve Hollinghurst**, The Sheffield Centre, Church Army, UK. Many thanks to Steve for your help! Thanks also go to **Claire Dalpra** of The Sheffield Centre, Church Army, UK for connecting us to most of this material listed below.

**The Missional Network** <http://www.roxburghmissionalnet.com/> is the source of many insights included here as well as several specific questions, especially, “What is God up to?”, “What are their names?” and “Describe the insides of their homes, apartments, etc.”

We also wish to thank the staff and clergy of the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto for their input and support as well as Toronto Fresh Expression practitioners Ryan Sim and Rob Crosby-Shearer.

Jenny Andison and Duke Vipperman  
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*Other Sources of Questions and / or Insights:*

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