



Establishing Mission Communities

A revised approach

The Strategy Steering Group has made some important adjustments to the 'archways' document that describes the pathway to establishing a mission community. These changes come about as a result of feedback and are designed to focus more attention on the key missional purpose of 'God for All' rather than just the structural aspect (important though that may be). The changes also make clear that 'mission' mustn't wait until some future point of commissioning but should be happening **now**, as part of the ordinary life of all churches.

Once the shape of mission communities in a mission area has become clear and has been agreed and once some initial planning has taken place we want to see those mission communities begin to work in earnest in pursuit of 'God for All'. The pathway becomes:

explore → launch → transition → commission

In a sense **launch** becomes the real start of the process; **transition** is not about 'business as usual' but about working together as a mission community to effect transformational change. This reflects some significant feedback we have had saying "we want to be getting on working together to further God's mission, not spending our time arguing about structures". It also reflects the problem that is experienced when attempting to assess the Mission Action Plan(s) for a mission community looking for clear indications of new activities designed to being about transformational change. In practice we feel that we need to give a clear indication to a mission community that they should leave the 'starting gate' running so that what is being assessed is what they are already doing rather than what they are thinking of doing. It also makes clear that not all the criteria associated with commissioning need to be satisfied in order to start operating as an effective mission community.

The 'launch event' is seen as significant. The 'transition phase' will be, in part, a learning process; a time of building relationships and working together, a time when planning continues, but in the light of experience. At the time of 'launch' there is no requirement to decide on, let alone appoint, the eventual mission community leader – indeed given the additional workload associated with getting the mission community up and running it may be appropriate to have a measure of shared leadership.