

Chapter Title: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission: A British Perspective
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Book Title: Mission in Secularised Contexts of Europe
Book Subtitle: Contemporary Narratives and Experiences
Book Editor(s): Marina Ngursangzeli Behera, Michael Biehl, Knud Jørgensen
Published by: 1517 Media, Fortress Press. (2018)
Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1ddcmgz.12>

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Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission: A British Perspective

Cathy Ross

This volume is about mission in secularised contexts in Europe. One common mark of all European countries is that they are experiencing a drop in religious belonging but religion is not disappearing. In England, the Anglican Church is the established church and attendance is declining. The Church of England Research and Statistics Department's "Statistics for Mission 2016" baldly states: "Over recent decades, attendance at Church of England church services has gradually fallen. These trends continued in 2016. Most key measures of attendance fell by between 10% and 15% between 2006 and 2016."¹

Yet religion is not disappearing, nor is Christian faith. The Anglican Church has therefore been exploring how to reach out in such a setting and to proclaim the Good News. In this paper I will offer some reflection on how the Five Marks of Mission have influenced such approaches in the Church of England and on the learnings from some practitioners.

A Brief History

The Five Marks of Mission have been widely used in the Anglican Communion over the past 30 years and have a history of evolution, reception, and change.² I will not detail all the history here but just give a brief overview, which is pertinent to the discussion of how the Five Marks of Mission have been influential in the development of missional thinking in the Church of England.

The Five Marks of Mission in the Anglican Communion and the publication of *Mission-Shaped Church*³ in England in 2004 have been significant in putting

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2016statisticsformission.pdf> accessed 28 January 2018

² For further reading on the history of The Five Marks of Mission, see Jesse Zink, "Five Marks of Mission: History, Theology, Critique", *Journal of Anglican Studies*, Volume 15, Issue 2, November 2017, pp. 144-166; Cathy Ross, "An Exposition and Critique of the Five Marks of Mission in Ecclesiology in Mission Perspective/Ekklesiologie in missionarischer Perspektive", *Contributions to the Seventh Theological conference within the framework of the Meissen Process of the Church of England and the Evangelical church in German* (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt: Leipzig, 2012), 146-170.

³ *Mission-shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of church in a changing context*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004)

mission at the forefront of Anglican life and practice in the past 30 years. Back in the 1980s it seemed that the Church of England's engagement in mission was almost moribund. A gradual realisation was beginning to emerge that the church needed to move from a focus on a pastoral model to a more clearly defined focus on mission and its practice. Various Anglican reports claimed that the dominant model within the Church of England was a pastoral model and that there needed to be an urgent move from a pastoral approach to giving mission its proper place.

In 1984 the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-6) met in Nigeria and proposed four "dimensions" of mission:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society⁴

By 1988 the Lambeth Conference embraced these four dimensions as the mission of the church. In 1990 the ACC-8 suggested adding a fifth "affirmation". The report states:

We now feel that our understanding of the ecological crisis, and indeed of the threats to the unity of all creation, mean that we have to add a fifth affirmation:

(e) To strive to *safeguard the integrity of creation* and sustain and renew the life of the earth.⁵

Eventually these "affirmations" were adopted by the Church of England's General Synod in 1996 and at the Lambeth Conference of 1998 they were identified and endorsed as The Five Marks of Mission in our Communion. In my opinion, the Five Marks are not a perfect or complete definition of mission. "They do not say everything we might want to say about mission in today's world. ... However, they are also rich with potential and they do form a good working basis for a holistic approach to mission."⁶ Paul Avis has noted that worship is missing – "there is no mention of worship offered to God and particularly of the Eucharist as the centre and summit of worship."⁷

However, even in 1996 the Five Marks were beginning to be reviewed and by 1999, one year after their official endorsement by Lambeth, the report of MISSIO called for them to be revisited. This report claimed that the first mark of mission, evangelism or proclamation, encapsulates what mission is about.

⁴ ACC 1984. Anglican Consultative Council Standing Commission on World Mission, *Giving Mission its Proper Place – Report of the Mission Issues and Strategy Advisory Group*.

⁵ ACC 1990. *Mission in a Broken World, Report of ACC-8 Wales 1990*. (London: Anglican Communion Office), 101.

⁶ Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds.) *Mission in the 21st Century, Exploring the Five Marks of Global Missio* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008), xiv.

⁷ Paul Avis, *A Ministry shaped by Mission*. London (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 16.

This is certainly an ongoing and live discussion within the Church of England with the current Archbishop of Canterbury trying to redeem the 'e' word. Evangelism and witness are two of the Archbishop's current priorities and he wishes to renew and restore confidence in the concept and practice of evangelism. He defines evangelism as: "showing others – through our words, actions, attitudes and interactions – how God has offered every one of us a new start."⁸

The Five Marks of Mission have continued to be revised, with the addition of an emphasis on reconciliation added in 2012 at the request of the churches in Burundi and Canada. So, the current iteration is:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth⁹

Janice Price, World Mission Policy Adviser for the Church of England, affirms that they have been used in many dioceses, deaneries and parishes as well as around the Communion. "They have given churches a practical language and image of mission that can be applied locally as well as globally."¹⁰ This is important as it has helped to break down the division between mission at home and abroad. It has helped the Anglican churches to acknowledge that mission is from anywhere to anywhere. It has also helped the churches to understand the holistic nature of mission. Price confirms that they "have been instrumental in shaping the mission imagination of the Church of England".¹¹

Importantly they have also been influential for young people. Price writes, "The Five Marks are being used to shape perceptions of what mission means for new generations of younger Christians who are exploring and finding their vocation in taking part in God's mission."¹² Indeed, a recent publication on the Five Marks of Mission (by Regnum) is by a group of young Anglicans who wrote their reflections on mission around this framework. The young writers agreed that the Five Marks were indeed a helpful framework and not a straitjacket. In the preface to this volume, then Archbishop Rowan Williams reflects on the practice of mission as articulated by these young Anglicans:

⁸ <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/pages/evangelism.html>, accessed 24 January 2018.

⁹ <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/marks-of-mission.aspx>, accessed 24 January 2018.

¹⁰ Janice Price, *World-Shaped Mission, Exploring new frameworks for the Church of England in world mission*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2012), 10.

¹¹ Price, *World-Shaped Mission*, 11

¹² Price, *World-Shaped Mission*, 11

All the writers here are deeply aware that what they are fundamentally talking about is the work of *God*. They are not discussing programmes that we may or may not want to take up but exploring the nature of the great current of diving transforming love in which we are swept up and which sustains us when we fail or stumble.¹³

The Five Marks of Mission appear on the Anglican Communion website as bullet points rather than numbered, as if to move away from any prioritisation and to focus on its holistic approach to mission. However, they are preceded by two intriguing statements on the Anglican Communion website, which seem to mirror a dilemma about the exact nature of the relationship between mission and evangelism:

The Five Marks of Mission are an important statement on mission which expresses the Anglican Communion's common commitment to, and understanding of, God's holistic/integral mission.

The first mark of mission, identified at ACC-6 (the sixth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in 1984) with personal evangelism, is really a summary of what all mission is about, because it is based on Jesus' own summary of his mission (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:18, Luke 7:22; cf. John 3:14-17). Instead of being just one (albeit the first) of five distinct activities, this should be the key statement about everything we do in mission.¹⁴

We endorse and are committed to holistic mission but the first mark is a summary of what all mission is about. These two statements express the tension and ambiguity found in discussions on mission in the Church of England – in parishes, mission agencies, theological colleges.

Let us now consider the more recent influence of The Five Marks of Mission on one of the most significant reports and subsequent movements in the Church of England today.

Mission-Shaped Church

The *Mission-Shaped Church* report (MSC) has been very influential in the Church of England and has sold more than 27,000 copies – an extraordinary number for a church report. The Five Marks of Mission formed an important part of the reflection behind this report. In its introduction the report outlines its two key themes: “that the Church is the fruit of God's mission, and that as such it exists to serve and to participate in the ongoing mission of God”.¹⁵

¹³ Cathy Ross (ed.), *Life-Widening Mission, Global Anglican Perspectives*. (Oxford: Regnum, 2012), ix.

¹⁴ <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/marks-of-mission.aspx>, accessed 24 January 2018.

¹⁵ Price, *Mission-Shaped Church*, xii.

This report echoed The Five Marks of Mission by developing five values for a missionary church. These were published in the *MSC* and claim that a missionary church is:

- Focused on the God the Trinity and that worship lies at the heart of a missionary church.

This is an interesting value as worship is not one of the Five Marks of Mission.

- Incarnational and seeks to be shaped by the culture in which it is located.
- Transformational and exists for the transformation of the community it serves.

Recent missiological thinking, picking up the theme of hospitality, might wish for more reciprocity and mutuality here. It might be challenged to wonder who is the host and who is the guest and how the church itself might be transformed by being in a particular community.

- Disciple-making through calling people to faith in Christ and developing a Christian lifestyle in that context.
- Relational by forming a welcoming and hospitable community of faith.¹⁶

MSC has provoked robust critique. Perhaps one of the most thoughtful came from Professor John Hull. One of his most trenchant critiques is around the theology of *missio Dei*. He reminds us that mission is indeed God's mission and that "[T]he effect of this revolutionary thinking was to readjust the relationship between church and mission".¹⁷ He claims that "*Mission-shaped Church* continues to view mission through the lens of the church instead of viewing the church through the lens of mission."¹⁸ Another caustic critique is found in *For the Parish* by Davison and Milbank. They claim that Fresh Expressions of Church has a consumerist approach to culture, a weak ecclesiology and a lack of respect for Anglican tradition.¹⁹

Notwithstanding these critiques, this report has been enormously influential in the practice of mission in England and beyond. One of its offspring has been the "Fresh Expressions of Church" movement, a term first used in the *MSC*. This is an ecumenical movement and refers to the following: "Fresh Expressions are new forms of church that emerge within contemporary culture and engage primarily with those who don't go to church." According to the website, there are now more than 3,000 Fresh Expressions active around the world. There are many different types of Fresh Expression: alternative worship, café church, cell church, community development plant, messy church,

¹⁶ Price, *Mission-Shaped Church*, 81-2

¹⁷ John Hull, *Mission-Shaped Church A Theological Response*. (London: SCM, 2006), 30.

¹⁸ Hull, *Mission-Shaped Church*, 31.

¹⁹ Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank, *For the Parish: A Critique of Fresh Expressions*. (London: SCM, 2010).

midweek church, network church, new monastic community, missional community, school-based church, traditional church plant – to name a few.²⁰

Here are four key features that distinguish and unite Fresh Expressions (FX) quoted from their website:

- **A Fresh Expression is fresh!** New, original, pioneering, innovative, different... you get the idea. A FX is not a re-brand or update to an existing model – it is a NEW thing that has developed because of a particular culture or context. They can be a network or a gathering, and they often don't look like 'church'.
- **A Fresh Expression has its own identity.** It isn't a tag-on or optional extra for people already involved in church, nor is it a bridge for those outside the church into joining 'the real thing'. Fresh Expressions *are* the real thing for the people they engage with.
- **A Fresh Expression is mainly for people who don't 'go to church'.** 'Un-churched' (those who've never been) or 'de-churched' (those who left for whatever reason) – FXs tend to grow to serve and make a space for these folks.
- **A Fresh Expression journeys with people.** They make discipleship a priority – valuing people's different faith journeys and supporting them as they wonder, explore and encounter.²¹

Recent research by Church Army researchers across 20 dioceses in England showed 1,109 FX with 50,000 members. It also showed that they are small with their average size being 50. Three quarters began in the past ten years. Their evidence shows that attendees are 21% non-churched and 20% de-churched. One third of leaders are lay and FX are as likely to be led by women as by men. FX are proportionally more present on needy estates than the overall distribution of parishes. 28% continue to grow numerically and 55% maintain the growth gained. They claim:

Evidence suggests that for every person sent out to be part of beginning a fresh expression of church, now there are more than two and a half more people. Nothing else as a whole, in the Church of England, has this level of missional impact and the adding of further ecclesial communities, thereby fuelling ecclesial imagination.²²

This is exciting and challenging. The movement is young – not even 15 years old yet – but has grown, changed and become more reflexive during its young life. The FX movement picks up the language and concepts of mission

²⁰ See "Encountering the Day of Small Things" for a fuller list.
<https://churcharmy.org/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=187469>.

²¹ <https://freshexpressions.org.uk/about/what-is-a-fresh-expression/> accessed 28 January 2018.

²² For the full report and analysis, see https://churcharmy.org/Groups/286719/Church_Army/web/What_we_do/Research_Unit/Current_research/The_Day_of.aspx, accessed 24 January 2018.

and makes it part of ordinary vocabulary and practice. An introductory book on FX and Pioneer Ministry, *Fresh!*, explains: “Fresh Expressions are intentionally missional, outward-looking Christian communities called into being to make the love of God known in an increasingly secular society. ... They have a deep sense of being sent, of apostolicity.”²³

Fresh! also offers three theological reasons why FX and pioneer ministry are central to our Christian faith: it roots us in the apostolic ministry of the New Testament, the Christian tradition is about being fresh and God is a God who pioneers fresh expressions of church. An apostolic theology requires us to bear witness to Christ and to establish communities of believers. The authors assert that the three persons of the Trinity are pioneers and that they bring into being that which is fresh, not stale. “Freshness is the hallmark of what they do. The interplay of the three persons of the Trinity is for the purpose of mission.”²⁴ So the challenge is to be innovative and creative as we witness to Christ in our various contexts.

Pioneer Ministry is part of the FX landscape. The Church of England understands a Pioneer as: “Pioneers are people called by God who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit’s initiatives with those outside the church; gathering others around them as they seek to establish new contextual Christian community.”²⁵ Another definition offered by a pioneer herself is “A pioneer is someone who sees future possibilities and works to bring them to reality.”²⁶ Pioneer ministry is also growing and having an impact in the Church of England. The numbers of pioneers are gradually increasing, and there are more conferences, publications on pioneering and resources being put into it. As I write this the lead story on the FX website is about Tim Watson, “A Week in the life of a Pioneer”, outlining a variety of involvements in the local community from Trash café to worship services in the local school to Sunday church in a local café.²⁷ Tim is a pioneer minister on the south coast of England and he explicitly refers to The Five Marks of Mission in his approach to ministry. He affirms that they offer a holistic approach to mission and they offer a wider perspective on how to go about getting involved in a community. It means that he can be creative and innovative in how to engage in mission in this context and the Five Marks of Mission allow for witness in many manifestations. Tim writes:

In the process of deep listening to the community it has been important to try to listen to the extended community, not just church congregations or those with

²³ David Goodhew, Andrew Roberts and Michael Volland, *Fresh! An Introduction to Fresh Expressions of Church and Pioneer Ministry*. (London: SCM, 2012), 76.

²⁴ Goodhew et al, *Fresh!*, 34-35.

²⁵ <https://www.cofepioneer.org/pioneermeaning/>, accessed 24 January 2018.

²⁶ Beth Keith, in Jonny Baker and Cathy Ross (eds.), *The Pioneer Gift, Explorations in Mission* (London: SCM, 2014), 1.

²⁷ <https://freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/>, accessed 31 January 2018.

associations with the church, but those in the wider community. Being attentive to listen for forgotten or unheard voices, listening to local statistics, but also listening and valuing local stories and anecdotes. ... there is a concern about social isolation and loneliness. With that in mind we sought to rent an ex-tattoo shop for a drop-in social space. Our offer was not accepted and so we await further properties coming up for rent.²⁸

FX freely acknowledges their obligation to the Five Marks of Mission as a way of understanding mission.²⁹ The former Bishop of Gloucester acknowledged the debt the existing church owes to this movement as he has seen “existing churches being reshaped for mission”.³⁰ This holistic understanding and approach to mission is evident in FX. Indeed, the authors claim, “One of the gifts of fresh expressions to the wider Church may be the discovery of fresh ways in which this holistic understanding of mission can be realised in practice.”³¹

Missional communities and emerging church are also an important part of this landscape. Michael Moynagh writes about new expressions of church and describes “four tributaries” that have emerged as a response to the new situation of post-Christendom in the global North. These are: church planting, emerging church, fresh expressions of church and missional communities.³² He claims that these all coalesce to create new contextual forms of church that are “missional, contextual, formational and ecclesial”.³³ Each of these streams claims that it is trying to reach people who are mainly outside the church, to focus on discipleship, and to embed a contextually appropriate faith community among those with whom they live and serve. There has been an increasing appreciation, as Steve Bevans has reminded us that “the church does not have a mission, but the mission has a church”.³⁴ This means that the church comes to be the church as it engages in mission; that mission is constitutive of the church itself. This kind of thinking that has pointed to the importance of context, the recapturing of the *missio Dei* and that the church is missionary by its very nature, a renewed focus on a holistic approach to mission, and the influence of The Five Marks of Mission have all been vital for the recent understanding and practice of mission in Anglican churches.

²⁸ Tim Watson, “Listening and the Five Marks: the Beginning of Mission with a Local Community”, lecture given at “Bearing Witness”, A conference at Ripon College Cuddesdon, 30 September 2017. Quoted with permission.

²⁹ Goodhew et al, *Fresh!*, 79.

³⁰ Goodhew et al, *Fresh!*, 103.

³¹ Goodhew et al, *Fresh!*, 81.

³² Michael Moynagh, *Church for Every Context, An Introduction to Theology and Practice*. (London: SCM, 2012), x-xii.

³³ Moynagh, *Church for Every Context*, xiv.

³⁴ Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue, Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2011), 15.

Beautiful Witness

I would now like to give some examples that highlight not only the tension but also the close relationship between evangelism and mission. In 2016 I was involved in a research project entitled “Beautiful Witness: Practical Theologies of Evangelism in the Church of England” funded by Durham University and the Evangelism Task Group of The Archbishops’ Council. This project interviewed eight practitioners around the country about their understanding and practice of evangelism.³⁵ We discovered that evangelism is a tricky word – some like it and some do not. Some are happy to see evangelism as the only aspect of mission, some see mission as a wider concept. We found a range of perspectives from our practitioners in this small research project and that the borders between evangelism and mission are porous, blurry and messy – as you might expect. In what follows I will summarise a few common themes. Although these themes do not map directly onto The Five Marks of Mission, I believe it is because of the appropriation of the Five Marks that these themes have emerged.

1. Listening to the local context

Clearly, context is vital. All the practitioners, who were in a variety of contexts from new church plants in poor or more middle-class contexts, prison ministry, to more recognisably Anglican parish ministry, commented on the importance of listening to and knowing their context. All of them know their contexts well, they live there – an incarnational approach – and they listen to and observe what is going on in their contexts. They are attentive and observant. They had researched their contexts. They know about levels of unemployment or affluence, housing statistics, demographics, the history of the place, industries and businesses coming and going, the people of influence as well as the underbelly and the unseen and powerless in their places and spaces. Listening, learning and observation – being attentive to the context is vital for all of them.

2. Creativity and imagination

This was a common theme among all the practitioners. The couple in Hull spoke of the importance of love, imagination and courage. Picking up on the theme of the Holy Spirit as a pioneer, they were challenged to act in ways that did not stifle the Holy Spirit and to find freedom in that. They described the need to be able to read the Bible, engage in worship that expressed the needs and desires of that community and not to impose middle-class values on it.

Another practitioner spoke about doing mission with “a twinkle in our eye” – so that there is a sparkle or a little joke – and that says something about God.

³⁵ This was also the theme of an edition of ANVIL journal in 2017 in which you can see interviews with the practitioners and read further articles on the theme. See <https://churchmissionsociety.org/resources/beautiful-witness-anvil-vol-33-issue-2>, accessed 24 January 2018.

One of her aims is to be out in the public square, to ensure that Jesus is represented in the public space – whether it is the raft race, the carnival, the flower show. She described how for three years they had made and given away non-alcoholic cocktails at the annual flower show. Each year they gave their cocktails different names. One year they had names such as life in all its fullness, or forgiveness. So, they had people come to their stall in the flower show and ask “can I have some forgiveness please?” People saw the little joke, but it was also meaningful. The forgiveness cocktail had the flavour of something fresh and clean and if they wanted to they could have a conversation about what it means to be forgiven. This represented who God is – simple, gentle, invitational. She explained that it is not about pressurising or pestering people into buying something or signing up to something but rather it is metaphorically enacting something that is true about God and giving them a flavour of Jesus. This is counter to the consumerist culture. Here the church is giving away with no expectation of return and is modelling a generous God.

Another couple introduced the concept of “Edge Sunday” to their church. Three times every year, they do not meet to worship but rather they organise themselves into groups to go out and bless the city. They might offer a pop-up BBQ or café, clean the streets or offer to pray with people. They see this as a way of serving others and reminding themselves that the church is not about us but must have a missional impetus to go. They believe in taking risks, having a go and cultivating a culture of expectancy.

All of these are good examples of exercising our gifts of creativity and imagination.³⁶

3. *God is already at work in people's lives*

This was a concept that all the practitioners affirmed. Back in 2003, then Archbishop Rowan Williams was saying, “Mission, it’s been said, is finding out what God is doing and joining in.”³⁷ We have heard this said so often now that it has almost become a cliché. However, these practitioners were able to affirm this and see this principle at work. One of the practitioners discovered this among a group of young mums who wanted to meet to discuss spiritual things. Another discovered it among mums at the school gate who were willing to meet on a Friday morning in the school to bring their own questions and issues about life. Another remarked that gradually it became obvious that God is at work here and that it may not be the hard earth that they were expecting. Gradually they began to see faith in unexpected places as the Holy Spirit

³⁶ Will Gompertz, BBC Arts Editor, claims in *Think Like an Artist... and lead a more creative, productive life* (London: Penguin, 2015) that we all have creative talent and he wants to harness it to help us solve some of the major world issues. Replace in his argument artist with witness or evangelist and note how we could apply them in our mission.

³⁷ <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1826/archbishops-presidential-address-general-synod-york-july-2003>. Accessed 21 June 2018.

opened their eyes to faith that was growing in unexpected ways. They were challenged at the resourcefulness of people in this particular context and how resilient people are when faced with adversity. Gradually as they began to listen and learn, and to get to know the place, they began to appreciate the beauty that was there and to see how God was already working in people's lives. As one practitioner put it, "God is in the rubble" and if we keep trying to tidy things up, we risk stopping what God can do.

4. Reciprocity and mutuality

One of the practitioners spoke movingly about allowing people to serve them and making themselves vulnerable. They were all aware of the reality of the power dynamics when engaging in mission and evangelism and were determined, as far as possible, not to allow unequal power dynamics to undermine relationships. They are also aware that it takes time to build relationships and trust. All the practitioners confirmed that it is a long journey of getting to know people, becoming friends, sharing stories, building trust together. One couple commented on the stream of short-term teams who had come into the community to try to do good, which turned the community into a project to be done to. Jean Vanier has commented on this:

Befriending a person with a disability or alcoholism isn't going to provide an instant solution to their difficulties. But this friendship can lead to a mutual transformation by touching the place where God lives in each one of us. We can then begin to work *with* people who are fragile instead of simply *for* them.³⁸

Jesus modelled powerlessness and vulnerability by being a guest in our world, by letting go and being among us in our place and space. This radically changes the power dynamics. So often in mission, the receiving person or culture is seen as needy, vulnerable, in need of help. We have to turn this on its head. We need to be in relationship with them and learn to see the resources and spirituality inherent in that community and context.

What I think these stories illustrate is that for mission to be contextual we need a broad and generous understanding of mission. This is what the Five Marks of Mission offers us – an understanding that allows us to be expansive in our engagement in mission. We do not need to be confined by an evangelism-first perspective, because there are many ways of coming to Christ. Mission has been likened to "a cut diamond of which no single facet can display its beauty and complexity".³⁹ We need many angles and approaches to mission according to the context. I believe that the Five Marks of Mission, although not a perfect summary, does allow for a range of witness that is contextual, creative, holistic and can be appropriated for each and every context.

³⁸ Jean Vanier, *Signs of the Times, Seven Paths of Hope for a Troubled World* (London: DLT, 2013), 119.

³⁹ Quoted in Avis, *A Ministry*, 16.

Conclusion

All the cited examples show how pioneers and individual Christians attempt to reach out and give witness to Christ in a secularised world. I believe that the increased focus on mission, partly brought about by the adoption of The Five Marks of Mission and their influence on movements such as FX and Pioneer Ministry, gives us cause for hope and expectation. The FX movement is not yet 15 years old (officially), so it is young, energetic, able to be flexible and to experiment. Some of its critics charge it with fragility, smallness, little theology and the fact that some communities come and go. In my opinion, fragility, smallness and change are at the heart of the Gospel. There is a vulnerability at the heart of our faith; indeed, the Cross stands as a reminder of that vulnerability. Each manifestation of growth has the fragile status of an ingrafted olive branch that by its very nature can be removed. Much of Jesus' teaching on the growth of the Kingdom is about its veiledness, its unpredictability and the sheer length of time maturity can take. Yes, we can have confidence that the Kingdom grows, but we may need a greater humility when we talk about particular manifestations and whether they are expressions of growth or decline. It is also vital to remember that the effectiveness of Christianity within a culture depends on proper translation, contextualisation and the development of local theologies. At its best, I believe this is exactly what the FX movement is trying to do in a secular context that needs to experience the Gospel afresh.

Along with Pope Francis, I have a dream:

I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, paragraph 27.