

Listening to God in our context

Draw a mind map of your context and share it with a small group

- **What are the patterns and places of physical meeting and communication?**
- **What are the needs and issues?**
- **What are the underlying values of the culture?**

*Mission is finding out what God is doing
and joining in*

Talk to each other about your experience of listening to God in your context

- **Where do you sense that God might already be especially at work in your community?**
- **What values are there in your church or planting team which are challenged as you listen to God in your context? (What makes you uncomfortable?)**
- **What do you think God may be calling you to do?**
- **How can you discern if that call is genuine?**



mission-shaped
and **rural**
growing churches in the countryside

**Notes and questions
for discussion**

Introduction

- **There's not just one rural context. How would you describe the rural area you come from?**
- **How would you describe your church or churches?**

A changing context

Among the changes in rural areas in the western world are

- From farming to commuting/tourism
- Greater mobility
- Weakening sense of village community
- More of a network society
- Consumer culture (buying into ideas and lifestyles)
- Christendom is over – Move from religion of obligation to religion of consumption

- **Can you recognise this “changing context” in our area and the people you know?**
- **Are there identifiable groups of people who are absent from/ under-represented your churches? Eg. social groups, interest groups, male/female, age**

Inculturation

“As the Father sent me so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit” John 20

- **Starting with God**
- **Mission in the Power of the Spirit**
- **Following the pattern of Jesus – Incarnation
Dying to Live**

“The change is to an outward focus: from a “come to us” approach, to a “we will go to you” attitude, embodying the

gospel where people are, rather than embodying it where we are and in ways we prefer.”

MISSION SHAPED CHURCH PG 41

Discuss:

- **Tell any stories you know of where the rural church has engaged in a “we will go to you” approach”**
- **Looking at those who are underrepresented in your churches, how could the gospel help them in their lives?**
- **What might an expression of church look like which met this group of people where they are at? Do any of the types of Fresh Expression listed have any resonance?**
- **What sacrifices might have to be made by Christians who want to build a Christian community with these people?**

The need for a “Mixed Economy Church”

Mixed economy means

- Assessing the old and valuing where and for whom it works
- Investing in, creating and nurturing a diversity of the new

We believe in One – Holy – Catholic – Apostolic Church

- **How well do fresh expressions and traditional forms of church you know fit these classic marks of church?**
- **How can you tell when a church is being born?**