

## Introduction

1. In July 2018 the Bishop's staff heard a presentation on and agreed the paper "Pioneer Ministry in Southwark Diocese" which is enclosed as Appendix B and should be read alongside this paper to give a wider understanding of what this strategy seeks to do.
2. In the 2017 Peer Review of the Diocese we were asked to consider "whether the current approach to clergy deployment remains fit for purpose in the light of the increasingly-mixed economy with fresh expressions, [and] pioneer work". Our Southwark Vision gives us objectives in regard to growth, "new worshipping communities" and a church that better "reflects our diverse community". This strategy paper seeks to see how we might deploy Pioneer Ministers to help support the Diocese in its strategic vision and goals as part of a culture of innovation and risk taking.
3. One of the key reasons to have such a paper is the need to make good decisions when it comes to the task of identifying opportunities, as well as selecting and supporting Pioneer Ministry. One of the issues that is sometimes seen is that Church initiatives make the same mistakes and don't learn enough from the experience of others (both good and bad). A more rigorous process might help with this.
4. "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 ministries"<sup>1</sup>. To reach our strategic goals we need to encourage innovation, imagination and risk taking. Pioneer Ministry can play a key role in this and we need to encourage more pioneering within the Diocese.

## Responsibility

5. The Diocesan Bishop with the Area Bishops, as leaders in mission, are responsible for deciding on deployment within the Diocese and therefore are responsible for the placing of Pioneers within the Diocese.

## Pioneer Spectrum

6. It is important for all parties to be clear as to the area of the Pioneer Spectrum that a Pioneer is being placed in. This can be done by not only referring to the "Pioneer in Southwark Diocese" paper (see Appendix B) but also having a clear vision and hoped for outcomes for the post. Figure 1 gives a visualisation of this Spectrum.

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<sup>1</sup> Dave Male, Director of Evangelism and Discipleship in the Church of England ( & agreed by the Ministry Council)

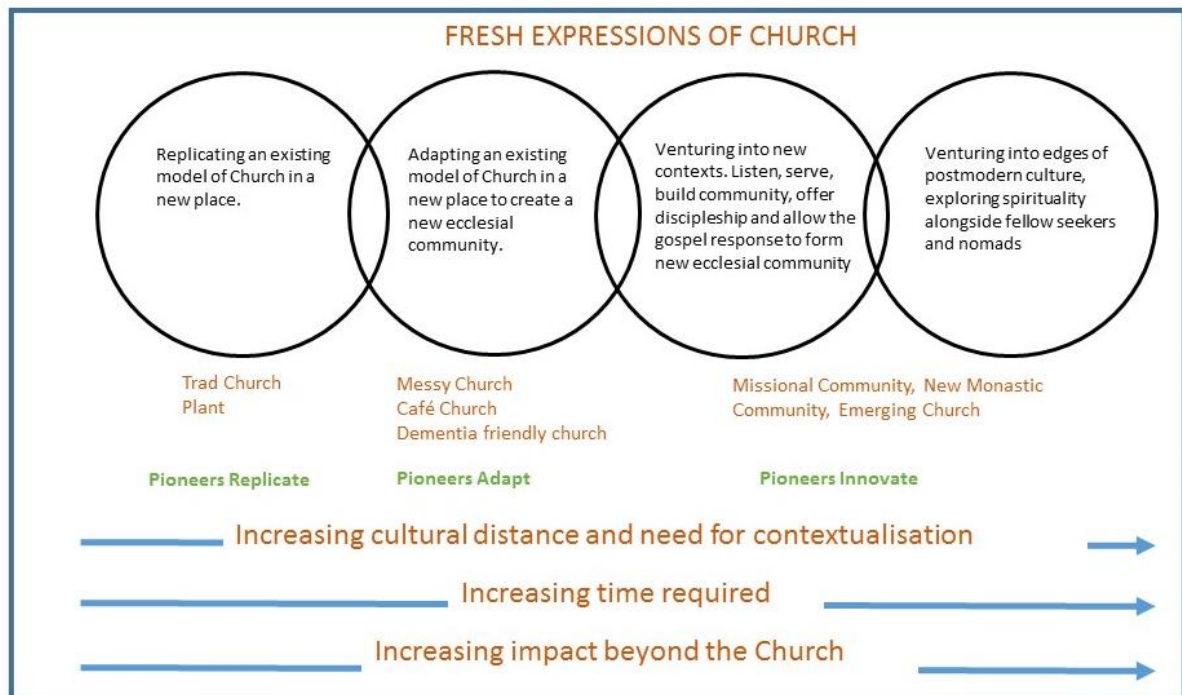


Figure 1 - Pioneer Spectrum

## One hundred Pioneers

7. As a response to the 2019 Peer Review and their positive response we are seeking to help with the culture change in the Diocese by aiming to have one hundred Pioneers by the year 2025. To reach this target the majority will be ordained (though in the long term the majority are expected to be lay pioneers).
8. The first Commissioned Lay Pioneers were commissioned in September 2019 and work is ongoing to ensure that we have a mix of Licensed, Commissioned and Affirmed Lay Pioneers. These routes and the training requirements are expected to be agreed with the new Lay Council in the first half of 2020. We hope that by 2025 that we will have some 40 Lay Pioneers (requiring us to license or commission 8 Lay Pioneers per annum).

There are a number of ways that we seek to achieve the ordained pioneers:

9. Bishop Christopher has agreed with the Vocations department that two stipendiary curacies each year can be pioneering ones. It will be important to try, where possible, to enable them to minister and bring their experiences to bear beyond their curacy within the Diocese. It would help with creating a strong culture of pioneering for all curates to either have participation or gain understanding of Fresh Expressions within their own parish, or to have a placement lasting up to six weeks elsewhere during their curacy.
10. In the right circumstances Strategic Development Funding can give a real opportunity for the appointing of Pioneers to posts that would be otherwise not affordable (e.g. Betsy Blatchley as a Pioneer Minister of the Arts in 9 Elms). As these will normally be time-limited they will need to be used wisely and where they can have a significant impact.
11. The Southwark Vision Development Fund launched by the Diocese gives us opportunities to support key Pioneer posts within the Diocese; these might be in places where we see real missional opportunity and be in the context of a Parish or Deanery where we can use the gifts and skills available to support and grow something new.

12. These first three are centrally funded ways in which we can support Pioneers. The numbers that we can support through these means and the length of time involved has natural limits. The following ideas use existing resources to encourage Pioneering.
13. In those churches that have relatively small congregations we could allocate part of an Incumbent's role to be pioneering. We would be looking at them having an objective in their job description on appointment to grow one or more Fresh Expression of Church (which we call Mixed mode ministry). Normally this is likely to be in the Pioneer Adaptor space – taking a model such as Café Church or a New Monastic Community and adapting it for their context, although on occasion we might find a gifted Incumbent or lay team who could Pioneer into the Innovator space. Working with Trios it may be possible to identify some 30 parishes who might have these mixed-mode ministers.
14. There will be cases where this might not work and some that Trios would deem as not appropriate (e.g. they may need someone to come in for a period of time to sort out particular issues that the parish has or the parish has had an unfortunate few years and just needs a good new Incumbent) but setting the expectations for it can be really helpful and having the Trios lead on this would be vital.
15. A sizeable church is looking to appoint an Assistant Priest for the Parish. We could see whether this role could have a special emphasis on Pioneering for part of the post. If this post is paid for by the Parish then this could be explored as a way of them being able to grow their church and be able to help the wider Church grow. This can tap into the entrepreneurial instincts of larger churches and can help them identify where they might want to focus on the Pioneer Spectrum. A recent example is St Mary's, Battersea where the recent appointment of a Pioneer Associate Vicar has allowed a focus with the eventual aim of creating a Fresh Expression of Church in the local community.
16. We currently have one Resourcing Church and we do expect to have a number of other churches who could play a significant role in regenerating parishes. Each of these church grafts or church plants can be seen as a Pioneer Replicator – replicating a church model that has reached a particular people group/ social group/ age group and have the energy and ability to replicate into another church that has a similar group that is present. We would expect 10-12 of these to occur over a 5 year period.
17. In the case of a Team Ministry there is the potential to have a team wide Pioneer working across the churches of the team to encourage and grow Fresh Expressions of Church. Some of these might well be in the Innovator category and allow for long-term development of new forms of Church.
18. Deanery appointments have been considered but at this stage the Diocese is focussing on developing Deanery leadership and working further. As that grows and develops we would consider Deanery appointments.
19. One key group of people that we should be aware of are SSMs. It is recommended that SSMs who might be interested should, at the least, take a team on a MSM course. In addition it is recommended that they have continued training via the Pioneer Gatherings and other recommended courses and modules.

## Realistic Expectations

20. With any of the options above it will be important to have realistic expectations. One of the first steps in doing this will be to have a clear Role Description to ensure that there are sensible and realistic expectations of the post.

21. It is all too often the case that timeframes are too short for a piece of real pioneering work to be done. The usual 3 year contract is often too short a period of time and needs careful consideration when planning. When looking at growing a fresh expression of Church then one of the really helpful processes to follow is that of figure 2 below. This shows the normal stages that a Pioneer will need to go through to create a vibrant and effective fresh expression of Church.



Figure 2 - fresh expression lifecycle

22. It will be important when a Pioneer is coming into post, and some of Figure 1 has been done, for a period of reflection and potential re-contracting with the Pioneer and lay people as the Pioneer listens to all that has already happened. This potential re-contracting might be something to explore after 6 months – 1 year in post (depending on whether they are a part-time or full-time Pioneer).
23. The hoped for outcomes of any post need to be clearly thought through and to have as detailed a plan as possible put forward with stepping stones along the way. The context for this is likely to be the team/ lay involvement/ experience of both the Pioneer and the people around them. It may well be useful for people who have a vision for pioneering to use something like “The 4 Disciplines of Execution” to think through and pray for what the lead measures might be that help the team to discern their way forward. This should not replace Figure 2 above but instead complement it.

## Accountability

24. There are a number of key areas to think through when wishing to proceed with a Pioneer Post. One of these is the higher level of support, supervision and team building that is required for Pioneers. Appointing a priest to a parish is what we have centuries of experience to call upon. In this case there are long established principles of accountability, elected Church Wardens and PCCs in addition to Bishops and Archdeacons. Pioneering doesn't have the same expectations, structures and experience in place and therefore a Pioneer post needs to be intentionally thought through and planned. We have had some experiences that have gone badly either due to the lack of accountability and the active involvement of lay officers or due to a misunderstanding of the expectations of the role.
25. Even when pioneering is occurring within an established, effective and functioning parish with clear accountability there needs to be realistic understanding of the scope of the Pioneer role and clear communication. For example, frustration can easily arise from both the Pioneer and the Parish if the Parish believes the Pioneer is there to be a Pioneer Adaptor and the Pioneer believes that they are to be a Pioneer Innovator. It is recommended that the

Dean of Fresh Expressions is involved in setting up the posts to ensure that there are clear expectations and that what is being asked is realistic.

26. Where pioneer posts are linked to separate worshipping communities outside of the parish structure then it is strongly recommended that specific agreements around safeguarding, management, finances and accountability are drawn up. These will need to be agreed with the Dean of Fresh Expressions and the Diocesan Secretary and others to ensure that the post is accountable for these areas and has the best opportunity for fruitful ministry. Different models are available for us to use with these depending on size and complexity of what is envisaged. These include the replication of parish structures with elected councils and wardens (and probably using a BMO), another could include the direct management of the pioneer ministers by the Dean of Fresh Expressions with evolving lay ministry and with agreed local/diocesan funding.

## Support/Mentoring

27. It is important to identify a Pioneer Enabler, someone who will support and encourage the Pioneer/ Incumbent Pioneer in post. This might be the incumbent of a Parish or Team, an Area Dean or Archdeacon. It is vital that they make regular time and space to support, encourage and challenge the Pioneer. They will be a key player who can help and support the Pioneer to make sure that they have sufficient time to spend on the pioneering part of any role that they have. It is always easy for existing parish duties to feel more urgent than the long term importance of pioneering.
28. On top of this local enabler it will be important to provide mentors, training and support for Pioneers. The Dean of Fresh Expressions is building this support infrastructure by looking to provide and co-ordinate regular training, pioneer gatherings and mentoring. As we build a team of practitioners this should prove significant in terms of the impact that Pioneers can have across the Diocese. Specifically, it is recommended that those who have a mixed mode pioneering element belong to Learning Communities of others in a similar situation to share ideas, receive support, encouragement and training.
29. For those Parish Priests who are also tasked with the role of encouraging Pioneering then regular training in different models would be required to ensure that they had the skills and vision to undertake a contextual Fresh Expression of Church.

## Lay Involvement

30. One of the key learnings that we have made from our experiences and the experiences of other Dioceses is not to put a Pioneer into post without sufficient lay involvement and an existing lay team. One of the key signs we should be looking for is to see where there is natural lay involvement that a Pioneer could help to bring to fruition rather than starting from scratch. Lay involvement and lay leadership ensures that we can see something flourish for the long haul.
31. Where a Pioneer is going into place there needs to be an active process of engagement with Lay people in the Parish.
32. In consultation with the Archdeacon if there is a vacancy then this should be done as early as possible (and might even pre-date the incumbent leaving) with consultancy and/or something like the Mission Shaped Ministry course for key member of the Parish to help them think through the possibility of Pioneering in their context and what sort of support and expectation might be appropriate.

## APPENDIX A – Table of people involved with supporting Pioneers

The following table is meant as a guideline as to how to support Pioneers in Southwark Diocese.

	<b>Line Manager</b>	<b>Enabler</b>	<b>Pioneer Supervisor</b>	<b>Support Network</b>
<b>Pioneer Curate</b>	Incumbent	Incumbent	Dean of Fresh Expressions	Southern RTP Diocesan Pioneer Gathering
<b>Strategic Development Fund Pioneer</b>	Incumbent	Incumbent	Dean of Fresh Expressions	Pioneer Gathering/ Action Learning Group
<b>Southwark Fund Pioneer</b>	Incumbent	Incumbent	Dean of Fresh Expressions	Pioneer Gathering
<b>Associate Vicar Pioneer</b>	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent/ Archdeacon	Pioneering Gathering
<b>Mixed mode Clergy</b>	N/a - Archdeacon	Archdeacon	Dean of Fresh Expressions	Learning Community
<b>Team Pioneer</b>	Team Rector	Team Rector	Team Rector	Pioneer Gathering/ Action Learning Group
<b>Deanery Pioneer</b>	Area Dean/ Archdeacon		Area Dean/ Dean of Fresh Expressions	Pioneer Gathering/ Action Learning Group

### Notes:

- I. The Line Manager is the person to whom the pioneer is accountable to day to day. It is expected that the pioneer would be part of any staff meetings and have other one-to-one regular meetings to track progress
- II. The role of the enabler is to support, encourage and make sure that the role of Pioneer is valued. They may or may not be pioneering themselves, they may or may not be particularly innovative. They will understand the importance of Pioneers and can help resource, empower, release and protect the Pioneer.
- III. The Pioneer Supervisor ensures that there is accountability on overall vision and plan for the Pioneer. The regularity of this supervision will depend on the nature of the post. So, a mixed-mode Pioneer may only meet once a year for an update whereas an SDF Pioneer would probably meet with their supervisor on a bi-monthly or even monthly basis. In the case where the line manager is the Incumbent then part of the supervision will include the Incumbent as well to ensure that everyone is clear.
- IV. Pioneers need support networks to encourage them and to share ideas with. We envisage four different groups:
  - a. The Southern RTP is an agreement we have with them to help train our Pioneer Curates for two days a year

- b. The Pioneer Gathering is a bi-monthly meeting where we gather as many pioneers as we can (lay and ordained) to share ideas, needs, resources, training etc
- c. Action Learning Groups are small groups of activists who focus on a particular area of interest and commit to a) Try New Things in their situation, b) Share their learning openly within the group (both positive and negative), c) look to see what lessons can be shared around the Diocese
- d. Learning Communities are groups of Mixed mode practitioners sharing their experience with each other, to encourage and support one another. As Mixed mode clergy will be incumbent level these Learning Communities will be offered to them without being required to be part of.

## Appendix B - Pioneer Ministry in Southwark Diocese

“See, I am doing a new thing!” Isaiah 43:19

“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 ministries”<sup>2</sup>.

With the Vision for Growth in the Diocesan plan we are faced with the need to reach beyond those we normally attract to our churches. With only 1.48% of the population part of Diocesan church, there are large parts of our communities that never set foot within our churches. Pioneers and the fresh expressions movement help us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who we traditionally find hard to reach. A key outcome of this pioneering is to find models that others can adapt to grow the church.

### Calling and appointment of Pioneer Ministers

We do have a number of existing Ordained Pioneers and through their ministries we are gaining valuable insights into how we create the conditions to enable them to flourish. Most of the rest of this paper is aimed at answering the question of how we can encourage pioneering to be fruitful and to help the wider Church.

We have made the decision to have two Ordained Pioneer Curates each year, allowing us to encourage a mixed economy within Southwark Diocese. Their placement needs to be carefully thought through and in places where there is real opportunity for them to thrive and flourish (see later under Placement of Pioneers). In Southwark we do not have an Ordained Pioneer route as we realise that sometimes people will only Pioneer for a period of time and that having a rounded training allows Pioneers to make connections with existing forms of Church.

The real untapped source of pioneering lies with the laity. In the future, 5 out of 6 Pioneers are likely to be Lay. If we want to see pioneering embedded across the Diocese this will not primarily come via Ordained Pioneers – this is likely to be a relatively small but vital group within the Diocese, creating centres of excellence and helping to encourage and support others in their pioneering ventures. The real wave of change will come through releasing larger groups of Lay Pioneers able to have a vision, be released by their churches and able to sustain that vision and mission initiative over a significant period of time. This will ensure a growingly diffuse impact of pioneering across the Diocese. I should note that the presumption here is that the Bishop’s Lay Leadership and Ministry Advisory Group will recommend the training and releasing of Lay Pioneer Ministers in Southwark when it reports this summer.

### The spectrum of Pioneer Ministry

One helpful way of looking at Pioneer Ministry is through the idea of a Pioneer Spectrum<sup>3</sup>. It is very easy to see Pioneers under an all-in-one label but the reality is that there is a wide range of pioneering that occurs and the Pioneer Spectrum tries to give some idea of this reality.

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<sup>2</sup> Dave Male, Director of Evangelism and Discipleship in the Church of England ( & agreed by the Ministry Council)

<sup>3</sup> based on ideas developed by Tina Hodgett and Paul Bradbury



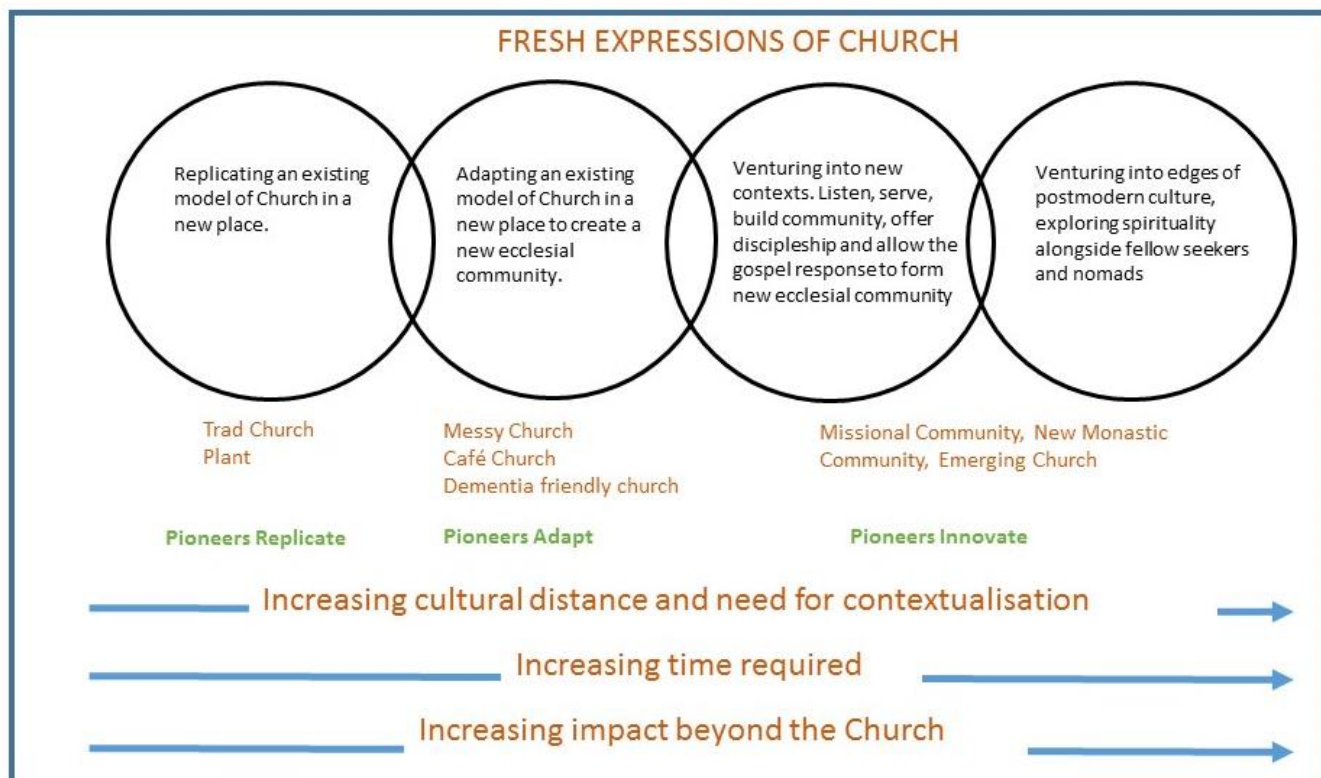


Figure 3- Pioneer Spectrum

The above diagramme (not be taken as a management tool but as a starting point to reflect where and why and how pioneering occurs) looks to show the Pioneer Spectrum and the increasing need for contextualisation as you move away from the culture of the missional team. Two other things need to be noticed. As you move into having to contextualise more, then the time taken to develop an ecclesial community tends to increase and the impact beyond the Church tends to increase. This means that if we are looking for Pioneers to innovate from scratch then a three year contract will be too short to setup, develop and create a sustainable fresh expression of Church. Indeed if we aim for the right hand side on a three year contract it might well be the case that there is nothing to show for their labours.

This spectrum allows us to be more strategic and thoughtful about what we might be able to achieve over time with different options. As we look around us and see that there are whole communities and groups of people who are distant from the idea of coming into Church we need to look at how we might engage with them incarnationally. In the context of a pioneering team there will be people who are culturally close to us and others who are culturally remote; the Pioneer Spectrum allows us, in a simple way, to think through who we are trying to reach with the Good News of Jesus Christ and how we might think that through. The corollary is that a Church with a record of community engagement and innovation is likely to be able to go further and in less time than a church without a record in either.

### What is it we want them to do?

We need to be clear not to see Pioneer Ministry as an add-on. In terms of practice the Methodist Church's expectations for Pioneers is very helpful in making their role clear.

- This is the main focus of their ministry. It's not a marginal or minor activity for them.
- Most of the person's time is spent with those outside the Church

- There is an intention to create a new ecclesial community. It may not always happen but this is the aim.

Using the idea of a Pioneer Spectrum we then need to ask what we need from a particular Pioneer.

For example, with Pioneer Replicators we are looking at where a parish church needs revitalising with a graft or a Church Plant. Taking a model that works elsewhere and launching it may be the most appropriate thing to do. Such a model takes less time to see if it works in the situation, or not. This model is the most likely to reach “people like us”

Pioneer Adaptors will be looking at what others have pioneered elsewhere and seeing how they can be contextualised for their situation. Examples here would include Messy Church, Café Church, Dementia friendly services etc. Each has a recognisable model that needs adapting to meet the needs of the local community.

With Pioneer Innovators we need to set things up for the long haul. Some of these new things may take years before we see new forms of Christian community coming into being. This won't be done by throwing multiple people in three year segments but in investing in people for perhaps a decade. The key outcome will not be a church that looks like the Parish Church; rather, digging into the riches of their traditions and listening to their context and the Spirit they will reach communities who would otherwise not be connected to the Church. Connected to the Diocese, they will share new insights from the Gospel and the culture they are seeking to reach helping our long term call and mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. The benefit for the Church will be to enable others to learn from these pioneering initiatives and learn how to adapt these models into their own situation. Ideally we are looking to create new models that can then move into the Pioneer Adapt space.

Pioneers will need support, encouragement, and the ability to being given latitude as to what they do (within safe limits). Some will grow and produce great fruit but we need to realise that others may only last for a time.

### Discernment, Selection, Training and Support

I am exploring, with the DDO how we might best construct a suitably flexible and rigorous discernment and selection process to grow and affirm those being called to be Licensed Lay Pioneers. I understand from the Diocesan Secretary that the Bishop's Lay Leadership and Ministry Advisory Group will be making lay ministry recommendations later this year which will help give direction on this.

As we get our first Pioneer Curate this summer the Director of Discipleship & Ministry and I are looking at the IME training to ensure that there is sufficient input, reflection and opportunity for them to thrive.

As an introduction to pioneering and fresh expressions we have the Mission Shaped Ministry course which gives input to churches to consider what they might do and how they can do it. It would be good to be able to go further with some people (lay and ordained). The DDO and I are in discussion with St Augustine about Pioneer training that might be provided to both ordained and lay. St Mellitus currently offers Pioneer Minister training but my understanding is that this is the same teaching as other streams or ordination and is mainly focused on Pioneer Replication, whilst we seek to go further than this.

We currently have a number of ways to help support and train pioneers within the Diocese. We are holding bi-monthly pioneer gatherings allowing pioneers to gather and share and explore their own context, situation and ideas that might be helpful to them. We currently have identified thirty pioneers – both lay and ordained, recognised and unrecognised and expect to identify more with time. We are running a series of seminars and training days looking at different aspects and models of pioneering. Ian Mobsby's symposia on Mission in the Catholic tradition are very helpful in encouraging engagement.

## Placement of Pioneers

One of the keys to successful Pioneer Ministry is that of where we place them and how we create a fruitful environment for them in which to flourish. All too often it will be easy to try and fix a perceived problem by throwing a Pioneer Minister at it and expecting miracles. The following may be helpful in terms of thinking through deployment

1. Look at what you are hoping to achieve. Is this a new model in a new place or adapting or replicating an existing model? Think carefully as to timeframes and expected outcomes.
2. Where is the team to support the Pioneer? Does this team and the Pioneer have a shared vision? Without a team the risk increases significantly.
3. Is there be a '**Pioneer enabler**' who will support and encourage the Pioneer Minister? They may or may not be pioneering themselves, they may or may not be particularly innovative. They will understand the importance of Pioneers and can resource, empower, release and protect the Pioneer. They will need to agree with the Pioneer where they will be working on the pioneer spectrum so that there is understanding of focus and potential timescale
4. Ordained Pioneers are likely to be used sparingly and need a team (remember 2. above). Decide whether they will be a '**Parish based Pioneer**' starting from the Parish base helping to create mixed-modes of Fresh Expressions or whether they are '**Fresh Start Pioneers**', classic blank canvas Pioneers who whilst staying connected to the Parish, Deanery or Diocese are released from expectations of being a minister to existing churches
5. Use more Lay Pioneers – They will often have teams that they work with to create new communities of faith which led them to becoming a Lay Pioneer in the first place. They will often be more cost effective as well. We need to identify, train and release more of these to have a significant impact around the Diocese.
6. Many of the best things that are occurring have occurred on the edges without formal support. Our support for many of these in the early stages should be light touch and supportive
7. Use long-term Pioneers (Lay and Ordained) to help create new forms of Fresh Expressions that others can adapt for their context (e.g. New Monastic Communities)
8. Don't over-resource or over plan. Use a '**lean startup**' model to ensure that we only start seriously resourcing when we have some confidence that an idea might work. This is about only giving enough resources to test out the idea, keep it as lean as possible until you see it work and then you put in greater resources. So, what resources are actually needed to test out the idea? How could this be prototyped and explored? Use a '**fail fast**' model to enable pioneer communities to experiment before focussing their work too much. This is about having some key principles and then prototype and change/ pivot quickly as you experience the reality

9. When it comes to placing Pioneer Curates we need to be realistic as to where we place them. If we assume a 50/50 split between inherited/pioneering then there will be limits as to what can be achieved in three years. They will need at the least a 'Sustainer enabler' as training incumbent and an understanding between them as to where the expectations are on the Pioneer Spectrum. If the church is a centre for pioneering new things then they may well be able to go further up the spectrum as some of the ground work may have been done by the Church and there may be a ready team to lead and an expectation within the Church.
10. Finally, the Spirit of God can overrule any and every rule!

## Conclusion

A long term view of pioneers with investment in training, support and placement will enable us to pioneer new forms of church that will benefit the whole Church and enable forms of Church that today are innovations to become far more accessible to many other churches. There is much exciting work going on, often at the margins and hidden. As we prayerfully, thoughtfully and collaboratively look at how we can support these initiatives and invest in them I believe that we can see much growth of the Kingdom.

Will Cookson

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