

# Missional Values

*(This material is based on the excellent module on Missional Values in the Fresh Expression's MSM Course)*

## 1. What are Values?

*Values are those things 'held in high esteem, prized, of worth or importance.'*

*Values express our deepest convictions and passions, how we want to be known, how we expect to behave.*  
Stuart Murray Williams

What values are represented by:

- Marriage Rings
- The scales of justice
- The cross
- The basin and the towel

Underline and discuss the values you see in the passage below:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

## Vision, Values and Strategy

**Vision** is about:

WHERE we are called to go (our purpose or task).  
e.g.

To create a Christian community for young adults.

**Values** shape and give fragrance to:

WHY we operate together as we do (our community);  
e.g.

We value hospitality because we want all to feel welcome and know their worth.

WHO we truly are.

*Understanding the distinction between vision and values is essential. When we start with a vision that builds on our values then the best strategy for our churches can be developed. This give us more flexibility to adapt the strategy as society/situations change, but the absolute values remain the same.*

So:

**Strategy** is:

WHAT you may need to do to get there (relating to vision/purpose);

HOW we function and relate together (relating to values/community).

e.g. We will create a Christian community for young adults by recruiting a pioneer minister and providing them with a team of twelve kindred spirits who will form a hospitable community, welcoming others through service, meals and offering prayer.

## Absolute and Relative Values

Relative values are formed by the particular needs and cultures in, and amongst which, churches are formed, grow and serve. We choose these values because they are important in order to be missiologically effective in our context. So in Asian cultures for example, a particular value is placed on hospitality.

Sometimes relative values are simply a matter of choice and preference. This is particularly true when it comes to values that shape the worshipping life of a developing community. A church plant amongst professional musicians may place a high value on excellence whilst another with teenagers may place a high value on opportunities for everyone to participate.

**Which of these are absolute and which are relative?**

Openness; Artistic; Innovative; Experimentation; Truth; Traditional; Family; Christ-likeness; Holy; Inclusivity; Excellence; Order; Justice; Community; Contemplative; Place; Discussion; Stillness; Biblical; Mission; Creativity; Child-orientated; Healing; Formality; Spontaneity; Commitment; Radical; Orthodoxy; Contemporary; Love

## The Importance of Values

Values play a key role in each of these vital related areas:

- ensuring that a church is indigenous/culturally appropriate – **missiological**;
- forming the identity of a church – **ecclesiological**
- shaping the leadership team – **leadership** .

Values are also an essential aid when it comes to the growth

## 1. Missional Values

A two-way exchange:

- We need to consider carefully the values we hold and the values held by the culture that we are engaging with. Which values are shared? Which values are distinctive?
- We may need to let go of some of our relative values to become a truly indigenous expression of church;
- We may need to challenge and model some counter-cultural values where the Gospel challenges those of the focus community.

This means we need very wise discernment of the difference between:

- the core of the Christian faith and the nature of God from which we derive our absolute values;
- the relative values we hold as a particular Christian community;
- values which are important to a particular culture.

## 2. Ecclesiological Values

These core and absolute values shape how a church grows:

- God the Trinity;
- incarnational;
- transformational;
- makes disciples;
- relational.

En example:

“We are called to be a family of God’s People learning to follow Jesus every day making a difference in our neighbourhood”

Write down your values as a congregation here:

## 3. Leadership Values (Style)

Here there are Articulated and Assumed Values. A bit like an ice-berg. These are crucial!

And sometimes these can clash:

Open community vs. Committed community

Particular people group vs. Open to all

Formal vs. Informal

Church building based vs. Community building based

Directive vs. Consensus

Contemporary vs. Traditional

Change vs. Stability

Creative Arts vs. Simplicity

Excellence vs. All have a go!

Noisy vs. Contemplative

Inter-generational vs. Distinct age groups

Culturally authentic vs. Counter cultural

# Exercise

## Missional

Current	Need to be

## Ecclesiological

Current	Need to be

## Leadership

Current	Need to be