Mission Drift and Ministry Lifecycle
Challenges for organisations

- Retaining a sense of Mission/Call/Movement in the longer term
- Not just have well managed organisations
- Dealing with generational change
  - Different attitudes
  - Transferring the stories
- Preventing “Mission Drift”
Sweet spot = Purpose, Values, Vision

MISSION

MOVEMENT

MANAGEMENT

MONUMENT

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Sweet spot = Purpose, Values, Vision

MISSION  MOVEMENT  MANAGEMENT  MONUMENT
Mission

• Sometimes just 1 person, sometimes a small group
• A Vision / Call
• No real resources – money or personnel
• No real organisation / board
• Eg. Paul in the New Testament
Movement

• Rapid growth
• No apparent plan or structure
• Can be chaotic
• No real management
• Sense of excitement, development, new things
• Acts
The sweet spot

• Remaining the same over time
  – Purpose
  – Vision
  – Values

• Tension between Movement and Management

• “Retain the core...stimulate progress”
Sweet spot = Purpose, Values, Vision

MISSION -> MOVEMENT -> MANAGEMENT -> MONUMENT

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Management

- Can become a machine – all about systems, processes and numbers
- Rules and regulations
- Good management / organised / bureaucracy
- Key performance indicators / reporting
- Managers rule not leaders
- “Safe”
Monument

- Lost the heart of the organisation
- Fear of change / risk
- “the good old days”
- “not on my watch”
- Tradition rules
- Activity happens but not really sure why
Mission Drift
A Study in “Mission Drift”

- The Dying of the Light, James Tunstead Burtchell
- The decline of the Christian ethos in 17 Colleges in United States
- Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic, and Evangelical
- Not all institutions moved away from their core purpose, vision & mission, however, this was in the minority
- What were the key reasons discovered for “mission drift”? 
Key reasons for mission drift

Fragmentation

• In order to fulfill the Christian and academic goals many institutions created specialist departments to handle the religious aspect.
• lead to academics purely focusing on the “secular” aspect of their work without amalgamating their faith in their teaching.
• The gap widened to the extent that the matters of faith were not deemed to be part of the serious study and relegated to be second class.
Key reasons for mission drift

• Low impact of religious instruction
  • Matters of faith were not deemed to be part of serious study.
  • Furthermore, the serious study of matters of faith were given back to seminary or Bible College.

• Financial Freedom
  • Many colleges found government funding and established strong alumni associations resulting in many institutions wanting to be free from their “oppressive” sponsors.
Key reasons for mission drift

• The initial vision losing its impact
• Initially many institutions started as a reaction to the loss of Christian virtue of the society around them.
• The latter generations, whilst they had a firm appreciation of the core vision, did not have a firm appreciation of the struggle of earlier generations that started the Christian School movement
Key reasons for mission drift

• Staff priorities changed and were not confronted by the board/executive
  • In many cases leaders were perceived as large souled, attractive and trusted as they lead institutions away from Christian ethos and religious sponsors.
  • All changes were viewed from the aspect of gain rather than any loss.
  • The teacher saw their role from more of a career perspective rather than from a sense of mission or call – this was a crucial aspect in the loss of Christian focus.
Key reasons for mission drift

• Lack of awareness of the Christian distinctives
• The role of religion was relegated to one of morals rather than a core value.
• The decision makers were unable to articulate what was Christian and objections to moves were seen as an attempt to hold onto outdated and unnecessary values.
• The loss of pietism lead to a movement to indifference which lead to rationalisation and loss of Christian focus
Antidotes

- Refresh Purpose, Vision and Values (and keep them core)
- Tell the stories
- Know priorities
- People and relationships are the key
- Management and systems serve the Purpose, Vision and Values
- Stewardship
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS