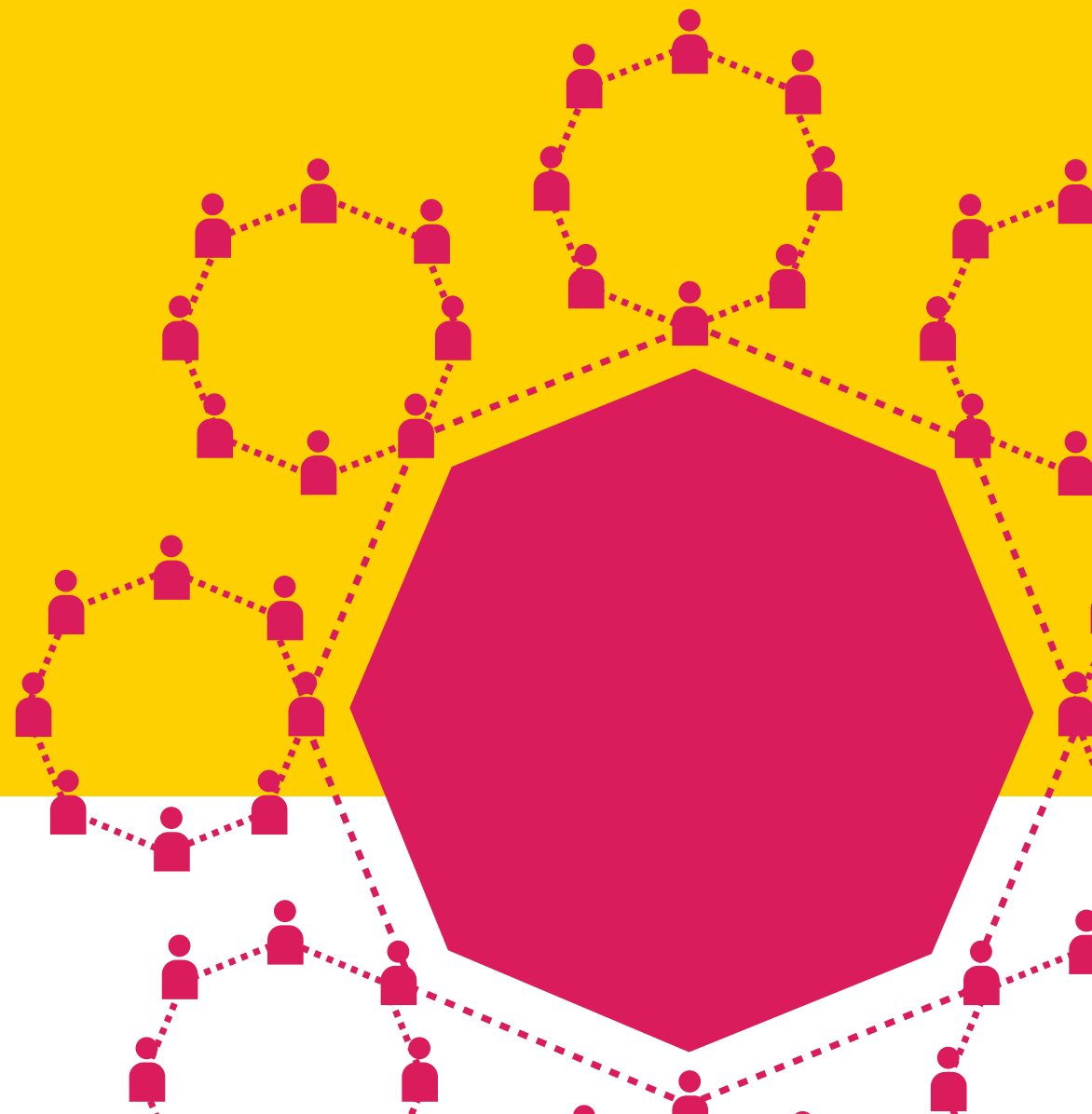


PIONEER MISSION LEADERSHIP TRAINING

FIVE YEARS ON – AN EVALUATION FOR CMS

SEPTEMBER 2015



cocreate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The report authors would like to offer many thanks to all of the students, staff and external interviewees who took time to offer their thoughts and views. We hope that this evaluation can encourage and benefit pioneers and those that support them.

On behalf of CMS, the authors also offer their thanks and acknowledgement of a generous private gift that made the production of this report possible.

Andy Schofield and Liz Clutterbuck

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SUMMARY

As a course and community, PMLT delivers an active learning experience for pioneers within CMS, encouraging and contributing to innovation in pioneering practice. This produces a community of graduate pioneers connected with a wider pioneer network and who are resourced, experientially and theologically, to offer this to the world through the communities that they serve. These pioneers are a gift to the church and the world, presenting a vision of constructive disruption and God's mission in action.

This statement of PMLT's impact is based on five years of experience by participants past and present, staff and supporters who contributed to this report over the course of three months in Summer 2015.

There is much that has been positive in the first five years of PMLT. These recommendations seek to preserve and improve its influence on pioneers and pioneering, to the benefit of the world and the church. They are also designed to support its replication or expansion in other areas and with new partners.

For pioneers

1. Hang in there. Pioneering takes time.
2. Reduce the potential sense of isolation by identifying networks of like-minded people.
3. Consider taking the course, given the positive experience of other pioneers.
4. Encourage others to take the course.
5. Think about and track the impact of your pioneering work as part of reflective practice.

PMLT 2010 - 2015 KEY STATS



110

Students have completed the course or are currently studying



78%

of students report that they feel that the course was very good or excellent at helping them in their pioneer ministry*



80%

of students report a good or very good student experience*



80%

of students past and present are currently pioneering

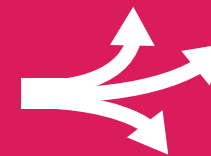
*from over 190 module responses

EFFECT ON PIONEERING INITIATIVES ATTRIBUTED TO PMLT



38%

started a new project or community



50%

diversified what they were already doing



67%

improved something they were already doing



Staff and students publishing together

* responded to the survey conducted during this evaluation.

For PMLT and CMS

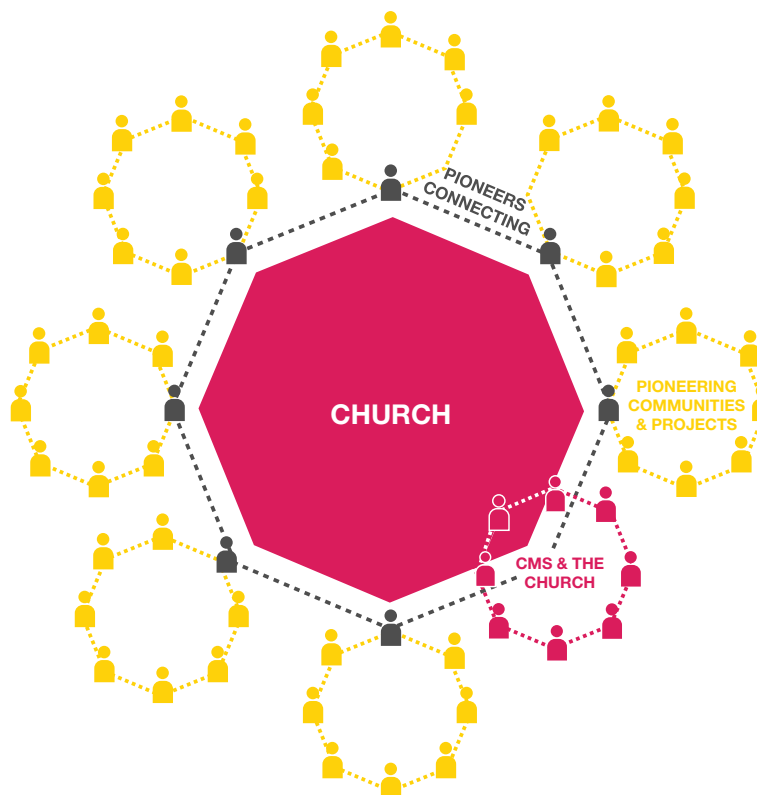
1. Keep PMLT for pioneers but recognise the diversity of pioneering as a calling.
2. Keep a similar mix of theology, mission and practice.
3. Consider how the learning community can extend beyond the duration of the course (before and after) and resource it accordingly.
4. Consider whether there is a need for one or more additional sessions – perhaps half days – to introduce people to pioneering concepts and stories.
5. Create a Community Mission and Innovation Fund to increase the financial resources available to pioneers for projects.
6. Recruit at least one new staff member who is ordained with good experience of pioneering.
7. Broaden promotion of pioneering and the course itself.
8. Maintain the tension between being both inside and outside of the church and inside and outside of higher education as a core gift of CMS and PMLT.

For scaling

1. Accept some experimentation but be prepared to insist on the presence of key PMLT characteristics as new centres or partnerships develop.
2. Reach new entrants and maintain the quality.
3. Maintain the sense of community.
4. Ensure that prospective partners recognise and respect an emphasis on the environment, relationships, people and interactions as much as the content.
5. Seek the right geographical scale for the training centre and the community. These are probably different.
6. Recognise and be realistic about resource needs.
7. Discern between licensing and joint venture arrangements when exploring collaborations.
8. Stay lean. Although resources will need to increase for growth, a lean model is advisable when demand is unknown.

For the wider church

1. Embrace the creativity of pioneers in mission as they advance the gospel and the kingdom.
2. Seek to balance autonomy and accountability for ordained and licensed Anglican lay pioneers.
3. Encourage the research and statistics arm of the Church of England to count Ordained Pioneer Ministers and report on trends.
4. Draw on the expertise of CMS and PMLT to explore ways in which pioneering can be encouraged as part of the mixed economy of church.



BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

ABOUT PIONEER MISSION LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Pioneer Mission Leadership Training (PMT) is a course created and run by the Church Mission Society (CMS). It is intended for pioneers, a relatively new term that is open to interpretation, but could be summarised as people of Christian faith who are engaged in doing something new or different with a motivation routed in mission. The course describes itself as “a creative way of equipping and mobilising Christians for ground-breaking, transformational and sustainable mission.”¹ It draws on the international history of CMS as a cross-cultural mission agency to train pioneers and provide a community for them to learn together and support each other.

The course began in 2010, with Ministry Division approval for ordinands given in 2012. The MA programme began in 2012, enabling the course to offer a full suite of academic options for pioneers. PMLT offers training to both lay and Ordained Pioneer Ministry (OPM) students from within the Church of England, and is recognised by its Ministry Division as a training route for ordination. Additionally, there are a number of students from other denominations, making the course Anglican in flavour, but with a broad spectrum of traditions, theology and experience.

Format and delivery

The bulk of the course is delivered on a weekday at CMS’s Oxford office, with a mixture of morning and afternoon sessions; a devotional; socialising around lunch and before and after teaching; and tutorials throughout the day. There is a mixture of lectures, questions and discussion with different group sizes. The course also makes use of action learning sets, which fit with an overall emphasis of reflecting on practice, and guest speakers who come to share practical examples of their work. For a fuller description of the current format and its delivery, see Appendix 1. Outside of the Tuesday term-time sessions, PMLT includes some residentials: ReSource weekends, where a project/missional community hosts students from CMS, some of whom will be studying on

PMLT, although they are also open to other participants (and in some cases have served as a route onto the main course). Some modules also have a residential component, such as the Missional Entrepreneurship module which lasts one week and is run at Pickwell Manor, itself a pioneering initiative, with guest lecturers and facilitators with substantial practical experience of pioneering.

Structure

The structure of the course is modular, with students able to choose from taking individual ones to obtaining a Certificate in Ministry (6 modules), a Diploma in Ministry (12 modules) and, more recently, an MA. PMLT also runs ReSource weekends, where attendees immerse themselves in a community engaged in mission. These are open as a stand-alone experience.

Besides the experience of studying alongside each other, PMLT has also started a Pioneer Mission Hub across six dioceses in the south of England². This is intended to connect and support those engaged in pioneering. As such, it is not just for those on the course. Other pioneers not directly connected to the course or CMS use it as a drop-in facility and networking opportunity.

The combination of different study options and routes into PMLT means that whilst there is a core of active students at any one time, this changes over the course of terms and years. Some students have been involved since the start of the course and have done more than one qualification; others might have done a single module any time in the last five years.

Finance

Individual modules cost £375, although the module price varies for those committing to a particular qualification, and there are a substantial number of people taking one or more modules but less than the number required for a qualification. The qualifications cost £2250 for a certificate, £4500 for a diploma and £4000 for an MA. There is an additional cost for students if they are not licensed in the Church of England, of £420 per annum. Most students are self-

financing, with the exception of Anglican ordinands whose training costs are covered by the Ministry Division. There are, however, examples of churches contributing or giving grants for people who are not ordinands. There is also a small bursary scheme administered by CMS, which awards grants on a discretionary basis to students who would otherwise struggle to pay the fees – typically this subsidises the cost of modules or a qualification.

Intended purpose and impact

PMLT has developed with a strong sense of purpose guided by its intent to serve and equip pioneers. At an early stage, it used a tool called the Transformational Index³ with one of this report’s authors to develop its own understanding of success and this has informed its existing measurement framework. The description from June 2011 said that PMLT sought to achieve the following:

- **An integrated and active learning experience** – characterised by fun, participation, personal growth/maturation and the development of cultural sensitivity – leading to a sense of empowerment
- **A new and creative way of training pioneers** – people think they’ve seen it all before... This dares to do something different, engaging and sustainable
- **Mobilised pioneers transforming communities** – proliferation of tangible, vital and diverse mission projects and communities.
- **A renewed and vibrant CMS**
- **A step change in the wider church** – release beyond church as we know it, disruption of the organisational/cultural status quo or norms and the space for different expressions
- **Networking, collaboration and engagement**, both amongst students past, present and future and the stakeholders in mission education, providing strength and support through the network

Whilst this evaluation recognises that a focus can shift or develop over five years, and that there can be other impacts beyond those hoped for or anticipated, this provides a valuable starting point for evaluating the impact of the course.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was commissioned by CMS to evaluate its Pioneer Mission Leadership Training course. It was to explore if and how the course works, as well as how it might grow. It did this using a number of techniques and data sources, including:

- Reviewing existing materials, including written materials about the course, a selection of before and after video interviews, as well as quantitative sources such as students' scored evaluations of the course and their own development;
- Undertaking semi-structured interviews with students past and present, cutting across different qualifications, pathways (ordained, recognised lay and independent lay initiatives) and church traditions;
- Running a questionnaire focused on impact for all students, past and present;
- Developing new data sources from a register of students with substantial input from Jonny Baker as the course leader into their origins and destinations, then categorising and visualising the results;
- Analysing all of the above to develop and test hypotheses and write the report and recommendations.

The timing of the report was to fit in with the annual report schedule, where the intention has been to have the review of the previous year (in this case, the full five years of operation) ready for the new academic year. This was timely in terms of planning for future growth and also recognised that the start of term in September was a busy time for those running the course, with summer preferable in terms of management. In terms of research, this timing generally worked reasonably well, with all key interviewees reached. A possible exception was the survey of past and present participants. This was run for two and a half weeks and followed two weeks after module feedback was requested. This may have contributed to a lower response rate, either in terms of some consultation fatigue or people simply being less available during summer holidays.

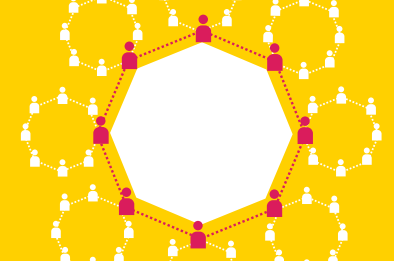
The work was undertaken by Ccreate Consulting between June and early September 2015. The team included people with experience of research into churches and social impact organisations, who were familiar with theological education and impact analysis.

1 <http://pioneer.cms-uk.org/pioneer-mission-leadership-training-course/about/>, accessed 27/8/15

2 The South Central Regional Training Partnership, comprised of Oxford, Winchester, Salisbury, Guildford, Portsmouth and Bath & Wells Dioceses

3 The Transformational Index (TI) is a tool that helps organisations to describe their unique approach to achieving transformation and measure it appropriately.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: THE STUDENTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE



INTRODUCTION

PMLT set out to provide an “integrated and active learning experience” as well as “a new and creative way of training pioneers”. Within this, the hope was that students would grow and mature, becoming more sensitive to culture and ultimately feeling empowered as pioneers. This covers who the students on PMLT are before turning to their experience of the course.

Who are the PMLT students?

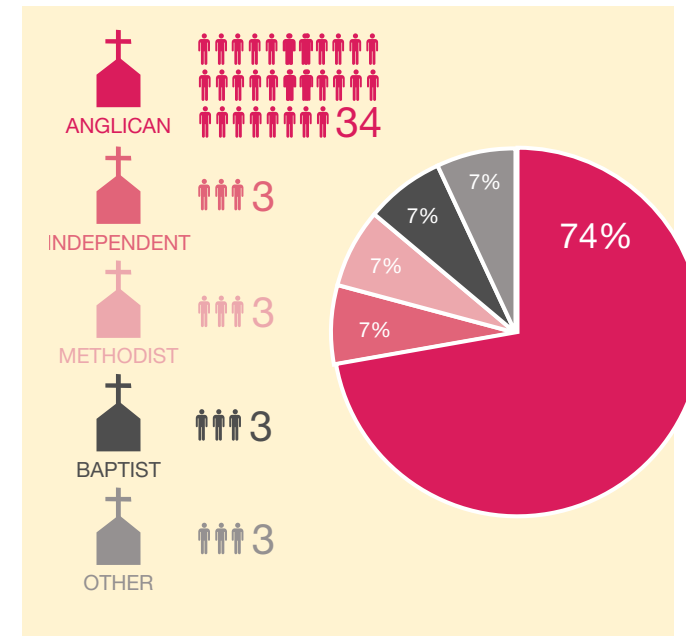
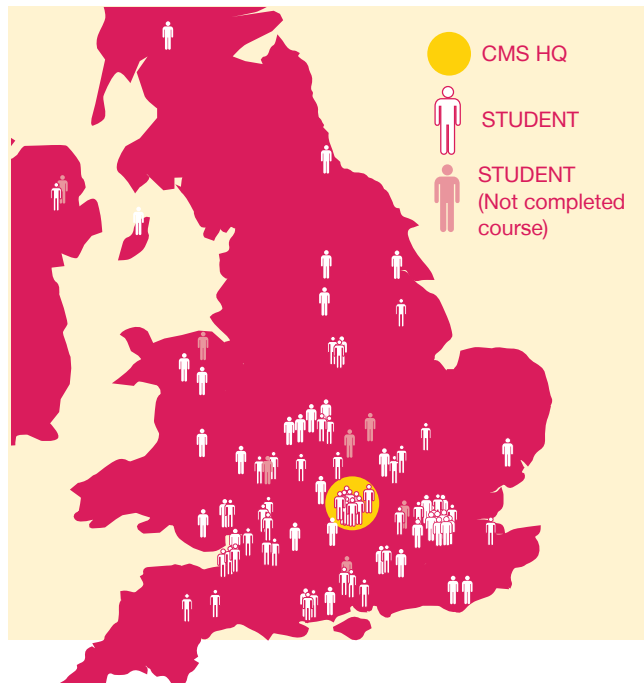
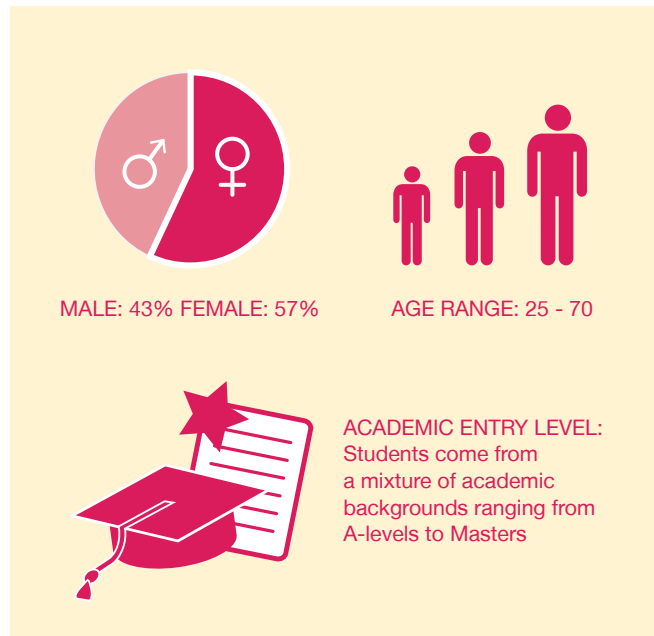
The PMLT course appeals to a wide range of people in terms of age, gender and academic background. This creates a very diverse demographic of students.

Where do PMLT students come from?

The majority of students seem to be coming from within a few hours travel time which might suggest that having a form of regional training would see more students studying on PMLT. The map also demonstrates that people are willing to travel from considerable distances to study on the PMLT course, which suggests that the draw of the course is strong. However on-going weekly long distance travel in some cases can prove to be challenging. The broken lines on the map indicate students who began the course but then dropped out before completing their studies. There is a range of reasons for termination of study including personal circumstances but evidence indicates that longer distance is also a factor.

Denominations

All of the students on the PMLT course have a faith and the data also shows that the course appeals to people from a range of denominations. There are some cases of students changing denomination during the course as a result of the journey they go on, some for personal reasons, although a few have become Anglican to become licensed. General opinion is that the course caters to different denominations well and brings a range of outlooks into its teaching. There were some comments during the interviews and in responses to the survey that stated the teaching can sometimes feel rather Anglican in flavour, although this does not seem to be a significant concern and is not particularly surprising given CMS' identity.



Selection

Most students on the course self-identify as pioneers⁴ and have independently shown interest and approached CMS to pursue study. All go through an application process, which includes a meeting/interview where students are asked about their commitment to pioneering. Some come to the course to train as an Ordained Pioneer Minister (OPM) in the Anglican church, in partnership with Cuddesdon. These PMLT students are required to have been through the national Ministry Division pioneer selection panel. This runs alongside the general Bishops Advisory Panel process. In addition to being a pathway for OPM candidates, data shows that the PMLT course also becomes a home to a significant number of students who are unsuccessful in either all or part of the selection process as a priest. Some pioneers that are not selected undertake training that might be supported by a diocese or might be self-funded. Quite often these students take up the opportunity to go down the Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) route as an alternative to ordination under CMS. In terms of recognising and empowering students, this is encouraging, but it can create tensions later on if a student wants to pursue LLM status because dioceses will not necessarily license students who have been selected by CMS as pioneers at a local level.

Whether approaching the course independently or as an OPM, when looking at the options of where to study students say that they feel that CMS 'understands that pioneering is a distinct pathway'. In the interviews a few noted that the PMLT course is not an 'add on', which is something they had felt when visiting other training institutions. The stand-alone, clearly defined nature of the course speaks of its commitment to fulfilling the need for a new and creative way to train pioneers and this plays a key part in why students are drawn to CMS as a setting for their training. People being selected are in most cases already practitioners or are committed to undertaking some pioneering in the future. Some of the different types of things people are involved with are picked up in the section on communities and projects.

The selection process for individual modules is slightly different. While independent students studying at Certificate level or above are interviewed by staff members, the studying of individual modules is more open – although there are still criteria that need to be met for some modules. (For example, the Missional Entrepreneurship course has attracted a high number of single-module students, but it only works for those who are developing an initiative.) The question of selection in this respect is worth considering, as the balance between practitioner pioneers and non-practitioners has been highlighted in interviews as being important. Increasing the number of students who are not directly practitioners could have a negative impact in terms of class discussion and the value of being part of a like-minded network, something borne out by interviews. It is interesting in this regard that some communities (e.g. The Earlsfield Friary, The Upper Room) have sent multiple students. Aside from possible benefits to the referring groups, this would seem to be good for the learning community of students as there is the potential for more of them to experience different sides of the stories of these pioneering initiatives. CMS as an organisation is also sending multiple people on modules. This includes CMS Mission Partners who are preparing to go overseas as well as several people who work for CMS sitting in on modules as part of their continued professional development (CPD). PMLT is probably the most appropriate training for them and it makes sense for CMS to use it. It is also positive in terms of building a cohort of staff within CMS that understands pioneering. However there is a possible risk that staff members may not be pioneering or at a level where they can fully benefit from or contribute to group discussion or module content. In terms of scaling, recognising this as a potential risk is important because if the idea that the course could be used as diocesan CPD becomes embedded before roll out, this could disrupt of the communal narrative of mutual learning that students prize.

⁴ The actual figure of those currently pioneering is 80%. See the section on Communities and Projects, below.

Pathways studied

| QUALIFICATION LEVEL | TOTAL | % |
|---------------------|-------|-----|
| Foundation degree | 11 | 10% |
| Certificate | 8 | 7% |
| Diploma | 9 | 8% |
| Modular/auditing | 79 | 72% |
| Unfinished | 1 | 1% |
| MA | 2 | 2% |

PMLT has 110 students who have either completed the course or are presently studying with CMS. From the data above, the most popular form of study is the auditing of individual modules, whether a single one or up to four or five (just short of the six required for a certificate). This means a student may study anywhere between one or all of the modules over a flexible time frame. This has some implications for the course, with students orbiting around the course for varying lengths of time. This is good for creating diversity in the network but given the high numbers auditing, this could be limiting in terms of building deep relationships and could feel more like a drop in than a community of practitioners, particularly if the auditors predominantly take single modules. CMS may want to consider how it intentionally identifies what route is the best fit for each student so that they are not missing out on something which would benefit them. There is also a financial implication here, not only in terms of the amount of income but also its predictability. Forecasting tuition fees is likely to be difficult and communication and marketing of the course to more people becomes important. Conversely, if this data is suggesting that modules are what most people want, can this be made into a strength? What flexibility can be offered beyond the main Tuesday study and current residentials if this suits pioneers? It seems likely that the ability to choose relevant topics is welcomed by pioneers, who will generally be doing something else as well as studying.

NATURE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE COURSE

It is clear from all data that students consistently like what PMLT is offering. In the module evaluations 80% of students report a good or very good student experience whilst on the course, something that is consistent across modules. 78% of students report that they feel that the course was very good or excellent at helping them in their pioneer ministry. They also used predominantly positive words to describe the modules, shown in the word cloud below, which also indicate that it was significant and stretching for them. This combination of perceived quality and relevance contributes to students liking the course. It appears highly important that it has been crafted by pioneers for pioneers and offers a distinct area of expertise that stems from and is rooted in practice – both CMS' and that of the students and staff.



At the end of every module studied students are asked to fill in a module evaluation. As part of this they are asked to choose some 'gut words' to describe their experience. The graphic shows a visual display of the words most commonly used by students. Their size relates to how frequently they were used. This graphic highlights the depth of the positive impact the course has on the students.

The course's use of mixed-mode training has been well received by students. For pioneers, having a context in which they are pioneering is crucial to their learning and the prominence of reflective practice was valued by all the students interviewed. 88% of the students who took the survey answered that they were already involved in pioneering activity before studying with CMS. The fact that the course puts emphasis on the opportunity to reflect on their practice plays a key part in their development as pioneers. In addition to personal reflection on their own practice students value the culture of studying live examples from others in different contexts through peer learning as well as feeding back on lessons learned as students implement learning and theory on the ground. This is reinforced by the majority of teachers also being practitioners, so students feel that they are learning from experience rather than just theory.

The survey also highlighted that gaining practical skills, a qualification or formal recognition were low on the list of importance for students. This tallies with the high popularity of auditing over obtaining a qualification. In the interviews one student said, "it's been less about a formal qualification and more about making my practice the best that is could be. [It was] Also about being able to articulate what I was doing to people who didn't really understand it."

There is therefore strong evidence that students rate the nature and experience of the PMLT course highly. This begs the question of how does it help them in their pioneering? In answering this, three main elements of the course came out as being key to their development as pioneers:

Language and theology

Students interviewed said that before the course they were 'doing' something that they felt sure was in alignment with the heart of God but lacked the theological underpinning to describe why they were doing it. The course gives students a language and theology with which to understand their pioneering and validate their calling as a pioneer. One student said, "Having a new language has helped in a Church of England context because

prior to PMLT I knew my heart was where they were headed but I didn't have a language to explain it to them. Finding a language has also helped in building relationships and securing resources." Similarly, another student said, "It was really helpful to have a theological framework to hang my practice on." This is a key feature of the course and it is notable that students link the knowledge they acquire with developing a clearer sense of identity. In keeping with reflexive practice, it has a personal dimension linked to experience. The language and theology acquired was noted by one student as being "so much more than sitting down and looking at doctrine. It tackles faith for all of life." This deeper understanding of self in light of learning appears very important for the development and confidence of well-rounded pioneers.

Network and relationship

During the course

Network and relationships were mentioned multiple times as key for students studying on the course. Pioneering can leave people feeling isolated and misunderstood; PMLT helps students build a primary community of likeminded individuals who can support them on both a peer and professional level. This place of relational formation has been described as a 'haven' for some and is of high value to students. In addition to a personal network the course also introduces students to a wider network of pioneering activities across the country, opening up opportunities to share knowledge and practice. One student said that "being part of the CMS network has opened up a lot of different conversations".

One factor that can have an impact upon students' learning experience is the nature of pioneering work that other students are undertaking. Several students commented upon the fact that if the student body contains too many non-practising pioneers, the course would lose some of its integrity and impact. Not only is reflective practice in one's own pioneering context essential to individuals' learning on the course, it also contributes a considerable amount to the wider learning community. One student commented that there was a danger that CMS might lose core

individuals and actual pioneers, if the course became too academic and 'institutional' with too many non-pioneers involved. Information from the staff team suggests that the current selection process should not mean that this is an issue (notwithstanding a lighter touch approach for individual modules), but it is worth bearing in mind for future development.

Students also valued the relational support they received from PMLT staff. One student, referring to two particular members of staff, said that they "are amazingly open to making time for students". This support and championing should not be underestimated either as an investment in them personally or in the role it plays in empowering students to continue fostering networks and relationships made during the course.

After the course

The relationships and networks built whilst studying are not just limited to the PMLT course but also act as a springboard to a 'web of relationships' that enable students to do other things. Resource weekends and residentials were mentioned by students as key times when networks and relationships are deepened. One student shared their experience, saying "There's energy and life in the gaps between teaching, and that's the time for relationships to develop, in spaces where it's not just about imparting knowledge."

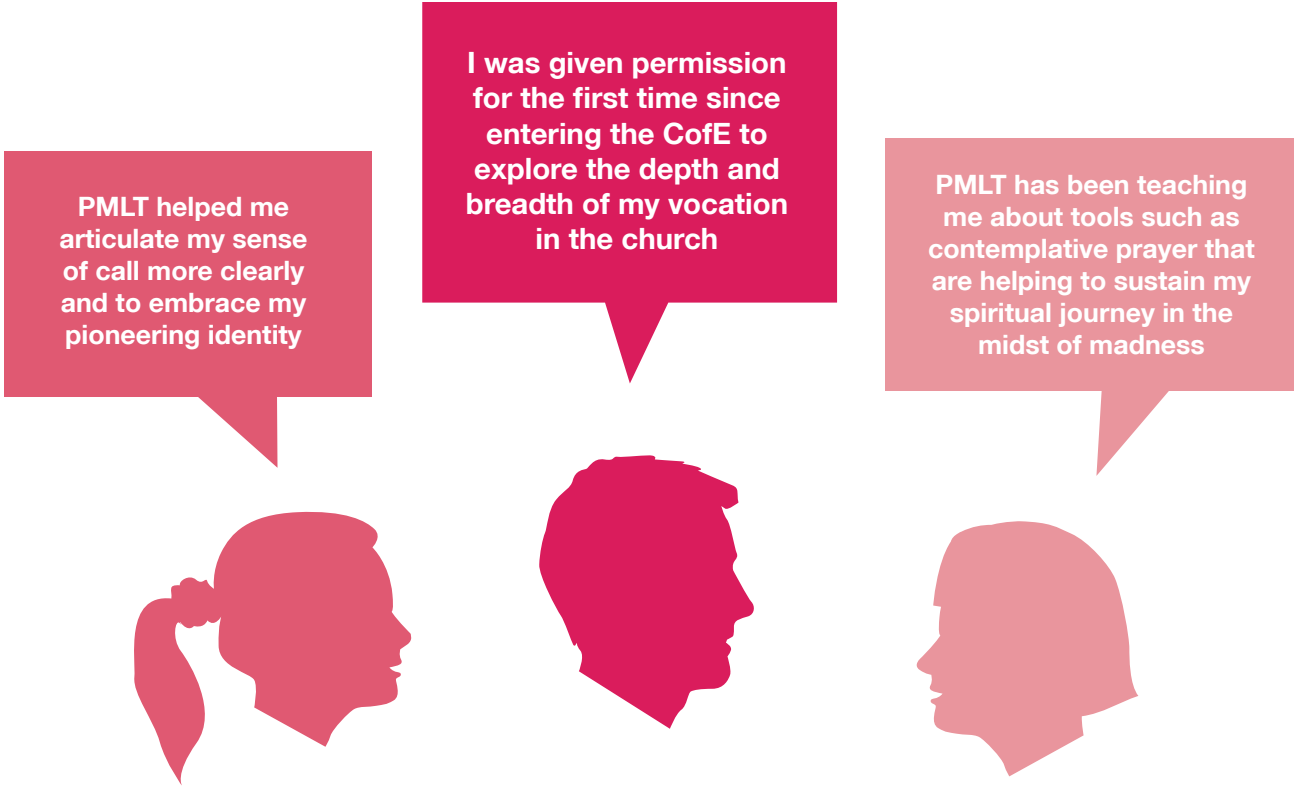
There is the question of what happens when students finish the course and how they then maintain and sustain the benefits of a community that has grown out of a frequency and proximity of contact. This is especially important given the fact that in some cases the network students build whilst on the course is their primary network and one that if lost could have implications for their support and development. In turn this could have a knock-on effect to the sustainability of the work the pioneer is doing. The Pioneer Hub has gone a way to help address this but there is still a gap that potentially CMS could help fill here. See recommendations section for more details.

Soul work: personal development & spiritual growth

One staff member referred to the importance of “soul work” to the students’ learning and development. Many pioneers are naturally activists and therefore a course that provides a focus upon spiritual direction and contemplative practices can have a big impact upon their spiritual life. Whilst on the course formation has a strong focus and there are on-going opportunities for students to look at their interior self and how that relates to what they are creating. Connecting the two and finding deeper understanding as to how the ‘who’ of them as people links together with and drives the ‘what’ of their activities is key for sustaining themselves and their work.

At the beginning of the course students are asked to fill in a questionnaire known as the Evaluation Wheel, which plots their self-assessed responses to questions covering nine categories related to their personal and spiritual development. Students are then asked to complete the same evaluation wheel on completion of their studies. Scores have typically gone up by the end of the course quite significantly. It is a 0-10 scale and increases of two to four points are common. Decreases in scores are very rare across the data. At the level of the averaged responses by category, only two students showed a decrease in a single category by 0.5 or 0.75, i.e. of the 15 students all report increases on at least 8 of the 9 categories and 98.5% (133/135) responses showed an increase.

The spider diagram on the next page shows the average change for all students surveyed in the same format as that used for individual Evaluation Wheels. All areas show an increase of 1.5 to 3 points. It also indicates that on average students show a particular increase in two areas: Relationships and Community and Spirituality and Worship. An increase in relationships and communities further supports the already clear conclusion that network and relationships are something that the course is very strong at providing. The growth in spirituality and worship could well relate to the soul work that students undertake whilst on the course. The specific questions in this category relate to a spiritual rhythm that sustains a life of missional faith and an appreciation and openness to a diversity of spiritual traditions. This seems positive in terms of pioneers being



PMLT helped me articulate my sense of call more clearly and to embrace my pioneering identity

I was given permission for the first time since entering the CofE to explore the depth and breadth of my vocation in the church

PMLT has been teaching me about tools such as contemplative prayer that are helping to sustain my spiritual journey in the midst of madness

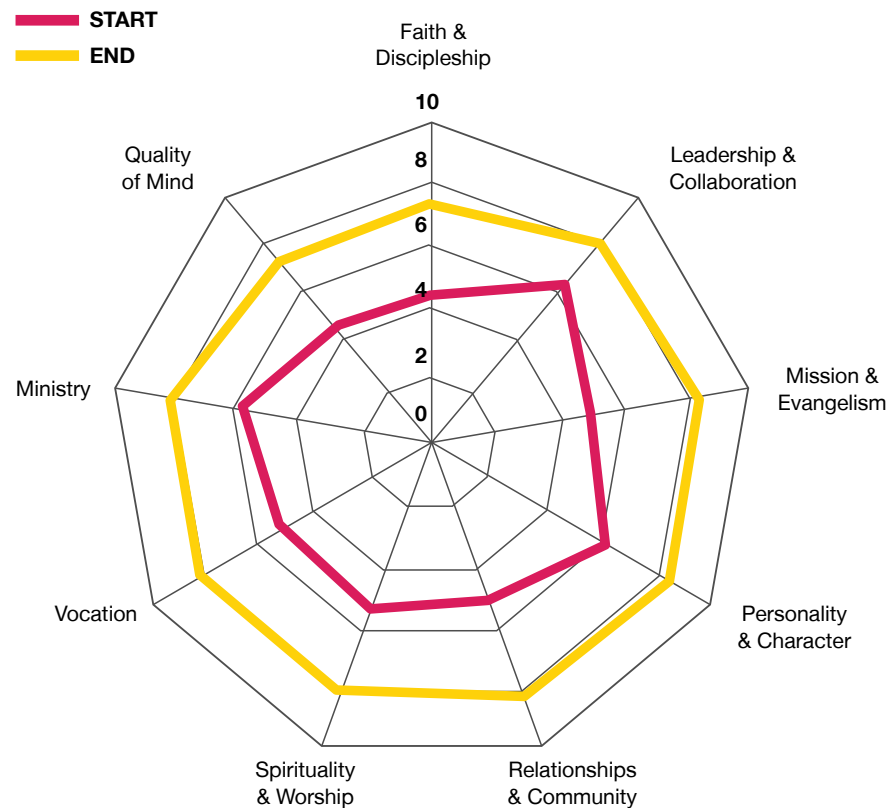
able to sustain themselves and their faith as they move on. The lowest increase is for leadership and collaboration but this has the highest before score – perhaps not surprising for practising pioneers – and a similar after score, more or less average at 8. This is therefore not a cause for concern. Overall, students show substantial progress in terms of their personal and spiritual development linked to the course. This exists in a reciprocal relationship to their development as pioneers.

Key Messages

- Students travel from all over the country to the study on the PMLT course. Students also span a wide age range and come from a variety of contexts and denominations. This creates a diverse group of people taking part on the course.
- 72% of students studying on the course chose the pathway of auditing individual modules rather than a long-term qualification. It seems that there is a smaller more stable core studying more modules for qualifications and a wider group orbiting for variable periods. This seems to reveal some preferences of pioneers and may have implications for how CMS shapes the course and community.
- The course has a very clear culture that is built on a high quality of teaching that is relevant to students and is deeply rooted in the practice of and reflection on pioneering. These key characteristics of the course are very appealing to pioneers in search of a place to call home as they learn and develop their practice and networks.
- In terms of students development as pioneers whilst on the course, three areas clearly stand out as important:
 1. Gaining a language and theology for the practical work they are already doing;
 2. Building of networks and relationships with other pioneers;
 3. Personal development and spiritual growth or “soul work”.

Students clearly credit the course with them improving as pioneers, a fundamental and vital positive impact.

EVALUATION WHEEL



The sample is of 15 students that have completed their study with CMS and completed the questionnaire at the beginning and end of their studies. The 32 questions have been developed by CMS and sorted into nine categories in line with the Church of England’s competencies for priests.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: COMMUNITIES AND PROJECTS



Having considered the impact of the courses on pioneers, the next stage is to consider the impact on the work they are engaged in. PMLT originally described part of its impact as “Mobilised pioneers transforming communities” based on a “proliferation of tangible, vital and diverse mission projects and communities.” Similarly, in one of the interviews, a member of staff expressed the hope that people would “create transformational, tangible things”. This suggests that the intent has remained similar and that this is a useful yardstick to apply to the activities of PMLT participants.

The diversity of pioneering

One of the first things that is striking when reviewing what students on the course do is that there is a diversity of expressions or out-workings of pioneering initiative. It is not uncommon for PMLT participants to engage in more than one thing, such as leading a missional community and creating another initiative alongside it. Some examples of the range of PMLT participant activities are shown below:

- Allotments
- Arts – from yarn bombing to new cultural centres
- Body image and self worth for young women addressing eating disorders
- Boxercise
- Chaplain
- Choir
- Comedy club
- Church plant
- Community development – sometimes employed in a secular context
- Club nights
- Community centre
- Community gardens
- Community mission house
- Cooking

- Dementia singing café
- Estate-based - increased missional focus on estate, leading a church, family days and festivals, community cafes
- Female Genital Mutilation campaign/charity
- Friary
- Health and wellbeing
- High street renewal
- Homeless initiatives
- Living/serving in a red light district
- Men in sheds
- Messy church
- Missional community
- New charities – set up
- Pagan festivals – running Christian stands
- Pastor
- Pig farm
- Prisons and families
- Prom dresses
- Repurposing and recycling businesses
- Rural transport for people with disabilities
- Shops
- Spiritual director
- Support and ministry for sex workers
- Surfing
- Wild camping

Looking at this list, it appears that there is thus an overlap of:

- **Contexts**, e.g. on a housing estate or in a village;
- **People** they reach or engage with – typically the underserved or marginalised, whether this was a particular neighbourhood or attendees at a pagan festival;

- **Issues** they engage with, such as arts or FGM; and
- **Descriptions of roles** that sometimes fit in a recognisable “church” mode, e.g. serving a parish, establishing a friary, acting as a chaplain, as well as those that do not, e.g. a social enterprise or campaign.

This not only demonstrates diversity, but also a measure of complexity. Indeed, the breadth almost makes it hard to describe, although this is perhaps not surprising given that pioneering overlaps with innovation: seeing how things could be different and building something new, to paraphrase one interviewee. There is thus clear evidence of pioneers who are active, mobilised and engaged in a variety of initiatives. Whilst it is not possible to map all of the other initiatives that might be happening in proximity to those of PMLT students past and present, in many cases it seems that pioneers are reaching underserved groups and communities where there would otherwise be little or no missional activity – clear evidence of positive impact in line with the original intentions of the course.

A continuum of pioneering

The examples of pioneering and the language used to describe them also gives rise to the observation that pioneering activity occupies a continuum of things that are more or less familiar to the church and lie within it, without it⁵ or on the marginal space in between. At least two interviewees referred to the idea of modality and sodality to help explain this. The modality is the main place-based or gathered expression of the church. One interviewee said that when people hear “church”, this is what they tend to think of. The potential problem with this, they said, is that “church has collapsed into congregation.” The sodality is the spread out expressions of church, which gather around transformation. Examples given were of the Apostles in Acts or the Franciscans.

Importantly, the sodality do not stop being church - they are just outside the usual “mode” of its structures. This is ideally an and/both rather than an either/or. It is perhaps not surprising that

⁵ This refers to the institutions and routine of the church in a structural or organisational sense, i.e. “without” denotes activities that are outside of this visible church, rather than being attached to a particular ecclesiology. These norms can of course change over time, with the consequence that what is considered pioneering is likely to shift over time.

this is referenced by people who want to hold a creative tension between the newness of pioneering and love for established expressions of church. Indeed, one of the interviewees said that, “The energy of the church in mission is best carried by both.”

Interestingly, whilst PMLT is actively selecting pioneers, some are attached to more traditional churches. This is reflected in the heatmap, below.

Data based on analysis of 92 PMLT students for whom there was adequate data to make a judgment on both scales. Some students had lower contact if, for instance, they had only done one module or if they had dropped out.

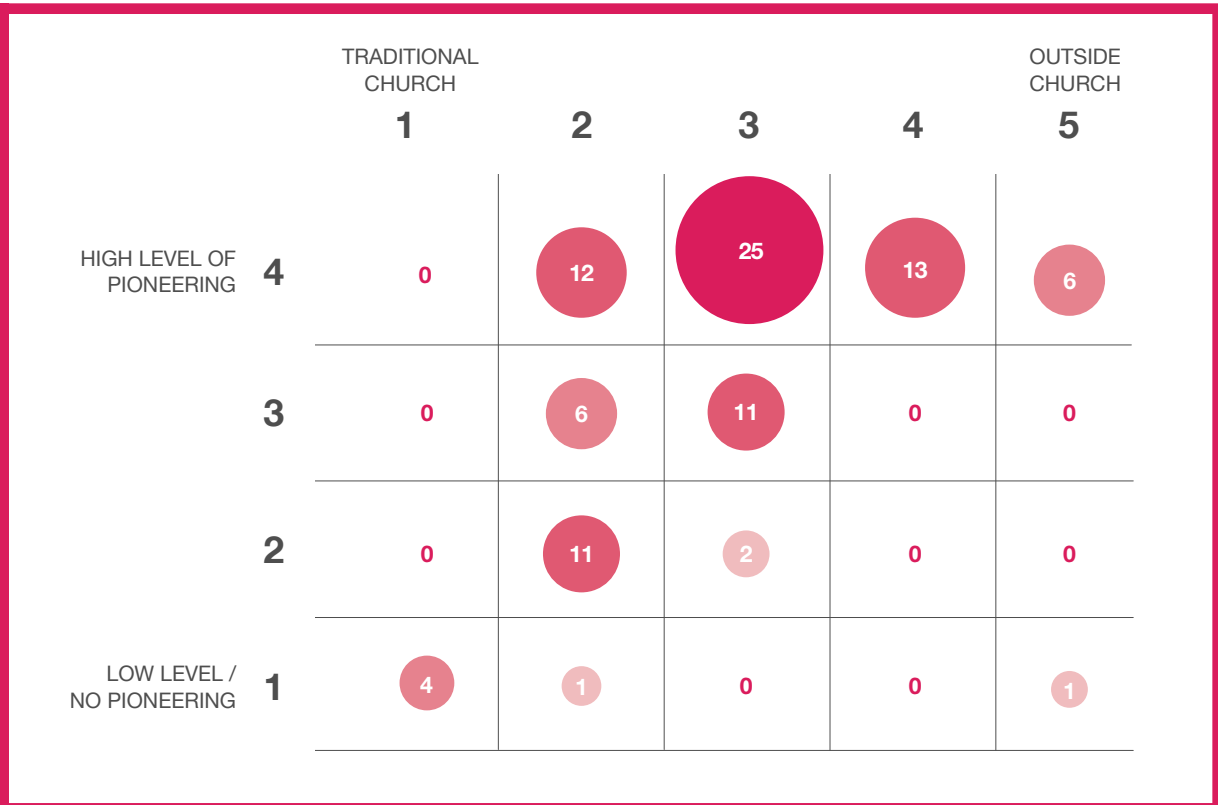
The scales used were as follows:

For context:

1. Rooted in traditional church
2. Shift in established church – outreach from the norm to new people groups and new locations – reaching new groups in response to local need, possibly in a new location
3. Alternative faith communities, unchurched or dechurched. Might be on the fringe of established church
4. Largely independent initiative tapping into church resources, links or support
5. Wholly independent initiative e.g. standalone social enterprise, charity or network

For pioneering:

4. Primary person – pioneering something new
3. Assisting person – growing something up
2. Not directly involved in pioneering but engaged in a context or place where people are pioneering
1. Not involved in pioneering at a personal level – may be weak link through an organisation or no pioneering activity at all



A number of observations can be made from this evidence (which was also corroborated by the survey, a smaller sample but showing a similar distribution):

- **The majority of students (80%, 73/92 students) show evidence of pioneering activity** at the time of this evaluation. The larger clusters are all at the top of the diagram. This is highly positive. Amongst those showing pioneering activity, there is a ratio of approximately three to one between those who are the primary leader of something new that they are starting (56 students) compared to those who are in a significant but supportive role (17 students).
- **Of those pioneering, half (36 past and present students) are pioneering on the fringes of church.** This includes a significant number of ordained and licensed lay pioneers. Many are engaged in missional communities. There is also a pronounced element of community outreach and support. It is interesting that this category is the most common for students. It may be that this reflects CMS's own status as a community rooted in the Anglican Church with a strong, historic missional emphasis to those outside the church – a liminal space. Perhaps students are attracted to this and they themselves want to operate in the crossover. It is also possible that this is a fertile fringe for pioneering activities: in some cases, church resources have supported pioneering activity (although equally many have operated without this). In others, it seems that a missional community has developed and it may be that the community itself has helped sustain a level of activity and service to others.
- **The other 37 pioneers are split more or less equally between operating inside established church contexts and almost entirely outside of them.** The last of these is perhaps not that surprising, in that pioneering is often associated with an outward, sodal focus. One interviewee said that pioneers on the course were engaged in creative mission initiatives which might not look like “forming a new ecclesial community”. Indeed, some see pioneer as a term that should be reserved for those who are innovating outside the church. However, with 18, almost 20% of the sample, pioneering within it, it seems that this is

worthy of consideration. One student was involved in helping three churches transition to a more pioneering mind-set, characterised by flourishing communities serving the villages. Another was “turning a church inside out”, working with the congregation to serve new people in that context and effectively helping the church to pioneer.

- **A minority are not pioneering.** However, it is useful to differentiate between those who are not pioneering at all and those who are nonetheless active in supporting or promoting it without actively leading it. There are several examples of people in traditional church contexts advocating for the importance of pioneering, for instance by creating roles and recruiting for pioneers. One interviewee said that people on the inside, in positions of authority can “broker the space” and help change the system. They can thus play a role in changing the environment. It is also the case, including for some of the ordinands or CMS mission partners, that they have pioneering intent and potential but are not yet engaged in pioneering activity because they are in a period of training.
- Only one person is shown in the bottom right part of the diagram. This is the most worrying category in that it represents people who are not pioneering and are not in the church. This would seem to be zone of failure, perhaps based on burn-out, where having started positively they have not been able to sustain their pioneering activity and faith.

Interestingly, some pioneer communities, including Earlsfield, Kasama and the Upper Room, have sent multiple attendees to the course, all of whom are counted above. This would seem to be both a vote of confidence in the course, in terms of relational connections and referral to something that people found worthwhile. There are also signs that a shared frame of understanding and skills around pioneering held by more than one person has helped these communities develop. For instance, someone who was assisting in one missional community is now setting up a separate but related local community café. The typical

pattern here seems to be of a leader who builds capacity amongst a team, with PMLT being part of this.

This data is therefore particularly useful in showing the scale of pioneering across the students who have studied with CMS. It also suggests some different roles within pioneering, including the missional entrepreneur, the missional “intrapreneur”⁶, those supporting pioneer leaders, and those who are sympathetic to pioneering. Beneath these roles is a very wide range of pioneering modes. One theme was of the pioneer mystic. This sometimes overlapped with a contemplative, creative or artistic mode. Another emerging type was the wanderer – people making themselves available in a place or community or operating as an itinerant friar. It might be interesting to explore other aspects of the historical tradition of Christianity as a means to identify where else pioneering might emerge or how it might be interpreted. It is certainly not the domain of one personality or disposition. That pioneering is as varied as it is widespread amongst the students is encouraging. For almost every pioneer on the course, there is a place or community being served, suggesting a high multiplicative effect in these contexts. There is strong evidence that the original vision of “Mobilised pioneers transforming communities” based on a “proliferation of tangible, vital and diverse mission projects and communities” is being achieved. There may also be an opportunity for CMS to develop a typology of pioneering based on its experience, which could be of benefit to students and the wider pioneering movement.

⁶ The analogy comes from business, where entrepreneurship typically means creating a new and self-contained organisation. However, activity can also be intrapreneurial, where an innovative initiative is happening within an organisation.

PMLT'S EFFECT ON PIONEERING INITIATIVES

The question that follows on from the predominantly pioneering activity of past and present students is to what extent the course enabled or added to this. As one of the staff noted, whilst some people start things whilst on the course, some would be doing them anyway. Be that as it may, the survey of past and present students showed that all participants credit PMLT with helping their pioneering initiative(s). The impact of PMLT was that:

- 37.5% (9 people) said they had started something new in terms of a project or community as a result of doing the course. "I left my church and started a fresh expression" is an example from one of the interviews.
- 66.7% (16 people) said that PMLT had aided in the improvement of something they were already doing. One observation was that the training changes the way people approach things. This seems to be linked to the emphasis on reflective practice. For instance, "being part of the community gave me a context within which I could evaluate, compare and locate what was happening in my parish in the light of what was going on elsewhere - which was really helpful and affirming". This survey quote indicates that they did not fundamentally alter what they did but that it was sharpened in the context of the learning community.
- 50% (12 people) said that they diversified what they were already doing. Some of these appear to have been new initiatives in a church or missional community. In some cases this has been further aided by peers sharing what they've done – one example was of a farming project drawing on the experience of another student.

All students surveyed credited PMLT with helping their pioneering initiative, whether by starting it, improving it or diversifying it.



Pioneers on the course try things – even if they don't work. There are signs of an increasing depth or maturation not just in individual pioneers but in their communities, with people describing teams developing, leadership being shared, and local communities taking ownership of groups or activities. One survey respondent also referred to their sense of renewed energy due to the course. Whilst this is at one remove from the effect on the community or initiative, it seems probable that resourcing the person who resources an initiative is likely to lead to greater sustainability.

It was observed by one of the staff that whilst they were encouraged by the different pioneering expressions they saw students engaged in, it was also the case that it "takes longer to develop things on the ground". There is an issue with regard to how 'success' is measured in pioneering contexts. On a diocesan level, this can have an impact upon whether a pioneer or initiative will receive funding. One interviewee observed that the Church of England would not put funding into pioneers because their results don't measure up against the conventional "success" criteria (e.g. numerical growth) of other forms of pioneering, such as church planting, which they may not even be seeking. Their belief was that bishops wanted results in a short time-frame, which then makes it clear whether or not their investment was justified. This relates to a significant potential challenge in measuring transformation of communities, when the pioneering activities and their potential effects are so diverse. The basic heuristic of missional activity based on seeing and building something different is valid. But providing pioneers with models of measurement that reflect their impact better would be beneficial, although this would need to be coupled with changes in the outlook of some parts of the establishment if they are to accept that pioneering could be as important to the church as it is to the areas and communities that pioneers serve. Perhaps the most significant long-term risk for pioneering in, alongside, and through existing ecclesial structures is not being able to change how pioneering initiatives are measured and evaluated. In the long run, what is measured becomes what matters.

Key messages

- The pioneering work of PMLT students takes place in diverse contexts, with different people groups. These are often underserved or unreached by church and sometimes society as well. It may relate to specific issues or needs or have a more holistic, often place-based, focus.
- The vast majority of students past and present are actively engaged in pioneering. For all of the pioneers who have participated, there is likely to be a high number of people engaged with the different projects and communities they have set up.
- Pioneering is happening inside the church as well as on its fringes and beyond its margins. Pioneering is a rich mix with different roles emerging.
- There is strong evidence from observation and from students past and present that pioneering helps their initiatives to grow, develop and diversify.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: CMS AND THE CHURCH CORPORATE



It could be argued that CMS has effectively been training pioneers since its founding in 1799. For over two centuries it has equipped and sent out people called to share Christ in new ways, therefore it seems appropriate that CMS now provides training for pioneers – lay and ordained; Anglican and from other denominations. Becoming an Acknowledged Community in the Church of England in 2009 has also provided it with a status within the institution of the church and within this community is the order of CMS pioneers, commissioned to lead mission ‘on the edges of the church.’⁷ Since its inception, the PMLT course on which these pioneers have been trained, has established an even greater connection with the Church of England. Training of ordinands was approved in 2012, and the Foundation Degree (FdA) programme transitioned to Ministry Division’s Common Awards programme in 2014. As a result of these developments, CMS has positioned itself both within the institution, as well as being active on its periphery.

An organisation with a long history, CMS manages to be at the intersection of old and new within the context of the Church of England, and within the wider context of the British church. It has a history of doing contextual mission in an ever-evolving way, meaning that it has the ability to bridge the gap between those who are on the edges, pioneering in new ways, and those still firmly within the traditional structures of the church. In the language of Winter and Arbuckle, both referenced in interviews, CMS has the ability to introduce sodal methods of ministry into the modality of the Church of England. This is a position unique to CMS – a mission order, a place of training and a part of the institution.

Our findings suggest that this context has a significant and positive impact upon both the pioneers training with CMS and the Church of England itself.

CMS Values

Students spoke of the impact that training in a place with a long history of cross-cultural mission had upon them. The values that have been applied to overseas mission over past decades have translated well to the context of pioneering in the UK. British

society is now one in which the gospel is profoundly counter-cultural and therefore this is an important element of training and equipping pioneers. It is a noticeably different ‘USP’ to that of other courses, with more than one student commenting that the PMLT felt noticeably different to courses with an emphasis upon church planting models of church growth. This was aided by the ‘broad spectrum’ of students that the course attracted. CMS has traditionally sent out both lay and ordained people, and this is also the case with the PMLT course. For students who felt no calling towards ordination, or even the Church of England, this was an important factor in choosing to study with CMS.

A question raised by students was whether CMS needed to emphasise its radical roots more, particularly with regard to allowing itself to be shaped by its pioneers. Pioneers largely work with those outside the church, and when those communities were invited into CMS, the contrast was particularly stark. As one student described: “When you bring people from that environment into CMS, it shows how affected it is by being a Christian space – it’s a hard place to come into as a non-Christian!” This is an example of CMS being at the intersection between the world of pioneering and the institution of the church. How does one allow itself to be shaped by the other?

Impact upon CMS as an Organisation

Conversely, what impact is pioneer training having upon CMS? A renewed and vibrant CMS was part of the original intent of the course. At some level, this is borne out by, on the one hand, some positivity from the main organisation, including the commitment of resources, and on the other the greater focus that the course has brought to mission activities in the UK. There also seem to have been some benefits to CMS’s reputation in the UK. However, the impact on the wider community of CMS is unknown. CMS members were not included in this evaluation, so there is no evidence of what they understand the PMLT course to be, or whether it has affected their understanding of what CMS is in 2015. However, this was a question brought up by several of those interviewed, suggesting that it might be something to consider in future.

To what extent then is the PMLT course integrated into the wider framework of CMS? Is the mission order of lay pioneers understood by other members of the community? PMLT is a source of innovation in mission that broadens the community of CMS. It is also a potential resource for People in Mission serving overseas. There are possible overlaps here. It is worth considering that some mission partners are already in or close to a pioneering mode, whereas others might not be. For this reason, as a source of training and community, PMLT may be a better fit for some than others: to protect its distinctiveness and serve mission partners well, it is an option for their training but should not necessarily be the default one, a point made by one of the interviewees. Students also raised the question of their involvement in the wider organisation of CMS. Being in Oxford once a week meant that they did have the opportunity to connect with other members of staff and visitors, but realistically this is not a lot of time in which to do so, and the study day is so full that it is difficult to fit anything else into it. Some students were also unsure of what it really meant to be an authorised lay pioneer, outside of their own pioneering context. Was it another network? Did it guarantee status within the wider church? A coalition of pioneers who had an agenda to effect change in the church? For the order to have real weight, these are questions that need to be considered further.

The purpose and meaning of pioneer training also need to be adequately communicated to the wider membership of CMS. On the one hand, this would effectively act as marketing for the programme – increasing awareness of its existence; contributing to a better understanding of ‘mission’ today; and highlighting CMS’ changing involvement in the Church of England. Supporting churches, particularly those outside of areas where pioneering is taking place, may not have understood that CMS is more than just a mission agency. Increasing their understanding of pioneering and its importance to the future of the church is very important to the continuation of the PMLT course, not least from a financial perspective.

⁷ <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2014/07/cms-creates-new-order-for-lay-pioneer-ministry.aspx>

Relationship with the Church of England

An important element of the origin of the PMLT course is the fact the CMS was approached by Ministry Division when conversations first began regarding the training of Ordained Pioneer Ministers (OPMs). This illustrates a recognition on the part of the institution that CMS had a level of expertise and experience regarding pioneering that it could learn from. Since this original vote of confidence, there are signs that PMLT has made an impression on the Church of England, something that is explored further below, particularly around dioceses and lay pioneers. Unfortunately, record keeping and reporting within the Church of England means it is not possible to either show that the numbers of OPMs have increased or show PMLT's role in the extent of this. It is therefore necessary to draw on the opinions of external interviewees. One was very positive about PMLT, to the extent that they saw CMS as helping transform the narrative around pioneering in the Church of England at a national level, working alongside the Fresh Expressions team. However, whilst another felt that there had been progress across the Anglican church with regards to pioneering, they felt PMLT's role was one of several possible factors, including the activities of other educational institutions.

CMS, through the course, community and wider activities such as publishing (see, for instance, *The Pioneer Gift*, 2014, ed. Baker and Ross) has helped to nurture pioneering in the context of the church. Whilst it is not possible to determine how much of changes in the church are down to PMLT, the act of naming and describing pioneering within the context of a course that is recognised and credible appears to have helped. The connections with Ministry Division also mean that CMS has been part of ongoing conversations about the development of pioneering and theological education - "putting on a suit and talking to the right people", as one interviewee termed it! CMS has thus provided something of a voice for pioneers and pioneering, and may thus have helped to protect or grow it within the Church of England.

Training

The course has impacted the church because it is unique – no one else in the Church of England is training pioneers in the same way, and therefore CMS has had a lot to teach the institution. Some Training Institutions created a pioneer 'add on' when OPM training was initiated, whereas CMS created something new out of its history of contextual mission. This is reflected in the table below and in more detail in Appendix 2.

Mixed-mode training is cheaper than traditional residential Ordinand training, which gives CMS the edge in terms of discussions regarding the future of theological education, as reducing the cost for the Church of England is crucial. Students also appreciated the fact that those teaching on the course were practitioners who drew from their own experiences. The PMLT course is not "ivory tower" theological education. In fact, some students suggested that if it became too "institutional" it would lose some of its attraction. It is rooted in the practice and theology of pioneering, and this was a key factor for many of the students.

Our analysis of trends in British theological education (see appendix 2) demonstrates that while CMS does have a distinctive offer in

terms of being both a centre of pioneer training and a Church of England ordination route, there is competition from other courses and colleges in each area. For example, the pioneer centre that Ridley College Cambridge has developed is open to independent, lay and Ordinand students, but modules cannot be studied on an individual basis. St Mellitus offers a full-time, mixed-mode route on a very similar model to the PMLT course, with a focus upon pioneering, but again, individual modules cannot be pursued. Outside the Church of England, a number of institutions now offer MAs in mission and pioneering that are similar to the one offered by CMS – which means that CMS will need to continue to examine what marks its MA programme in particular as distinctive. As mentioned above, the landscape of theological education in the Church of England is in a time of change, so this is a factor that needs to be seriously considered when planning the future development of the course. Aside from possible similarities in the content and structure of other programmes, it may also be that some choose to market themselves using the language of pioneering, particularly if this is becoming recognised and popular within parts of the church.

| | Min div | FdA | BA | MA | Lay? | Single Modules? | Dispersed/ Distance? |
|--------------------------|---------|-----|----|----|------|-----------------|----------------------|
| CMS PMLT | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ridley College | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | |
| St John's Nottingham | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Trinity College Bristol | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| St Mellitus College | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| For Mission – Springdale | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Cliff College | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Redcliffe College | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |

Priestly Pioneers

The training of OPMs means that within the Church of England there is a new category of priests – referred to by more than one interviewee as ‘priestly pioneers’. As a senior member of the church commented, all priests should be pioneering in some way, but only a small number of priests are called to be pioneers in the sense of doing something radical on the fringes of the church. In the development of the PMLT course, the ‘priestly’ formation of OPM students is managed via a relationship with Cuddesdon College, a Church of England Training Institution in its own right.

One Ordinand we interviewed highlighted this formation as an area that left them unprepared for ministry as a priestly pioneer. It felt as though they were in the minority at both CMS (owing to the lower number of ordinands compared to lay students) and at Cuddesdon (as pioneers were in the minority). Although CMS and PMLT have ordained members of staff, until this summer there was not one who had done this as a pioneer. Students who had come as ordinands felt role models for priestly pioneers who had gone through the same route and came with the benefit of that experience were lacking. Given that this is a key element of CMS’ contribution to the pioneering ministry of the Church of England, it seems that this is an issue that needs attention. This could be through the appointment of further ordained pioneers to the staff team; inviting ordained pioneers to speak or teach specific sessions; or through the facilitation of mentoring or networking specifically among ordained pioneers. There may also be opportunities for CMS and Cuddesdon to explore the blend of training across the whole of the ordination pathway, beyond their time with PMLT, so that OPM students gain a better experience and preparation.

Common Award

The 2014/15 academic year was the first year of the national ‘Common Award’ programme, a degree programme created in collaboration with all the Church of England’s Training Institutions and courses, validated by Durham University. While each institution was able to shape their version, it meant that there was a certain amount of difference between the course CMS had offered with

Oxford Brookes and that now offered with Durham. For staff, this transition was a major undertaking, especially given that their existing resources were already stretched. Many students commented upon the change, several negatively, owing to a perceived reduction in the amount of portfolio and reflective work, compared to the Brookes’ syllabus. This is an understandable concern given that reflecting on practice is fundamental to PMLT’s approach. However, there is still space for portfolio and reflective work. Indeed, the maximum amount of portfolio work that could be included under Common Award has been included, and there is still substantial space for creative reflection. It is also the case that the programme is also still evolving, with plenty of opportunity for future changes. This was reflected in feedback from staff and external interviewees.

It seems that there is space for ongoing work with Common Awards to shape it to the needs of students and that Common Awards would welcome this as it beds in and is improved. This is therefore more opportunity than threat. The CMS imprint on PMLT is not erased by the shift to Durham. With Common Awards, it could ever be argued that the PMLT course has now given more integrity to pioneering within the context of the Church of England because its training is officially on a par with other Training Institutions. PMLT might even serve to strengthen the importance of reflective practice in the light of local context and cultures, something that all ordinands as well as other practitioners need. This touches on a deeper debate about the best way(s) to train people in the church. The usual model is to take people out of their context for the first part of education, then put them in a new one whilst they serve their “apprenticeship” as a curate. PMLT offers an effective approach from which the broader church could learn.

Learning Community

As mentioned above, a major finding of our research was the importance students placed upon the network of pioneers that CMS gave them access to. One student described the students and alumni as a learning community that continued to share learning with each other outside classes and after their course

had been completed. This results in a significant resource for the wider church, particularly with regard to learning and experience of pioneer ministry. For example, a pioneer Facebook group in which learning is shared currently numbers 338.⁸ This network has a huge amount to offer the wider church, so it is important to consider how best the PMLT team can support and resource it. There is an interesting division here, in that many pioneers are oriented towards those underserved by the church and do not necessarily intend to change the institution – they are getting on with something else. However, CMS and PMLT as an umbrella for pioneers can help to describe, nurture, credential and advocate for this emerging network. Over time, this has the potential to create something tangible and energising within the broader church.

The network produced by the course is possibly unique in comparison with other modes of training. Rather than an alumni network, it is a place of continued learning. Students who had completed courses spoke of continuing pastoral care and advice from the staff team. It is possible that because PMLT is so unlike anything else on offer in the UK, there are few other places where such support could be sought. There is a challenge here in terms of resourcing the network, which will only grow as more people do the course and alumni as well as other pioneers remain in contact. Provision could theoretically be made for a national support network that sits outside PMLT so that it does not become a burden for an over-worked staff team. However, this would not necessarily serve pioneers or the course that well. The combined emphasis on learning and practice seems successful and the PMLT itself is seeking the success of pioneers beyond the term of the course. Finding ways to support pioneers when they have left the formal component of study is a good long term strategy for their sustainability which is closely aligned with the intended impact of the course. There may also be a financial dimension, if pioneers find out about the course and choose to study for a qualification or take a number of modules over time. PMLT should therefore consider to what extent it is prepared to support the community as a resource for pioneers that is needed and valued, and to what extent the community may need to be resourced in other ways, including by its members themselves.

⁸ As at August 2015

Dioceses

Despite CMS' level of acceptance on a national level, it is clear from our research that there are some issues at diocesan level. Dioceses wield considerable influence for Anglican pioneers (three quarters of the total), including through their ability to choose who is ordained or licensed and how resources are allocated. Some are choosing to use this positively, for instance creating pioneering curacies with housing and support, whereas others are neutral to or even wary of pioneers. The attitude towards pioneering and CMS thus vary widely between different dioceses. One diocese with a CMS-supporting Bishop pursuing a mission-focused agenda sees the course and related training as hugely important to its work within the diocese. In contrast, other dioceses have bishops who will not recognise the Authorised Lay Pioneer status conferred upon students and feel that CMS are pushing them to do so, regardless of their own selection processes. This is particularly interesting given that a significant minority of students were encouraged towards PMLT from dioceses that would not select them for ordination. CMS then seems to have discerned a pioneering vocation which may then lead to licensing as a lay pioneer rather than ordination. This has a personal cost for pioneers who are highly committed to their mission. It is far from ideal if diocesan politics is stymying mission and potentially losing pioneers (those too who might be too discouraged to study and would not show up on the course). It is also indicative of a lack of understanding regarding the role of pioneering in the church.

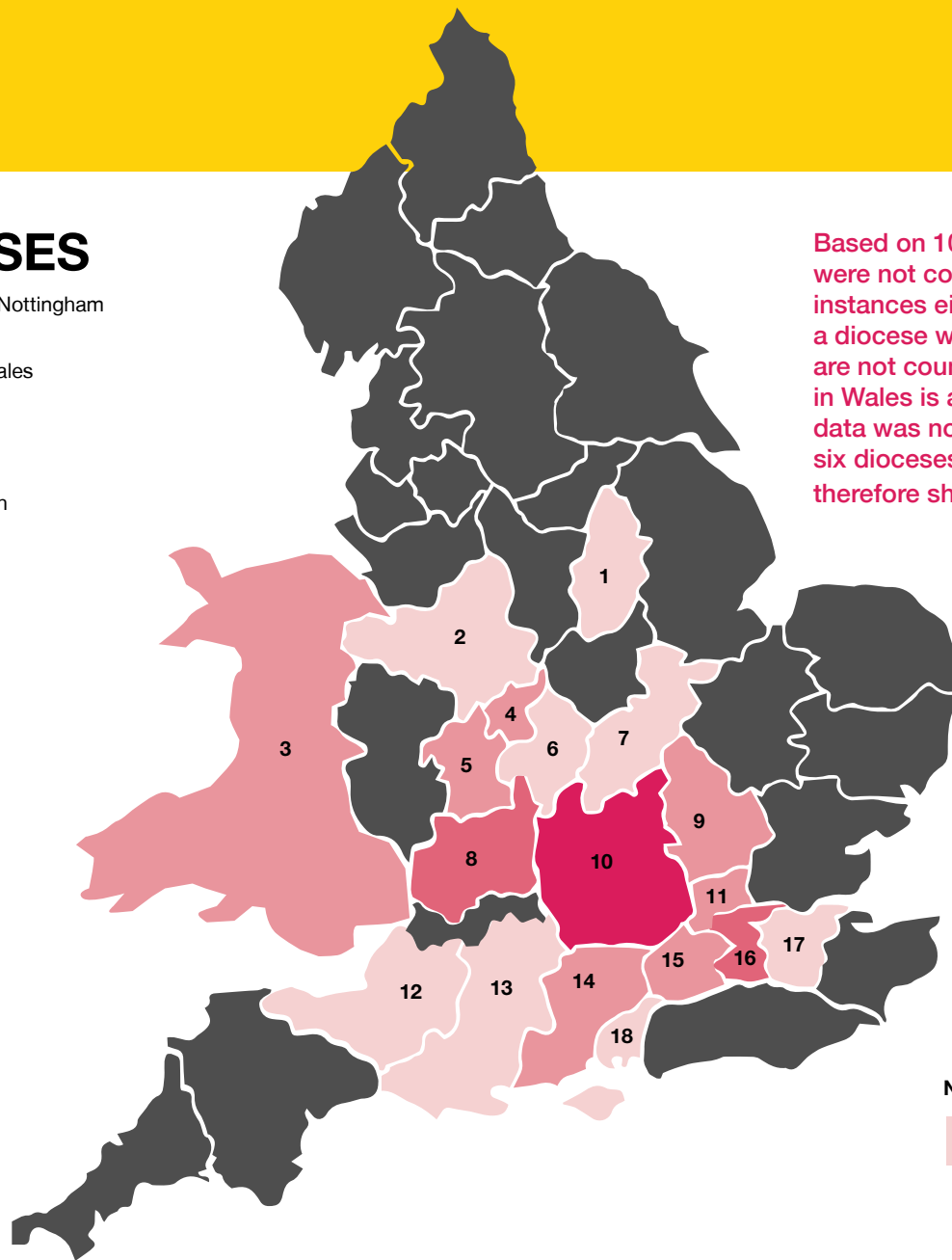
The map of dioceses shows where pioneers connected to the Anglican church are active. This only shows where those studying with PMLT are: it is probably influenced as much by travel patterns to Oxford as the attitude of a particular diocese (which in any case is unlikely to be homogenous). However, it would seem to make sense to engage with those with concentrations of pioneers to encourage their positive engagement with pioneering and share learning across them, something that PMLT has already been seeking to do through the regional training partnership.

An important question to ask may be how CMS can best serve the varied dioceses? In positive cases, this might be providing training that is highly regarded by those in the dioceses – whether that is lay or ordained pioneers. For other dioceses, it may be about encouraging key people to visit CMS and see what the PMLT course is all about, getting to know pioneers and hearing about their work. In this context, the important question to answer is “who needs to understand pioneering and what CMS offers?” It may not need to be the bishop, but the DDOs and Archdeacons. Some dioceses may have a limited understanding of pioneering or mission generally, and instead might be helped by being trained and resourced in this area.

This is one element of what one staff member termed “scrappy insurgency” – the constructive disruption of the church as institution. This is particularly applicable to the national understanding of pioneering. While the narrative is largely positive, there is certainly a role for CMS to be the organisation who asks the difficult questions regarding pioneering – particularly those surrounding the resourcing and training of pioneers. Given the proposals contained within the Resourcing Ministerial Education (RME) report, one element of this may be the protection of specialist pioneer training, particular amongst those dioceses that do not understand it. This also connects with a feeling from among the students that CMS needs to act as a form of spokesperson for pioneers. The network of pioneers that come together through CMS could form a “pioneer union”, but to make it a “network of teeth” (as one interviewee put it), this perhaps needs to draw on the authority and history of CMS itself. This would enable the needs of pioneers to be considered within the wider church.

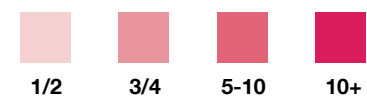
DIOCESES

- 1 Southwell & Nottingham
- 2 Lichfield
- 3 Church of Wales
- 4 Birmingham
- 5 Worcester
- 6 Coventry
- 7 Peterborough
- 8 Gloucester
- 9 St. Albans
- 10 Oxford
- 11 London
- 12 Bath & Wells
- 13 Salisbury
- 14 Winchester
- 15 Guildford
- 16 Southwark
- 17 Rochester
- 18 Portsmouth



Based on 102 records. 29 of these students were not connected to a diocese. In all other instances either the location or connection to a diocese was unknown and these students are not counted in the 102 total. The Church in Wales is an Anglican Province. Sufficient data was not available to identify which of the six dioceses students had come from and it is therefore shown as one area.

NUMBER OF PIONEERS



Lay Pioneers

CMS has been demonstrably ahead of the curve with regards to training lay pioneers. Recent statistics referred to by one interviewee show that over half of all Fresh Expressions are led by lay people, yet 40% of them stated that they had received 'little or no training'⁹. Although pioneering and Fresh Expressions are not synonymous, and in any case there are pioneers on the course outside the Church of England, in training lay pioneers prior to receiving authorisation to train OPMs from Ministry Division, CMS demonstrated a commitment to training lay pioneers that has continued through the five years of the PMLT course.

Despite some dioceses' negative attitudes towards pioneering, the statistics show that lay pioneers make a significant contribution to the life of the church. Therefore, the training and equipping of these pioneers is a key area of growth for CMS and a way in to those dioceses that have previously resisted pioneers. Ordained pioneers may only ever account for a small number of clergy, and there will continue to be questions asked regarding their funding and housing, however these questions are not as pertinent for lay pioneers who do not have the same expectations. The majority will be volunteers, with a passion for pioneering, but in need of equipping. This could prove to be an important source of income and students for CMS, especially if more dioceses follow the example of Leicester, who have commissioned CMS to train their lay pioneers. This element of training for pioneers in dioceses would also have an impact upon the way in training is delivered.

Partnerships

Ecumenically, there are visible partnerships between CMS and other denominations, owing to the range of churches that students come from. Several students commented on the positive dynamic achieved through the wide spectrum of traditions and denominations represented by students, particularly with regard to a 'generous orthodoxy' in terms of theology and practice.

One notable partnership had been with the Methodist Church, involving the training of some of their Venture FX Pioneers. Previously, no pioneer training was provided by the Methodists for those it selected for this programme, but funding was available to those who wanted further training. But, as of the 2015/16 academic year, the Methodist Cliff College is offering a MA programme in Pioneering Fresh Expressions, and as a result of this development, no further funding will be available to Methodist pioneers in order to train with CMS or anywhere else. However, it is important that CMS continue to look for similar partnerships – where pioneers are at work but need training to equip them further. This again relates to the question of how the course is marketed.

Within the Church of England, partnerships, such as that formed with Leicester Diocese, are an important area for further development for PMLT. Collaborations are emerging with other dioceses, although since they are at an earlier stage it is not appropriate to deal with them in specifics. They enjoy a geographic spread, which is good given the more central and south bias in student intake, i.e. these could reach new people who might otherwise struggle to participate in the course. It also seems that there will be different types of relationship to work out. One of the key determinants is whether there are potential local staff who are experienced pioneers and could help with training. Where there are, this brings strength to the prospective new location, which could also benefit the original centre and staff. It will also require less resources from CMS if they are not providing teaching staff. Conversely, some new centres may well require greater input of staff time. This is not a reason to avoid them but the resource model needs to be appropriate to covering the cost and PMLT should be wary of spreading itself too thin. This is a high quality course that could have a wider benefit to pioneers and the church.

Key Messages

Necessarily, this section focuses on the Church of England.

- CMS has been a good home for PMLT, based on its experience and culture. Although members may not be generally aware of it, PMLT has been supported by the organisation and in turn appears to have had some positive effects on CMS.
- PMLT has a training model that is currently distinctive within theological education, although this is a sector that is experiencing rapid and significant changes. The shift to accrediting PMLT through Common Award, the standard for the Church of England for ordination, has entailed some changes but these do not appear to have altered the fundamental emphasis of the course on reflection and practice.
- There is a need and opportunity to strengthen the course as it relates to priestly pioneers, in keeping with the 'and/bothness' of PMLT as a space for ordained and lay pioneers. There has been significant progress with and through lay pioneers although in some cases this has led to tensions with dioceses.
- The learning community and network has given scale to pioneering but will also raise resource questions as it grows.
- CMS has a number of partnership opportunities that could prove positive for bringing the course to more pioneers. The nature of these relationships will need to be determined so that resources, particularly staff time, can be estimated and allocated appropriately.

⁹ Church Army Research Unit, 'An analysis of fresh expressions of Church and church plants begun in the period 1992-2012', Church Growth Research Project, <https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/sites/default/files/churchgrowthresearch-freshexpressions.pdf> [Retrieved 11.9.15], 60

CONCLUSIONS



1. PMLT HAS STRENGTHENED THE IDENTITY OF PIONEERS INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY

Pioneers who participate in PMLT develop greater self-understanding, particularly in terms of the language and theology used to help them reflect on what has often been relatively intuitive practice. “Sitting down and writing essays about what you’re actually doing,” as one student said, was seen by them as one of the most helpful aspects of the course. Another said that they did not previously have the words to describe what they were doing and that their engagement to do mission among people where people is not typically done – their local context – is better as a result. This particular student said that they now had new ways of doing mission due to their experience of the course. There is therefore a strong link between pioneers understanding what they are doing and their perception of the effectiveness of their practice. Still another had said that the course gave them the confidence to step out and set up a new missional community.

Just as the students have had to develop and mature, so has the course had to name something and make it visible. Rather appropriately, the inception of the course and its approach have also been pioneering. Whilst accepting a broad range of people, it has kept pioneering as something different, meaning that there is an integrity to the term pioneering as well as a diversity. PMLT’s staff and supporters have had to reflect on the emerging practice of identifying, training and supporting pioneers. This is healthy for PMLT in terms of its ongoing development and it is encouraging that this is still present after five years. CMS itself has grown into and recognised the importance of PMLT, at the same time as CMS being identified with pioneering, by pioneers as well as other parts of the church. This shows progress in line with the original objective of a renewed and vibrant CMS.

The main work to do here is how pioneering and ordination can combine within a single identity. This may always be a hard task but the fact that there is some negativity around ordination means people who can perhaps do more than any others to bridge different

perspectives have a hard job. As observed above, the modal and sodal together carry the energy of the church and mission – accepting and even celebrating differences in identity is potentially a sign of maturity. Work is underway here in who CMS brings together but more remains to be done.

2. PMLT HAS HELPED RESOURCE THE CALLINGS AND COMMUNITIES OF PIONEERS

This pioneering identity has been forged through students’ own learning and reflection, but this is inseparable from the development of a community and culture that encourages the sharing of knowledge and experience. This is a learning community which has an identity in its own right and this also appears to have operated as a network of support for pioneers. Such support and collaboration were part of the original intent and exists between students and staff, who were praised by students. It also extends beyond the course through the Pioneer Hub. Connection is a very important resource given the potential loneliness and long time periods (five, ten or fifteen years, based on the stories of students) to birth and sustain pioneering initiatives. There seems to be significant energy around the alumni network and how this is maximised is important. Some of it can remain fluid, mediated by students sharing ideas or collaborating on projects. A skills bank is also under development and this could be a useful way to share good practice and even content for things like writing policies or preparing funding applications.

The vibrancy and importance of this community shows that PMLT is much more than a course. People are highly invested in their work and it becomes a significant and potentially primary community for practitioners. Indeed, this perhaps reflects some limits of the course. Ultimately it is cast as training; it does much more than this but this leads to a tricky responsibility for PMLT which cannot be accountable for all aspects of a pioneer’s development or success. Some people seem to be looking for more. Financial resources for projects or employment may come about through the course, and

in some cases have, but the course cannot promise these things. Nor were they the original intent of the course. Relationships created through the course have helped with this, including on the Missional Entrepreneurship module. But pioneers by their nature also need to be responsible for their resources, something that many have taken very seriously, with at least three selling their homes to fund the mission they are called to.

Nonetheless, given the intended impact of PMLT in terms of mobilised pioneers transforming communities, some financial resources could be catalytic. Some of the students and staff who contributed to this evaluation wanted to see a pot that people can apply to. Ideally it would be relatively independent, i.e. whilst it might be administered by CMS, it would be simple to access. Awards of £5-10k early in the development of a pioneering initiative could be highly beneficial, as this is the stage where several pioneers said it was hardest for others to back them. Other ideas are to frame this as a soft loan that does not have to be paid back but more might be returned if a project were successful, or operating “financial collectives”. Little detail was given around this but the idea of some kind of solidarity and mutuality between pioneers or supporters is tantalising.

The pioneers are undoubtedly mobilised in their communities – helping the sustainability of these initiatives is important and it seems that this is a likely interface for growth to be explored in future.

3. PMLT HAS GAINED CREDIBILITY AND RECOGNITION FOR PIONEERS, A PATH THAT HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN SMOOTH

The identity of pioneers that has developed through PMLT also relates to the broader church. CMS has in some cases helped serve as a bridge between their initiatives and the more established church.

PMLT embodies an and/both approach to many areas. A course of study accredited within the university system as well as the Church of England; an option for those seeking ordination, recognition as

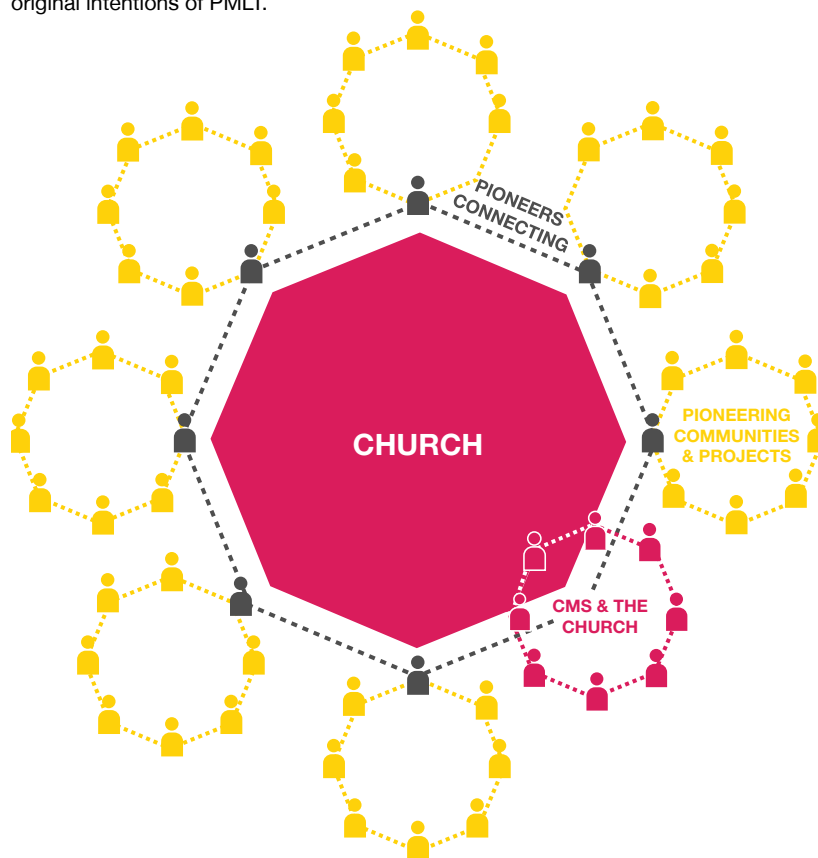
a licensed lay worker, or practitioners who don't require either; a course and a community. These tensions are held within CMS as an organisation that is itself an authorised community within the Anglican church that trains people for mission in the UK and further afield – part of the institution but one that is actively engaging with those outside, more sodal than modal. This status of the course and CMS has been broadly helpful in fostering connections and acceptance. This has happened through connections with the institution and is supported by publishing on pioneering.

However this has not been a straightforward process. As one interviewee mentioned, paraphrasing The Pioneer Gift, a pioneer is a gift to the church, but not always understood & received by it. One student observed that they work far outside the “sending church” and thinks that this church is perhaps more dubious of him than before as pioneering is outside their theology and understanding. This can also happen for those pursuing ordination. There have also been tensions, described above, related to the process of ordination and licensing. There is work for the church to do here. One interviewee spoke of not expecting pioneer ministries to necessarily evolve into or become part of parishes, with the implication that conforming to the usual structures was the implicit expectation on the part of some factions of the church. This relates to another idea that emerged from the interviews of conventional measurement not fitting pioneers. They wanted a better narrative around “success” that was less linked to growth. They made the point that regular clergy should be judged in the same way, meaning it should be consistent. Interestingly, an overemphasis on growth would not serve large parts of the established church any better than it would pioneers operating on the fringes – perhaps part of the gift of pioneering is to re-envison what meaningful transformation looks like for all churches. A changing narrative around pioneering could yet lead to a changing narrative for the church.

FINAL COMMENT

Over the course of five years, PMLT has emerged as a highly positive course and community of practice for pioneers. This has had a ripple effect, indicated in the diagram below. Connecting

pioneers to each other has strengthened their contributions in different communities and projects which are predominantly outside the usual sphere of operations of the modal church. Not only has PMLT helped pioneers reach and serve many who might otherwise have lacked this missional contact, but they have also contributed to changes within CMS and the broader church. The next section covers recommendations but these should be seen in the light of a high positive impact which is well aligned with the original intentions of PMLT.



RECOMMENDATIONS



FOR PIONEERS, WHETHER PMLT STUDENTS OR BEYOND

- 1. Hang in there.** Pioneering takes time, both in terms of personal development and in the gestation of communities and projects. Whilst it is difficult and sometimes lonely, if it is your calling it is worth persisting.
- 2. Reduce the potential sense of isolation by identifying networks of like-minded people,** particularly where you and they have shared experiences of pioneering to reflect on. The Pioneer Hubs are an existing network to draw on and they are available to people who are not students.
- 3. Consider taking the course.** Other pioneers from a variety of church backgrounds have had very positive experiences of the learning, community and personal development. They also consistently credit PMLT with improving their pioneering initiatives.
- 4. Encourage others to take the course** who might benefit from it, particularly if you are leading a missional community or other project. Having collaborators within a project who share a framework around missiology, skills, and experience, as well as having broader networks, will increase not only their individual capacity but strengthen the whole undertaking.
- 5. Think about and track the impact of your pioneering work as part of reflective practice.** Describe it. Gather evidence to demonstrate what is happening. Reflect on it and be prepared to change course to improve your work in that context. Also consider how to share it with potential supporters and funders; besides helping your pioneering activities, this can also contribute to a greater understanding of the diverse nature of pioneering.

FOR CMS AND STUDENTS

- 1. Keep PMLT for pioneers but recognise the diversity of pioneering as a calling.** PMLT is already doing this and it is therefore a strength to be retained. Both the nature of the course and community rely on selecting pioneers but it will not work with passengers, particularly given the emphasis on reflecting on

practice. At the same time, don't reject those with pioneering potential – pioneering takes time and people may arrive at the course at different stages on their journey. Also bear in mind that pioneering can be present in the modal as well as the sodal church. Maintaining this and/both tension can be creative and is in keeping with CMS' history and positioning.

- 2. Keep a similar mix of theology, mission and practice.** This is working well and is generally liked by students. Modules can change and be developed but this is a distinctive part of the course that flows from CMS's experience. The mix should also be similar if the course is delivered in other locations and potentially with other partners. This is in part channelled by staff who are themselves pioneering. How widespread is this and could more be made of it in communications and marketing? It is recommended that the role of practitioner-staff is explored further as a possible distinguishing characteristic of PMLT compared to other places that are likely to rely more on traditional full time faculty.
- 3. Consider how the learning community can extend beyond the duration of the course (before and after) and resource it accordingly.** Whilst this is to some extent down to students, there may be relatively low cost ways of encouraging it on an on-going basis, through providing opportunities or excuses for people to meet and keep in touch. The element of community that grows around but is not limited to the course is highly valued by pioneers and for some it appears to be a primary support network in what can be quite isolated contexts. It should also be noted that building community can act as a route into the course and helps sustain pioneers and pioneering initiatives after they graduate, increasing the intended impact of PMLT. Indeed, the impact of PMLT is primarily channelled by its alumni and this therefore needs to be a strategic focus for PMLT – not doing it stands to hamper the future progress of pioneers and their projects, a major risk to its purpose. For this reason, it is recommended that resources are increased and/or factored into the plans for growth. This needs to be combined with deploying them effectively.
- 4. Consider whether there is a need for one or more additional sessions – perhaps half days – to introduce people to pioneering concepts and stories.** The aim would be to

inform and engage people including those in more established expressions of church around pioneering, even if they do not intend to become pioneers. By sharing the stories of successful endeavours, it could influence the church, increasing understanding and reducing the perception of risk. PMLT could also offer sessions or a short course in what it has learnt about pioneers and how to work with and support them, perhaps in conjunction with a diocese where this has worked well, to encourage more pioneering in particular geographic areas. This would fit with the aim of changing the environment to be more supportive of pioneers.

- 5. Create a Community Mission and Innovation Fund to increase the financial resources available to pioneers for projects.** The existing bursary scheme is very positive in enabling people to enter the training and this should be continued. However, project funding, particularly at an early stage, is hard to come by. Ideally, CMS would commit some of its own resources, whether on a grant or loan basis, to help pioneers start their initiatives, with pioneers as part of the decision making process. Over time, CMS might fundraise to increase this and possibly partner with other funders.. Ultimately the imagination of pioneering needs to extend to how it is resourced in order for it to fulfil its transformative potential. Whilst ordained pioneer ministry is one valid model, there are clues within the missional entrepreneurship module about how else pioneers can sustain themselves and their communities or projects. Any fund for pioneering should seek to engage with this challenge and intentionally back different approaches to resources so that pioneers can continue not fitting in, rather than being driven into more conventional approaches (the long term prospects of which may not any better) by economic necessity.
- 6. Improve the access of OPMs to other ordained pioneer priests.** Although there is now one on the staff, this is due to a recent ordination and still leaves those following this route rather under-represented. Additional ordained pioneer experience would be timely as a new and relatively sizable cohort of ordinands start in September. This could come from staff, partners, visiting pioneer ministers or a mixture of all of them, but it would benefit OPMs to have access to some more experienced priestly pioneers. The ideal position of CMS is to encourage the “and/bothness” of ordained and lay pioneers.

7. **Broaden promotion of pioneering and the course itself.** Ideally, this would include endorsement from senior figures within the church, Anglican and wider. It should also draw on the history of CMS at the intersection of pioneering and church. CMS's central communications and messaging, including the timeline on the website, should seek to integrate the story of work overseas and in the UK, including CMS becoming an acknowledged community in the Church of England in 2009. Consider targeting storytelling and marketing messages on dioceses with a high number of pioneers, shown on the map of dioceses. They are either keen and could do more, leading to a higher likelihood of change in that diocese, or there is substantial pioneering activity already present which they would ideally understand and get behind. Publishing by staff and students on the course is also valuable in developing the discussion and is a positive to be continued.
8. **Maintain the tension between being both inside and outside of the church and inside and outside of higher education as a core gift of CMS and PMLT.** Much like pioneering itself, it offers a different vantage point from which to act. Fitting in too much, if PMLT grows and gains acceptance, could even be a danger. This tension may need to be present culturally and structurally as it grows.

FOR SCALING

1. **Accept some experimentation but be prepared to insist on the presence of key PMLT characteristics as new centres or partnerships develop.** Whilst not everything has to be the same, PMLT is well tested, well liked and effective in developing and supporting pioneers. This is rooted in elements such as reflexive practice, the space for relationships to develop and the resulting learning community. It is also a course taught predominantly by practitioners with a primarily pioneering student body. Whilst adapting to other contexts is important, these appear to be some of the key characteristics.
2. **Reach new entrants and maintain the quality.** One interviewee said that regional hubs should take similar pioneering people from a broader geographical area, not taking people who are less committed to or involved in pioneer mission. The focus should remain on contextual pioneering practice, with this as a

requirement for hubs and scaling. Whilst PMLT should not just work as a qualification or training for non-pioneers, there may be non-pioneers and not-yet pioneers who can benefit from involvement. The current 80:20 ratio of pioneers to those not currently pioneering should be taken as a guideline. Since there is evidence that pioneers value flexibility in study over formal qualifications, it may be worth considering how the course can reach more people, not just on the basis of geography. PMLT already does well in taking people from a wide range of educational backgrounds with a mix of ages, gender, and denomination. What about those who work full time, for instance? This relates to a major question – and potential risk – about who the prospective students are. This needs to be picked up by analysing who the demand comes from at the other possible learning nodes.

3. **Maintain the sense of community.** There may be some risks with different delivery models. For instance, separating modules out over too long a period for convenience in delivery or of different students might undermine the community learning environment that regular days in Oxford as well as some residential blocks has established. If anything, delivering training in one week blocks which include residential and intensive local courses is probably safer than spreading things out.
4. **Ensure that prospective partners recognise and respect an emphasis on the environment, relationships, people and interactions as much as the content.** Some interested parties have apparently expressed admiration and then asked for the curriculum – this should be a warning sign. PMLT is not a course so much as a community for those with a shared calling. Trying to separate off the learning from the 'who' and the 'how' is counterproductive to achieving impact in terms of increased pioneering.
5. **Seek the right geographical scale for the training centre and the community.** These are probably different. Training seems to be substantially about the travel time/distance for regular teaching and connecting with other pioneers. Too small, and the centres will cannibalise each other or not attract enough students. Nor are they likely to have the quality of staff in terms of experience and expertise, because they will be stretched too thin. At the risk of being over prescriptive, the travel time between them should

probably be about three to four hours, i.e. if students can reach somewhere in one and a half to two hours, they can probably do it if they are motivated (and can afford it). This would suggest that any training centre, whilst based in a diocese, should serve multiple dioceses and should not be limited by their boundaries. (In any case, intake is and should continue to be broader than the Church of England). On the other hand, communities of practice could be working at a more local level – in fact, where enough pioneers come together, the closer they are, the greater the likely potential for mutual sharing and support.

6. **Recognise and be realistic about resource needs.** Growth is resource intensive. A lack of resources will make it unlikely that new training centres and/or hubs will succeed. It is also a risk to the existing successful course if staff time is drawn into starting new things. New roles might include a remote learning manager and additional capacity to cope with the increased volume of academic administration. It is also worth considering whether local training centres should include someone to support local hubs. Since the learning community includes those who have done the course, a number which will only grow, as well as being open to others engaged in or exploring pioneering, the number of relationships will increasingly be greater in the community space than the number of students. We recommend developing a model that shares the risk of recruitment for the courses with local centres, encouraging the hub to be proactive in recruiting students. This is essential because PMLT caters to a relatively small group, i.e. the subset of pioneers who desire and can afford/incorporate training in this field. Demand is relatively unknown outside of five years of experience in Oxford. This suggests that scaling PMLT needs to be done carefully and with models that give the local hub – which should have the networks – with some of the responsibility of attracting students.
7. **Discern between licensing and joint venture arrangements when exploring collaborations.** If there are already capable people there to teach and lead, with a suitable organisation, licencing is possible. If a prospective collaborator lacks the people to teach and train, this should probably be a joint venture. Generally speaking, licencing is less resource intensive, although it still requires quality assurance, but control is reduced. Joint ventures by their nature mean entail collective decisions about

how things work. This is probably preferable in terms of finding something that is contextually appropriate and can change over time rather than “selling” PMLT as a package. The best joint ventures and licensing arrangements are likely to bring new resources, not just require. This might be students, teachers, access to new locations, new relationships, etc.. In both cases, it would seem advisable to get key people coming to PMLT modules and other sessions so they can experience and try out the culture of the course.

8. **Stay lean. Although resources will need to increase for growth, a lean model is advisable when demand is unknown.** How many more students would like to study on PMLT? With over 100 students having passed through the course, does this represent 1% of the demand, or 10%? Without knowing whether there are 900, 9900 or another number of students likely to sign up makes scaling the model difficult in terms of allocating resources. In light of this, we recommend attempting to scale in a manner that is as lean as possible. We presume that this mostly relates to staffing costs. Correspondingly, try to develop the most efficient tools and processes possible. Theological education is in a period of turbulence: many traditional theological colleges in the UK and North America are currently struggling financially, primarily due to declining student numbers. Therefore, be wary of copying the current approach to administration, management and staffing that is present in these colleges, as it is proving to be a model that cannot cope with smaller and more unpredictable student numbers. An analogy from the business world might be helpful: some argue that the best (and hardest) time to start a business is in a recession. This is because you can see more clearly how other models do not work and it forces you to innovate and be creative in creating new models and approaches. Network models can be appropriate in these environments. As CMS pursues opportunities for PMLT with partners, it is a good time to look for ways of sharing resources – spaces, staff, support, etc. – rather than expecting them all to be held centrally.

FOR THE WIDER CHURCH

1. **Embrace the creativity of pioneers in mission as they advance the gospel and the kingdom.** Pioneers can reach people and places that other expressions of church will not. Ideally, they should be encouraged and resourced, particularly where this can bring life to areas that lack it. Equally, do not expect them to fit into existing structures or narratives, including how success is perceived or measured – the very nature of pioneering is to create something different and therein lies its value.
2. **Seek to balance autonomy and accountability for ordained and licensed Anglican lay pioneers¹⁰.** It may be that this could work well at the level of an archdeaconery, as a mezzanine level between a bishop, who may be pulled in too many directions to manage individual pioneers, and the parish, which may lack the resources or incentive to engage with something new nearby. The example of Winchester is interesting, where the diocese now has a “floating” archdeacon focused on mission and pioneering. There could be a fruitful discussion
3. **Encourage the research and statistics arm of the Church of England to count Ordained Pioneer Ministers and report on trends.** This should be a subset of the clergy role (1.9). Ideally they should also count lay licensed pioneers, for which there is precedent as Church Army evangelists are already counted. This could act as a baseline against which to assess changes over time. It would also be interesting to combine this data with others, such as the Baptists or Methodists, who are working on pioneering and may have mechanisms for assessing its proliferation.
4. **Draw on the expertise of CMS and PMLT to explore ways in which pioneering can be encouraged as part of the mixed economy of church.** Selection processes, training, and the creation of new roles are some possible areas to explore. This is particularly pertinent for the Church of England.

¹⁰ Whilst there may be similar questions for other denominations, this recommendation refers to the Church of England.



APPENDICES

1. FORMAT AND DELIVERY OF THE COURSE

Format:

- 9:00 - 10:00 - students arrive and spend time socialising in the café space.
- 10:30 - 11:00 - students and staff meet for worship and notices
- 11:00 -13:00 - first teaching session
- 13:00 -14:00 - lunch – students eat at the same time, often together in the café, socialising across module groups, and reconnecting with others
- 14:00 -16:00 - second teaching session
- 16:00 - teaching finishes but normally students stay longer to continue socialising. Cake has often been made and brought by someone!
- Non-students or those not needed for the day's teaching may pop in and out of CMS during the course of the Tuesday too.
- Tutorials take place around the building throughout the day

Delivery consists of a mixture of:

- Lectures lead from the front – style of these depends on tutor but generally even if it is a traditional lecture there is always an element of creativity to the teaching
- Small group discussions of directed activities
- Sharing of small group discussion in larger group discussions
- Space for questions and discussion around thoughts and ideas.
- Time dedicated to Action Learning Sets in small groups a few times throughout a module – a key part of the reflective practice the course offers. Gives students a chance to bring a live issue or question they are facing and have space to reflect with others.
- Powerpoint/Prezi presentations are used frequently
- Videos as a teaching tool

- Guest speakers of particular topics to offer live examples
- Generally regarded as being an interactive learning experience

1. SECTOR TRENDS

The marketplace of theological education in the UK has seen significant change in the five years since CMS launched the PMLT. Some of these changes have been the result of financial pressures, others the result of innovation and planning for the future. In order to look ahead at what the PMLT might do in the future, it is important to understand the context in which it exists.

A narrative on theological education since 2010

One element of the foundation of the PMLT was as a response to the Church of England's decision to have a specific designation for pioneers in ministry. Ordained pioneers (OPM's) and lay pioneers were seen as crucial resources in the Church of England's response to Mission Shaped Ministry and means of training these pioneers needed to be created.

In 2010, training for Ordained Pioneer Ministers (OPM's) was still in its infancy. Some long-standing theological colleges and courses added strands of teaching to their existing degree programmes, or set up centres that specialised in pioneer ministry; other colleges/courses did not cater for it at all. Just prior to CMS launching the PMLT, St Mellitus College (formed through the joining-up of NTMTC and St Paul's Theological Centre) began training ordinands on a full-time mixed-mode course designed to be particularly relevant to pioneers. By 2015, St Mellitus had become the Church of England's largest college in terms of the number of ordinands in training, with campuses in London, Chelmsford and Liverpool.

During the same time period, theological colleges also faced new financial challenges, including increases in tuition fees and a need to be registered with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). One response to this was the decision by the Church of England's Ministry Division to create a 'Common Award', that all its colleges

and courses would offer, validated and overseen by Durham University. Common Award went live in the 2014/15 academic year. Other financial repercussions have included the decision by St John's College to cease offering full-time residential training, moving towards a new 'Contextual Mission Pioneering' course beginning in 2016. Ecumenically, the Methodist Church dramatically reduced the number of training institutions it held, closing/removing its endorsement of all but two (Cliff College and the ecumenical Queen's Foundation) by the beginning of the 2013/14 academic year.

Looking ahead, the Church of England continues to explore new ways and models of training. Currently, the 'Resourcing Ministerial Education' paper is making its way through General Synod. This makes a number of recommendations regarding theological education, particularly regarding where decisions about ordinands' education may be made – potentially moving away from a centralised process, to one determined at diocesan level. Additionally, the paper recommends that efforts should be made to increase the number of vocations to ordination in the church as a whole – a recommendation potentially impacts upon the role of pioneers. (The paper's recommendations have proved to be controversial.)

Outside of Ministry Division oversight, independent colleges and courses have also continued to evolve, training lay people both within the Church of England and ecumenically. Of particular note (for this evaluation) are Springdale, Cliff College and Redcliffe, all of whom offer a mission focused degree qualification.

Graham Tomlin, Principal of St Mellitus College, described the current climate of theological education, stating that:

“We are living in a period of rapid change, perhaps a sea-change in theological education. The independent residential theological seminary, providing training for a particular denomination was an invention of the Counter-Reformation, imported into the Church of England in large measure in the second half of the nineteenth century. Now it feels like a model that is changing fast.”

11 The Archbishop's Council, Mission-Shaped Church, London: Church House Publishing, 2004

In such a context, there is huge potential for the future of the CMS PMLT course, as well as unpredictability.

Comparative Factors:

In comparing the CMS PMLT against what other forms of training available in the UK, the following factors were considered:

- Whether the training was a Church of England approved ordination/Ordained Pioneer Ministry (OPM) mode of training.
- The qualifications offered. (Foundation degree, BA, post-graduate.)
- Whether the training was available to lay students as well as ordinands.
- Whether the training could be accessed as individual modules.
- Whether the training included a range of learning styles.

Information was gathered from college/course websites, prospectuses and follow up directly with the institution where necessary.

The colleges and courses were selected with input from CMS PMLT staff. The list includes both Ministry Division approved routes for ordination training, as well as independent institutions.

Analysis

Ridley College, Cambridge

Approved Church of England training route that also accepts independent students who are looking to pursue ministry opportunities in the Church of England. Training is delivered in a residential context (within the college or in married accommodation) and within the ecumenical Cambridge Federation.

Undergraduate degrees are available both through Cambridge University and Common Award; a range of post-graduate options are also available, but there is not a specific MA route that focuses on pioneering/mission. Part-time options are available.

It is not possible to undertake modules on an individual basis.

Has its own 'Centre for Pioneer Learning', which provides the possibility for students to train in a mixed-mode context. This gives those on the OPM track the opportunity to focus on a specific theme relating to pioneers each week. In addition, a 'Pioneer School' runs for 6 Saturday sessions per academic year, which are open to all – lay or ordained. (This is not part of the degree programme.)

St Mellitus College, London, Chelmsford & Liverpool

Approved Church of England training route that also accepts independent students. Its 'full-time' programme is mixed mode, involving one day of teaching per week; part-time students receive teaching one evening per week. Full-time students live in their placement contexts.

The full range of Common Awards undergraduate qualifications are offered, alongside a MA in Christian Leadership. Independent students can study part-time or audit courses, but cannot take individual modules. Teaching is delivered in London (Monday for full-time students; Tuesday evening for part-time); Chelmsford (Thursday evening for part-time students); and Liverpool (Monday for full-time students). Additionally, Monday's London teaching is live-streamed to other venues (including Cheltenham and Peterborough) for groups of independent students.

The full-time course was designed with OPM students in mind and there is no specific OPM pathway available. Ordinands who have OPM designation meet together with specialist staff during their training.

St John's College, Nottingham

Approved Church of England training route, but announced in 2014 that it would cease its residential training of ordinands and instead focus upon mixed-mode pioneer training from 2016.

Little information regarding the nature of this new training is available, but it is currently referred to as a 'Contextual Missional Pioneering' course, that will be open to both ordinands and lay students.

Trinity College, Bristol

Approved Church of England training route that also accepts independent students. Training is delivered in a residential context (within the college or in married accommodation), although those pursuing mixed-mode training are accommodated in their placement context.

An undergraduate degree is available through Common Awards (FdA or BA) and a range of postgraduate options are available, validated by Bristol University. Degrees can be undertaken on a part-time basis, and it is also possible to study individual modules. 'Open Learning Groups' also operate in a specific geographical context, studying a specific module in a small group.

Previously, a specific OPM pathway was available, but this has been absorbed into the two main programmes of Ordinand training – the full-time degree and mixed-mode training.

For Mission, Springdale

Springdale is not accredited by the Church of England, and is a non-denominational college offering both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Their degrees combine academic teaching with placements and private study. The programmes are flexible in the sense that specific module combinations can be chosen by students, rather than a prescribed combination.

Degrees can be studied on a full or part-time basis, with either a September or January start point. Campuses are located in: London, Bath, Birmingham, Liverpool and Leeds. Degrees are validated by York St John University.

A mission-focus is particularly obvious in their MA programme for 'mission practitioners'. This course is studied over three years, on a part-time basis with the student engaging with a missional context while studying.

Cliff College

A Methodist college that has specialised in mission and evangelism since its inception, Cliff College does not train people as part of ordination for Methodist ministry, but does offer a BA Theology (validated by the University of Manchester) for lay people, and a range of postgraduate programmes for both lay and ordained students. Undergraduates are accommodated at the college.

From 2016, the college aims to offer Certificate level, part-time courses for those involved in mission and ministry, focusing upon specific areas – children, youth, 'third age', creative arts and sport. Short courses (held over a week or weekend, residentially) are also offered on various themes.

Cliff College's MA in Mission is validated by the University of Manchester and operates over 11 'streams', from which students choose their particular focus. These modules can also be taken as part of a Post-Graduate Certificate or Diploma and the course can be studied full or part-time. Some of these modules are now available for online learning. One of the streams is a specific 'Pioneering Ministries (FX)' stream, which has been developed in conjunction with the Methodist Church's Venture FX programme, and relates directly to the pioneering context in which the student is working.

Redcliffe College, Gloucester

A college that has a long history of training people for mission, Redcliffe offers a range of postgraduate courses in theology and mission (and more), but is not an approved route for ordination training.

Most relevant to this comparison is its MA in Contemporary Missiology, validated by the University of Gloucestershire. It has a focus upon practical mission in a range of contexts, including Europe, Biblical Studies and Reconciliation. A practical element is not included within the course itself.

