Which biblical stories or passages tell you something about how we should fulfil the marks of mission?

iii) Read the story of Jesus and the woman of Samaria (John 4: 4-42)

The encounter begins with Jesus asking for something simple – a drink of water. This then leads to a conversation, which helps to build up a relationship and which eventually opens the door to a deeper discussion on faith matters.

Think about the encounters and conversations that you have had today, or recently.

1. Did any of them lead to a strengthening of a relationship?
2. Did any of them help you to understand better the other person or help the other person to understand you better?
3. Did any of them help the other person in some way or other?
4. Did any of them offer an opportunity to talk about faith matters? Was it taken advantage of? If not, why?
5. Do we expect enough from our daily encounters with others and our day to day conversations?
6. How could the worship and life of our church help us to be more aware of the opportunities for mission in our daily life?

***Union of Welsh Independents***

4



**Nurturing and Strengthening Churches**

***Year 1, Part 4***

***How to use the material***

**We suggest dividing the contents of this film into 5 sessions. The questions for each session are on pages 2 and 3.**

***Session A*:** Watch the episode, *The challenge of building a living church,* and discuss the questions

***Session B*:** Watch the episode, *The mission of the living church,* and discuss the questions.

***Session C*:** Watch the episode, *The features of the living church,* and discuss the questions.

***Session D:*** Watch the episode, *Building the living church,* and discuss the questions.

***Session E*:** Watch the episode, *The response of the living church,* and discuss the questions.

The individual episodes are accessible from the main menu of the DVD. Please use the four cursor ‘arrows’ to select options. For those using the downloaded version, the episodes are available from our website, [www.annibynwyr.cymru/videos](http://www.annibynwyr.cymru/videos)

This leaflet contains additional material to use during the sessions. Before concluding each session, it would be useful for the group to discuss the following question:

***What can we do, as a church, following this discussion?***

***Questions for discussion***

***Session A*: The Challenge of Building a Living Church**

1) Have you seen a decline in your church, during your time as a member? How does it show itself? What do you feel is responsible for it and what could be done to arrest it?

2) How honest are we about the state of our churches today?

3) What do you think is the biggest challenge facing your church?

***Session B*: The Mission of the Living Church**

1) How many of the 5 marks of mission do you think your church is successful in doing? (See page 3)

2) What are the priorities in the life of your church? What are the priorities that you would like to see?

3) Can you think of an example where you have tried to be a bridge between your church and the wider community? How successful were you?

***Session C*: The Features of a Living Church**

1) What would be an ideal church for you?

2) How effective is the worship in your church in making the members aware of being part of something more than the local church? How does that awareness show itself?

3) To what extent does your church act as a community?

***Session D*: Building the Living Church**

1) What do your buildings say about you as a church?

2) Does the worship and life of your church challenge you to take your faith into the wider community?

3) Where is the relationship between your church and the local community strong? How could it be stronger?

2

***Session E*: The Response of the Living Church**

1) Do you see signs of people showing an interest in the gospel? How should the church respond to this interest?

2) How much emphasis is there on showing love in the life and witness of your church? How does that love express itself?

3) Would you agree that ‘fear of the response we would get’ is the main reason for our unwillingness to share faith outside the church? How can we overcome this?

**Sayings about the church to stimulate further discussion**

***‘A good person is good, whether in the church or outside it.’***

*Anyone wishing to find Christ must first find the church.'*

***‘Church people should be known, above all else, for their hope.'***

*'I long so much for a poor church which exists for the poor.'*

***One of the greatest challenges facing Christianity is to relate to the millions who are looking for God, but don’t come to church.'***

*'Jesus alone remains the same, yesterday, today and forever. The church has always adapted and changed.’*

**(ii)** The 5 marks of mission are

1. **Sharing the gospel** and telling about the love of God
2. **Teaching people** in order to help them be disciples
3. **Being a caring community**
4. **Treasuring and looking after** creation
5. **Transforming the systems** which are responsible for injustice (Continued on page 4)

3