GROVE BOOKLETS ON EVANGELISM

Church Planting

1. Models for Mission in the Church of England

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE COVER PICTURE

is by Neil Pinchbeck from an idea by Ian Bunting

INTRODUCTION — A DEVELOPING VISION

Until fairly recently, the term 'church planting' was only used in relation to overseas missionary strategy. We automatically accepted its relevance in advancing the gospel in heathen lands where we assumed that neither Christians nor churches existed; and we would support pioneer missionaries to go and establish new congregations. In these situations abroad, it was natural to see church planting, evangelism, and mission, as all part of one process. But church planting was not a term we were used to hearing in relation to Britain and certainly not in the Church of England. In this country we have assumed that the church was already planted centuries ago. But in that assumption, we are recognizing that even here, every church was originally planted by another church. It should be obvious that no churches exist today without there having been a time of planting. From this simple conclusion, it is clear that church planting is the very foundation of mission. Surely then, we should be very careful before assuming that such an activity has become completely unnecessary or inappropriate in any country.

My wife Mary and I, started attending missionary meetings some 15 years ago, soon after we were converted. At one of these we heard of a missionary couple in Thailand struggling as best they could with God's help, to share the good news of Jesus in a remote town. We were thrilled by their story. They met together in their home with the new believers to learn from the Bible, pray together, and support one another, and then they would go into the surrounding villages and begin to repeat the process. There seemed to be a freshness and dynamic quality in their pattern of evangelism and mission commitment which appeared so lacking in most of the churches we were discovering in our own country here in the U.K. We began to wonder whether there were not principles that could be transferred to the U.K. from these patterns abroad. These ideas began to develop into convictions as we learnt that in many so-called heathen lands of Africa and Asia, there were in fact far more Christians than back here at home and often much more vibrant and effective churches. Could the weakness of our churches here in part at least be because we had lost this dimension to mission? Should some form of church planting always be a part of mission if the church is to be kept healthy and relevant?

As we looked into the Bible we were further encouraged in our ideas. Church planting seemed equally fundamental to the mission strategy of the first century as it has been since and still is 'on the mission field'. For a number of years these growing convictions remained in the realm of our own thoughts. However, around 1981, we heard certain church leaders in this country beginning to mention church planting and our hearts leapt. It was not long then before we came across cases of church planting actually beginning to happen in the U.K., today. Their forms and expressions might be slightly different from those abroad, but church planting they undoubtedly were! Furthermore as our ideas began to expand regarding the different ways in which church planting mission could be expressed in this country, we saw that it was happening even more than we realized although many of those involved in it might not call it by that name.

Our own particular calling developed as we heard of missionary societies who were realizing the vulnerability of sending just one missionary (couple) into a pioneer church planting situation. From bitter experience of burnout and early returns home, they were forced to consider combining missionaries into church planting teams. Although limiting the area they could cover, there were the compensating advantages of quicker and greater fruitfulness from the shared strength and wider range of gifts in the team. Again our spirits rose as we contrasted this model with the traditional one-man ministries in the U.K.

In this way, step by step, a vision evolved for us which started with the recognition of the U.K. as a missionary field and went on to a commitment to a mission and evangelism strategy, involving mobile and versatile church planting teams, which took us from leafy Chorleywood in South East commuterland, to U.P.A. Mersey-side in the North-West.[1] Over these years we have also moved from seeing church planting as a theoretical possibility in this country, to the exciting discovery of it cropping up in practice in many different forms and places. In this first booklet on church planting, I hope to open up the whole current debate. Then in a subsequent issue, I shall return to our personal experience and also that of others, in order to illustrate all that is happening. In both, I hope to share our now firm conviction that church planting for the U.K. is viable, biblical and historical: it is already happening today and it could happen much more to the advancement of God's Kingdom.

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1 U.P.A. = Urban Priority Area (the official term of the Church of England for deprived urban areas).

1. SOME BASIC QUESTIONS AND A PARABLE

As church planting has become a live topic in the U.K., it has inevitably prompted some quite basic questions. Some do genuinely wonder what we really mean by church planting anyway. The term church planting reminds us of agriculture and men cooperating with God's creation to produce plants and ultimately a crop. Thus in this context we are less likely to think of the church in terms of buildings but more of a living organism. Nonetheless, many still question whether church planting is relevant at all to the U.K., where we have a parish system that links every area to an existing church. Furthermore, when we move away from the overseas mission situation where the link between church planting and evangelism seems self evident, some even begin to question this relationship. So I want to start by addressing some of these basic issues.

1.   What do we mean by church planting?

If we find it hard to understand the relevance of church planting to countries like the U.K. with centuries of Christian tradition as well as long and well-established denominational churches, this may be because we have not sufficiently defined the activity based upon its underlying principles. Instead we tend to think only of its familiar forms from a foreign setting. In essence church planting is bringing to birth new local churches. We could therefore define it as the activity of an individual, a group, or the whole of an existing body of Christians aimed at establishing a new identifiable group/gathering (ecclesia assembly). On this basis we could include the establishing of a church in a home as church planting although, because the word 'church' has tended to be linked to an area congregation rather than a neighbourhood cell — many might chose to exclude this. But we should remember some of Paul's references — such as 'the church that meets in their house' (Rom. 16.5).

Looked at this way, many past initiatives in the U.K. could be described as church planting and show how this concept has already had its relevance to the growth and development of the whole church in Britain. Examples would include the daughter church movement and the establishment of mission halls and city missions, not to mention a host of developments outside the Anglican church down the centuries. To pick just one such example, a classic case would be John Wesley's societies and their subdivision — the class meetings. These were planted all over the country and were particularly strong in working class areas.

These past examples are all from times when the church was proportionately much stronger in Britain than it is now so if it was relevant then to the ongoing renewal of the church in evangelism, we should expect it to be more so now. I also hope this serves to open up our ideas of church planting and to see it in much wider terms, so that we can expect the Holy Spirit to generate many new and creative patterns of church planting appropriate to the Britain of today.

2. What is the relationship between evangelism and church planting?

Difficulties may arise here because some have traditionally seen evangelism as complete once an individual responds to the claims of Christ. The previous three Grove Booklets in this new evangelism series have reminded us that the definition of evangelism produced by the Archbishops' Committee of 1918, is

> '. . . so to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that men and women shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church'.

This gives more than a hint of the fact that we should see evangelism within the overall context of the kingdom of God. Within this ultimate purpose of bringing in God's rule, the church has a provisional character as the Body of Christ expressing his life now and proffering signs of the kingdom that is still to come in its fullness. Evangelism is part of this work of the kingdom and for it to be complete, new Christians have to be gathered into groups ('ecclesia') to worship together, support one another and together to express their new life in Christ in the world.

However, incorporating new Christians into the life of the existing or traditional churches can be very difficult. There is a danger that we use tradition to demand spiritual conformity of those new in their faith, and deny them the cultural freedom to express themselves in a church context. Furthermore it is not necessarily right for existing churches just to get bigger and bigger in a time of growth with lots of new Christians (nor is this always practical). As we shall see presently in Section 3, the biblical pattern was to establish new churches, as new groups responded to the gospel. Of course this raises fundamental questions for today: should we adopt the same ideas, much as the House Churches have attempted to do? What about the parish system? Wouldn't a flexible church be better than starting a new one? These important questions will be dealt with in later sections but it is clear from the biblical pattern that evangelism necessitated church planting. In this way, establishing new churches can be a key part of the process of evangelism — *CHURCH PLANTING A GOAL OF EVANGELISM.*

In his contribution to the book *How to Plant Churches*, Michael Griffiths has said that 'planting is a good word for you are establishing a focus for new growth'.[1] I believe that as new believers are gathered into groups, the church in the home, the local congregation and the universal fellowship of Christ, this should be the ideal springboard for evangelism. The vitality and intimacy of the small group, combined with the encouragement and strength of the local congregation expressing the universal church, is God's breeding ground for new life. As new expressions of the body of Christ emerge and are planted, they give space and scope for ALL the resources and energies of ALL the members to reach out more effectively into the community in the whole range of Christian witness. In this way church planting *equips and releases for every-member evangelism.*

God in creation has shown a pattern of growth which always involves multiplication. In a church situation where new groups/congregations are being established, two other vital ingredients exist. Firstly, the whole environment produces an expectation of gaining new members which every Christian can be involved in reaching. Hence it *motivates for energetic/enthusiastic evangelism.* Secondly, the multiplying of new groups creates the flexibility and potential for diversity which is the only way that the church can hope to cross the many cultural barriers in our modern societies. As the church evolves in a pattern of new units it can match more effectively the cultural patchwork in which it is set. Church planting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit should help the church to break free from a mould of monochrome uniformity which excludes whole sections of the community and creates a barrier to evangelism hence church planting *liberates for broad, multicultural evangelism.*

Looked at from this perspective then, a multiplying church is ideal for producing effective, energetic and appropriate evangelism by the whole church and therefore is also the beginning of the process — *CHURCH PLANTING A TOOL OF EVANGELISM.*

In summary, we see a cycle in which church planting is both the end and the beginning of evangelism. I believe it can be the very matrix of the life of evangelism and mission, a view supported by Donald McGavran who has been quoted as saying that '. . . actually church planting is the most effective method of evangelism under Heaven'. If these observations are correct, then we at least have a basis for questioning church structures which seem to inhibit any concept of such planting. However, if we do still have doubts about the appropriateness of church planting in the U.K. or in the Church of England in particular — then maybe we should consider a parable . . .

3. The parable of the Olive Tree of Hippocrates

The year after our wedding, my wife Mary and I went on a very basic student holiday to the Greek islands. There we discovered the home of Hippocrates (b. B.C. 460), the father of modern medicine from whom we derive the 'Hippocratic oath'. As well as the site of one of his early hospitals, we also remember 'the olive tree of Hippocrates' — supposedly dating from his time and therefore some 2400 years old! It was certainly of great antiquity. The trunk was of very large girth but completely hollow save for an outer shell little more than bark-thick. There were a few long straggling branches but they had to be supported with sturdy wooden props every few feet along their length. It had the occasional leaf here and there and we understood that in season it might produce one or two olives.

In the fields around, over the low stone walls, were olive groves in many directions. The strong healthy young trees with narrow trunks were everywhere covered with a thick canopy of leaves, under which masses of olives would form each year to fill countless wicker baskets and weigh down the donkeys as they carried off the rich harvest.

The lone tree of Hippocrates could still be called an olive by nature in that it still just showed the essential distinguishing characteristics but it had long since ceased to fulfil an olive's function. Tourists filed up to inspect it as an ancient relic which might just be a link with such dim history, but the *job* of the olive tree passed long ago to many successions of replanted trees. He who has ears to hear let him hear!

1 Monica Hill, *How to Plant Churches* (MARC Europe. 1984). p.126.

2. RECENTCHURCH PLANTING DEVELOPMENTS IN BRITAIN

We all accept that a tree of great antiquity must have been planted sometime and the same must obviously apply to even the oldest churches in this country. But, as our parable suggests, for our churches to have continued to express new life, growth and fruit, there must have been new plantings spread over the centuries, and even some periods of intensive replanting activity. I think that our introduction has confirmed this pattern, demonstrating that CHURCH PLANTING IS FULLY HISTORICAL. Let us now look at some recent developments.

1. **Growth and diversification in church planting outside the Church of England**

It has not been such a new idea for denominations which are not based on a parish system (i.e. Baptist or Pentecostal), to send off a pastor to a new area to pioneer a new church from time to time. However, in the past fifteen years there has been a mushrooming of church planting patterns of mission and evangelism in the U.K. which have diversified way beyond this single model.

The major thrust has come from the House Church Movement and it may be significant that, even in their name, they affirm a commitment to the rediscovery of the church in the home (the cell) as well as the congregation. We shall see this important development from Acts 2 in the next section on biblical background and it is also at the heart of recent 'church growth' theories and practices.[1] As they have grown, House Churches normally establish more 'house groups' and a new congregation can arise when there are enough new groups to be combined together. Alternatively when one new group arises in a new area/estate a formal mission plan may be drawn up to evangelize that area and create new groups with a view to generating a new congregation. In this way mission and evangelism spreads throughout a city or town with no artificial barriers to its progress, and the interrelationship between cells and congregations is all based on personal relationships between the leaders.

Sadly most of the mainline denominational churches have reacted negatively to these developments (and maybe sometimes not without cause). But, perhaps in so doing, they have helped create a rather superior and 'exclusive' ethos about some of the House Church circuits. However, by no means all these new groups have been antagonistic to the established churches. Furthermore, a group such as the Icthus Fellowship in London under Roger and Faith Forster has been open to all other parts of the church and they also seem to have developed one of the most attractive and effective patterns of church planting evangelism. Over a period of 13 years they have grown from just a single congregation in 1975, to 22 congregations spread across South-East London (including many very difficult areas such as Soho) and totalling some 1,500 members. They have training programmes for church planters/evangelists to which they have invited trainees from other church groups. The training involves the confirmation of a gift and

calling to evangelism based on fruitful work with a new group in a new area. The trainees also spend time together receiving instruction and relating to the overall leaders of the church networks. All this seems to strike many chords with the New Testament mission and is proving effective not just in middle-class suburbia but also in the hardest social situations, and they are also presenting a gospel which includes practical and prophetic dimensions. It is therefore hard to retreat into a tut-tut writing-off of their achievements based on assertions that they lack the continuity with some 2000 years of church tradition. The saying of Jesus that 'whoever is not against us is for us' seems fully applicable (Mk. 9.40).

Other House Church initiatives have involved groups moving to a completely new area to start a new congregation at some considerable distance. For example, Basingstoke Community Church identified a substantial mission opportunity in the Midlands' new town of Milton Keynes and a group was called out to move house, find employment, and form the nucleus for a new congregation among the expanding housing estates. (However, to some this may seem to have been done without much regard for other ecumenical church initiatives in the area).

These cases are merely quoted as illustrations. There have in fact been many other groups giving new impetus to all sorts of examples of church planting in this country. All this activity has led to the publication of books like Ten New Churches[1] and to the first national, inter denominational church planting conference, in September, 1983.[2]

2. **Developments within the Church of England**

In all this activity, the Church of England has not been completely left behind, although, when I started to talk more widely about church planting, as recently as 1980, even quite radical leaders saw little potential for it. There were responses like 'anywhere where you might plant a new church would already be assigned to a parish and would therefore be a no-go area' and so the emphasis tended to be exclusively on church renewal.

It was in fact in 1971 that the first four of the 'daughter' congregations were planted in the parish of Chester-le-Street (in County Durham) by Ian Bunting's predecessor, Patrick Blair.[3] This imaginative development was partly prompted by rapidly growing housing estates within the parish. A number of other initiatives arose around this time as a strategy to reach distinct housing areas within a parish. However there have been other 'plants' which have crossed Church of England boundaries. An example of crossing a parish boundary is where a group from St John's Harborne in Birmingham went with the curate to revitalize a dwindling congregation threatened with closure in the next-door U.P.A. Parish of St. Germain, Edgbaston in December, 1983. A plant into another deanery is illustrated by the sending of a large group of some 100 church members with

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1   e.g., Eddie Gibbs *Urban Church Growth* (Grove Booklet on Ministry and Worship No 55, 1977), p.13, and also the whole thrust of David Prior *Sharing Pastoral Care in the Parish* (Grove Pastoral Series No 3, 1980).

1   Roger Forster (MARC Europe 1986).

2   Out of the contributions to this event came the book to which we have already referred *How to Plant Churches*.

3   More recently this was up to seven satellites with a total membership of 600 and now Geoffrey Walker has taken over from Ian Bunting (p.29 in App 3)

a curate from Holy Trinity, Brompton to rescue the church of St Barnabas, Kensington, in 1985.

There are even examples of diocesan boundaries having been crossed on ventures like our own in June 1983, when a group of three of us moved from Chorleywood in the St. Albans diocese to help a Vicar bring life into a dormant situation in a U.P.A. in St. Helens in the diocese of Liverpool. More recently another group, plus curate, moved from Holy Trinity, Brompton, in the London diocese, to a church threatened with closure in Battersea in the Southwark diocese. The group numbered some 60 to 70, most of whom already lived in the areas of Battersea, Clapham and Wandsworth.

These examples show that within the Church of England it has proved possible for successful church planting ventures both within the parish and across all levels of institutional boundaries. Furthermore, we have been trying to keep statistics of the number and types of new 'plants', and these confirm a rapid rise in these initiatives over the past twenty years. In fact, these figures show a rising trend which is currently producing an average of nearly one new Church of England church plant per fortnight.[1]

The plants are taking place in every sort of area and social context. It is also very encouraging that all the major traditions within the Church of England have now had recent planting projects – anglo-catholic; evangelical; evangelical-charismatic; and liberal-broad church.

3.   Ecumenical developments

It may be harder to establish a new church under an ecumenical arrangement since the vision and commitment required has to be shared by different participating groups. It also requires another level of agreement and legal formulation. However, there are some very successful and exciting examples of new ecumenical churches within the U.K. These have arisen most frequently when there is a completely new estate, village or new town development. The full story of one such new church has already been written.[2] In large New Towns like Milton Keynes and Swindon, the opportunity has been taken to establish ecumenical deaneries which have facilitated the process by enabling plans to work down 'from the top' to the parishes as new congregations are established. Such brand new conurbations also enable things to be set up from the start with well designed and equipped Community Centres.

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1   George Lings Vicar of Deal, has been keeping these records on his computer and a statistical report is presented in Ch.13 of the book George Carey, et al., *Planting New Churches* (Eagle, 1991). A brief summary of just part of this is included in Appendix 1.

2   Ray Simpson, *How we Grew a Local Ecumenical Project* (Grove Pastoral Series No.17, 1984).

3. THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND TO CHURCH PLANTING

The term church planting is itself an analogy. It uses the practice of planting which is essential for the start of any cultivation to describe the initiation of the life of a new community of Christians. It is just this analogy that Paul employs to describe the missionary task of establishing churches, in which he and others were involved.[1] Hence we have now seen that church planting is both fully historical and *FULLY BIBLICAL*. There are also several New Testament themes which, I believe, illustrate important principles for church planting.

1.   The effectiveness of the newly gathered church in evangelism

In the early chapters of Acts we see the forming of a new congregation both preceding and producing evangelism, as 'many were added to their number'. Even the birth of the church at Pentecost can be seen as the planting of a church. As they gathered together, some 120 of them (Acts 1.14, 15 and 2.1), they had a shared experience of the Holy Spirit (2.2-13) which led to evangelistic preaching by one of their group (2.14-36) and resulted in '3000 being added to their number' (2.41). This growth in turn required the formation of new subunits as 'they broke bread together in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God' (2.46). The result of this was also more evangelism and growth as 'the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved' (2.47). It would seem from this narrative that the planting both of a new congregation and of new cell groups, led to evangelism, which in turn would have led to the need to plant new gatherings (see also 5.12-14). This therefore illustrates the principle outlined in Section 1, that church planting is part of a cycle in which it can be both the beginning and the end of the process of evangelism. It is interesting to note in passing that the evangelism here involved both large meetings and homebased, relationship outreach (see also 5.20 and 2). The text also seems to imply that when order and leadership patterns have been established in newly planted churches, this promotes more effective evangelism (6.1-6 and 7). Clearly all the members of these newly formed groupings expected to be bold witnesses (4.23-30 and 31 and 8.4). Thus the new community of believers is recognized as an evangelizing unit in addition to the individual evangelist, and this is consistent with Ephesians 4.11-12 which shows that the evangelists' main function is to equip the other members, for this service in building up the church. A living, multiplying church is the most effective agent of evangelism.

2.   The principle of concentration before crossing racial and cultural boundaries in evangelism

In the first seven chapters of Acts we have seen a great concentration of the new churches in Jerusalem, which even drew crowds in from the towns of Judea (5.16). This preceded the scattering out into Judea, Samaria and beyond to Gentile Antioch through 'the persecution in connection with Stephen' (8.1, 5, 14 and 11.1 9f). If that could be called 'unplanned', the subsequent concentration at Antioch, before the scattering out into the rest of the known Gentile world, was

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1   (I planted, Apollos watered, but God . . . 1 Cor. 3.6-9).

more explicitly under the Spirit's timing and direction (13.13). We see a succession of gifted leaders / ministers being drafted into the planting and establishment of the Antioch churches. First come the pioneer planters from different backgrounds, then Barnabas, Saul, further prophets, John Mark, and later Judas and Silas.[1]

From this account in Acts, it seems to me that the Spirit's strategy in evangelistic mission was to pioneer *from strength in strength*. Once the 'bridgeheads' had been strongly established, then a process of scattering occurred with smaller 'seed teams' being preferred (see next section). This should make us question approaches based exclusively on a principle of distributing limited resources of leaders / ministry evenly by population, and would suggest that we should also support and encourage more organic patterns of growth based on New Testament models of church planting out of centres of strength.

3. Evolving church planting teams to disseminate the Gospel widely

From Acts 13 onwards we see the church planting ministry of Barnabas and Paul spreading across Asia and into Europe. A review of the sweep of these missionary journeys and details that are recorded seems to me to highlight certain principles. Firstly, neither Paul nor Barnabas would work in church planting evangelism on his own. I would suggest that it is this fundamental commitment to the team that led Paul to turn his back when 'a door was opened for me in the Lord' (2 Cor. 2.12-13). This principle is further borne out by their seeking to take a third member with them on both their first and second journeys, and then, when they could not agree on John Mark, they both set off in pairs, Paul choosing Silas to partner him.[2] Furthermore Paul soon seeks a third member of his team, possibly also wanting to extend the racial mix.[3] When reference is made to members leaving or joining the central team, again they are usually in pairs.[4]

From here we see the church planting teams develop and the text gives us surprising details of their composition and activity.[5] The text even changes 'they' to 'we/us' at times when they were joined by Luke, the author. The teams grow from the original two and three to at least ten on occasion (19.22 and 20.4). They were often self-supporting to increase their mobility and penetration into new communities.[6] Where periods of time are mentioned, it appears that they stayed in an area for anything between three months and three years. Although a city or town would be their base they clearly expected to mobilize the newly planted church to evangelize the whole surrounding area (19.1-10 from Ephesus to the whole province of Asia). From the make-up of the teams and their movements, it would seem that Paul operated on a 'rolling' principle, tending to leave some of his team behind to continue in the planted church and to take some new members from it to replace them or increase the team. Sometimes he sent on a

pair as an advance party ahead of him. The result of this 'rolling' team was that by Acts 19.22 the team of ten was made up from some five different previous church plants. With this amazingly dynamic and versatile team model, they took with them their shared life, financial support, gifts and ministries, in the most liberating church planting evangelism programme.

This team concept is, I believe, quite different from institutional schemes to link leaders from different congregations for mutual support (good though that may sometimes be). It is in essence a functional team for mission and evangelism in church planting and includes different levels of leadership / ministry (apostolic prophets and teachers — 13.1-3; helpers — 13.5; fellow workers 18.3; travelling companions 19.29).I believe that these records point to the need for a range of mobile, self-supporting ministries that would extend the only two existing categories of ordained (mobile) and lay (static). The equipping, recognition, and releasing, of such a range of ministers into teams for diverse patterns of church planting evangelism could transform the British church scene.[1]

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1 Acts 11.19-20 22,25-28, 12.25 and 15.30-34.

2 Acts 13.5 and: 5.36-37.

3 16.13 Timothy half Greek.

4 18.5 Silas and Timothy; 19.22 Timothy and Erastus; 20.6 Paul and Luke.

5 This information is summarized in tabular form in Appendix 2.

6 Acts 18.3 and 20.34; 2 Cor. 12.14 and 1 Thes. 2.9; etc.

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1 As one initiative in this direction the author has been involved in new ventures to recruit and train members for such teams. It is hoped that teams are available for pioneer work after that.

4. CHURCH PLANTING ANALOGIES AND ANALYSES

We have seen that the term church planting is itself an analogy and the explicit biblical basis also comes from Paul's analogy of a farmer planting a field. This perhaps gives us some encouragement for trying to extend this sort of picture in other helpful ways.

1. Some analogies of church planting methods (the 'how')

There are several analogies which help us to illustrate *how* we plant churches. In particular, we can learn from the plant kingdom where there are two distinct methods of reproduction vegetative (asexual) and seed (sexual). Ian Bunting has already used the strawberry plant with its 'runners' (vegetative reproduction) as an illustration of planting daughter congregations.[1] It is a good parallel for the situation where a new 'assembly' of Christians is started close to the older one and can continue to draw aspects of its life/resources (represented by the runner) from the 'mother plant'. Michael Griffiths has used another equally helpful picture of a shrub or hedgelaying, where a branch is laid along the ground to re-root a distance away.[2] Turning to seed (sexual) reproduction, I would propose another illustration drawn from the many plants/trees with seeds that are carried by the wind to a great distance, either individually, in pairs, or in small clusters (e.g. dandelion 'parachutes' or sycamore 'helicopters'). These compare with the sort of seed teams that, as we have seen, Paul and Barnabas developed. They are most effective in getting life into new environments and adapting to them (cultures or areas) and, like the result of seed/sexual reproduction, they show the dynamic known in the plant kingdom as 'hybrid vigour'! Table 1 develops some of these comparisons further.

TABLE 1

VEGETATIVE (Runner)	SEED (Helicopter)
Advantages:	**Advantages:**
(a) Draws strength from mother'	(a) Reaches to a distance
(b) Easier administration	(b) No competition with parent
(c) Minimum team re-location	(c) Variety and hence adaptability to new environments
(d) Repeats pattern of success	(d) Hybrid vigour
(e) Less vulnerable to unfavourable new environments (lower risk)	

1 *Partners* No 10, p.3. (summer 1985) — although the expression is believed to have originated with Eddie Gibbs.

2 *Op. cit.*, p.127

Subsequently George Lings has further applied these analogies to current Church of England plantings and proposed a classification of seed plants which is explained in the next section.

2. A classification based on where we plant churches

As we have considered analogies to illustrate church planting, we should remember the point made earlier that these are not just theoretical models all sorts of church planting initiatives are multiplying in the U.K. and this includes the Anglican Church. Such has been the gathering tide of experimentation and interest in these missionary models, that a first day conference was held on 16 June 1987 on church planting in the Church of England. Over 50 church leaders attended. In his keynote address, Prebendary John Collins reviewed some of the growing number of church plants.[1] His analysis was based on *where* the plants were taking place rather than *how* as we considered above. His classification distinguished plants within the parish ('P-type plants') and those affecting boundaries and therefore involving the Deaneries and Diocese ('D-type plants'). He contrasted both these types with reorganization schemes which usually involved closing buildings and represented retreat rather than advance. His illustrative classification scheme is set out in Appendix 3 — several of the examples he uses were mentioned earlier in Section 2.2.

It is worth commenting on certain other examples used in his classification. Firstly, we can note D.2 — a parish reorganization scheme where a new parish was actually created by taking part of two adjacent parishes so that the different housing areas were better served. (Then D.5 is a situation where a lay team crosses a parish boundary but there is no formal recognition/approval from the diocese. Thus the 'plant' is forced to remain somewhat unofficial, meeting in a home or secular building. Finally, there is the example D.6 where a small lay community or an extraparochial congregation under a clergyman would be established in a town or archdeaconry under the direction of the bishop with a view to expressing its own life and witness but also acting as a resource base for the other parish churches in the grouping. Two of these latter schemes are in the planning phase. The first is the lay community scheme, in which small permanent 'outposts' from the Lee Abbey community are planned in urban areas, initially in the Birmingham Diocese. They will follow their simple rule of life, have a ministry of prayer and hospitality and also offer their skills where needed to churches of different denominations and racial groupings. The second case of this sort of scheme at the planning stage, is in the Wakefield diocese and is of the extraparochial congregation type.

3. Further analysis and classification

Another sign of the gathering momentum of this movement and of rapidly increasing interest was demonstrated by the fact that the second annual day conference on 19 May, 1988 attracted at least 180 delegates.

1 Copies of the pre-conference papers and full Conference Report are available from the author.

At this second event, a further analysis of the many emerging models of church planting was explored by both George Lings and me. I think that these classifications serve to help our understanding of church planting, and so I record them here under the following three headings:

(a) **The individual planter, the team or the group:** It was stressed that there was still plenty of scope for the one man/woman pioneer evangelist church planter within the Church of England — whether an ordained person or Church Army Officer. Quite a number of clergy appointments can constitute a church planting initiative. An interesting case has been cited of a curate in the Chester diocese who, on the bishop's initiative, in 1987 was assigned to Offerton, a new estate in Stockport, with a brief to start a church in a nonlicensed building on an estate of 4000 people. His first preference was a room in the local pub called 'The Harvester'! Another recent example of the individual planter involves a curate from Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who moved into an area within the parish made up of two council estates and one housing association estate. Together they had a population of 4000 and were sociologically quite separate from the rest of the parish. After 18 months some 50 people now worship in the community centre. The most effective evangelism project has been a shop selling second-hand clothes and providing facilities for tea and a chat. This has been jointly run with the Methodists and a Church Army Captain has also helped in the venture.

In these cases, it is up to the planters first to gather round them the nucleus which will provide the team out of which the emerging church can grow. This is in contrast to some of the examples we have already cited where a team is the planting unit. We have seen that these teams can be very small (3 or 4) although they are often rather larger (10-12).

The third case is where the planting unit is actually a large group, something in the region of 30 to 100 members, and this approach we could really call a congregation 'trans-plant'. The group will already be subdivided into a cell structure (home groups) and will have bypassed the stage of growing from a single cell to a congregation .

(b) **Vegetative plants and seed plants:** George Lings saw three subdivisions of the vegetative-type of church plant. *Vegetative 1* is reproduction within the parish in which daughter congregations are established in close relationship to the 'mother' and the classic team size is 10-12. *Vegetative 2* is where a group move out from the 'mother' church across the parish (or deanery/diocese) boundary but maintain some link. The example already quoted of St. Germain's, Edgbaston, illustrates this case where the 'planting team' of 35 was in fact still less than the dwindling congregation they moved in to 'revive'. This could be likened to a grafting process. *Vegetative 3* is the case where a large group moves across parish (or other) boundary from the mother and outnumbers any remnant at the 'rescued' church. We termed this a transplant earlier, but, to use a closer vegetative analogy, we could

liken it to a plant which enlarges into a clump and the gardener does a 'splitting off' and replanting.

In the 'seed' plant category there would seem to be two determining characteristics. Firstly, with a much smaller team goes the flexibility to relocate at much greater distance and to find new self-supporting employment. Secondly, there will also often be implied a mixing of team members from different parent churches (seed = sexual reproduction). In our own case there was not only the team from the South coming alongside a vicar in a northern UPA, but the small team had members from two different churches in Chorleywood — Christ Church and St. Andrews, and another couple came from the interdenominational missonary organization — Youth With A Mission. George Lings helpfully proposed two types of seed plant. *Seed 1* would be a case such as our own, when a seed-team moves to a situation where there is an existing church even though this could be fairly 'vestigial'. In this way the team helps to plant life where otherwise the church may be dwindling or even dying (on the point of closure). *Seed 2* on the other hand is where a similar small, probably hybrid team, moves at a distance to an area with no existing church at all (i.e. to a new estate or to re-open a closed church). We do not as yet have any information on such a plant in the Church of England — but no doubt we shall before long.

(c) **Pioneer or progression planting:** Reviewing the many imaginative and highly creative ventures in the Church of England which are arising out of partnerships between visionary leaders and enthusiastic and committed congregations, there is another basis of analysis which I think throws further light on what is happening. In many of the case histories of planting, as one investigates the facts more closely, the 'mother' church very often already has members in the area where the new congregation is to be planted even if this is across a parish boundary. For example, when Holy Trinity, Brompton, gave some 100 members to initiate a completely new phase in the life of St. Barnabas, Kensington, and some 60 to 70 members transferred to St. Mark's, Battersea, in fact a significant number of both these teams already lived in the parishes where the 'plant' occurred and had been 'commuting' to Brompton. Similarly when a satellite congregation is established on a housing estate, there may already be several church families belonging to the mother church living on the estate and these are joined by others who live outside it but with a vision for the plant and so the new group starts its life. It is in this sense that I see such developments as *progression plants*. The step of forming a new congregation is not the first step to occur, but is part of a progression in which the existing life and witness of Christians in an area becomes focussed into a new, more or less independent, group. Hence the planting of the congregation draws on the prior existence of 'indigenous' church families/individuals.

By contrast I see a pioneer plant as one where there are no Christians linked to the planting church and either an individual pioneer planter or a pioneer team or group, begin a completely new witness in the area from scratch. This could still be quite close to the mother church and in the case of council estates can often actually be within the parish boundary, when there is no one at all living on the estate attending the mother church.

I have prepared some diagrams to explain this analysis further and to give examples of how these different projects express the interaction between the opportunities for mission and the parish boundaries.

A: PROGRESSION PLANTS

We may have an area with a spread of church families attending the parish church represented by each of the dots marked in the hypothetical layout of plan (i) on the right.

(a) One situation could then correspond to plan (ii), where the parish boundary encompasses most of these members, with the parish church building more or less centrally located. However, careful scrutiny of the distribution of the church families within the parish shows that there are two clear areas of concentration further from the centre of the parish and there is also a third less distinct sub group. These area concentrations may correspond to the patterns of housing and community life in the parish. In such a situation, there is the clear possibility of building on the existing mission strengths represented by the living church, with a plan of church planting evangelism. This would establish daughter congregations at the heart of these centres of strength and aim to make them more effective focuses for outreach into their respective areas. Such a scheme is illustrated in plan (iii), which shows different types of buildings being used for each progression plant.

(b) Alternatively, exactly the same spread of church families may look very different if the parish boundary falls as shown in (iv).

In this situation there are many members outside the boundary line. Here the facts of life are that the mission of the church has already extended beyond its institutional geographic limit. This could arise either because of a different mission emphasis from neighbouring strong healthy parishes or because a neighbouring parish may not be very strong or may be weak in these particular areas/
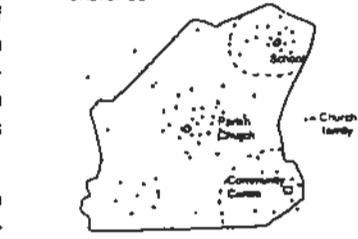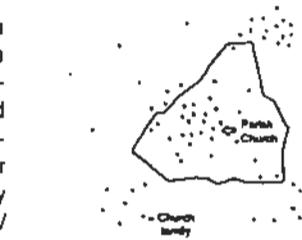
(i) Church family distribution

(ii) Parish boundary
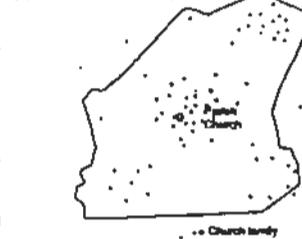
(iii) Progression planting of daughter churches

(iv) Alternative boundary position

social/ethnic groups. If no agreement can be reached with diocesan authorities then the less satisfactory progression planting model has been for the mother church to recognise these outlying concentrations of members as mission bases and to give them informal cell status, as shown in plan (v). The argument may be put forward that these members should be sent back to enliven and renew the existing church within their parish. However, many claim that in practice this rarely works. I believe the ideal progression planting strategy would be for formal recognition of the reality as it has already developed. This would still enable the 'satellite' groups of Christians to be challenged to further evangelism in their locality rather than just being 'commuter' Christians. This could happen in three ways as shown in plan (vi). Firstly, although the least likely, the boundaries could be redrawn, as shown, with daughter church D1. Secondly, a new extra-parish daughter congregation could be established within a neighbour's area, as shown by E1. This might be an Asian church sharing the neighbouring parish church building or a local authority estate church in unlicensed premises. Finally, T1 involves agreeing to a congregation transplant such as in the case of a neighbouring church facing closure.

B: PIONEER PLANTS

Here we will use two different hypothetical distributions of church families. The first is a situation with quite numerous members as in the last case, but the second has fewer, more spread.

(a) Initially, looking at the distribution of members in plan (i) on the right, it may appear fairly even. In practice many parishes with good numbers of attenders like this may also be quite satisfied with progress and remain largely unaware of the true facts. These only emerge when we see where the parish boundary lies and where the borders of a council estate are in relation to this. This shows a totally unchurched area on the estate which is largely within the parish. The likelihood is that even missions aimed at the estate will have failed, any people attending the parish church from the estate being unlikely to 'stick'. Rather than face the challenge of these failures, the tendency is to try to ignore the whole area. Some recent church-planting initiatives have faced the fact that only a more radical pattern of evangelism will break out of such seemingly locked situations.
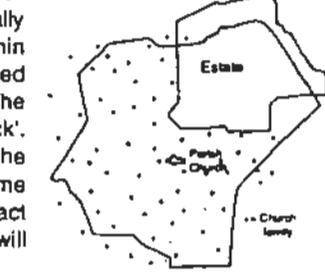
(v) Progression planting of informal cells :

(vi) Redrawn boundary: extra parish church or transplant :
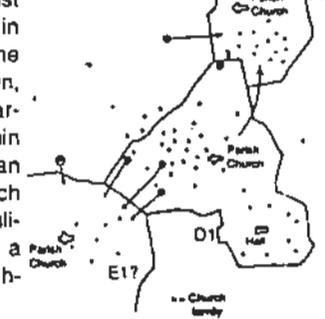
(i) Church family distribution :

(ii) Parish boundary and council estate :

An entirely local strategy could involve a team committing itself under the leadership of a curate, C.A. officer or lay-leader, to focus its life of worship and service on the estate. They might work out of a community centre and/or a shop aimed at meeting real needs of those in that area. Progress is likely to be slow but real 'located' mission has begun. Alternatively, lack of adequate resources or vision within the local parish might mean that the catalytic implantation of an outside team or extension from a religious Community might provide the nucleus and leadership for a local venture. The outside group might even have to take it on alone. Such a seed-team could be lay-led, supervised by a C.A. officer or a recently ordained person with a heart for church planting in teams. Such ventures would ideally marry up with *mission area* designation. This concept involves identifying an area where legal requirements can be suspended in the interests of a more flexible mission strategy — it was recommended in the Partners in Mission Report and many others since.

(b) We now look at the case where church families may be spread much more thinly, see plan (v). If these fell largely within the parish then this would be a case for church strengthening and renewal. However, if the parish is in fact a much smaller area in the middle of such a distribution, then this would be typical of an inner-city or U.P.A. parish. As plan (vi) shows, most of the few church members that still exist, have moved or been re-housed outside the parish and although many may now have little in common socially with those living in the parish, church is still regarded as their link with the past and family roots. Such people rarely welcome the sort of changes that would be needed to introduce mission and ministry that would be culturally relevant to the very deprived situation that they have left. Bishop David Sheppard identified this problem in *Built as a City* (p.63), and *Faith in the City* drew further attention to it.[1] Again, such parishes should be 'classic' candidates for radical *mission area* strategies. If a leader were appointed with a vision for radical new local mission initiatives, he could not build on any existing members and would probably even have to contend with their outright opposition. This is therefore one of the hardest cases of pioneer planting
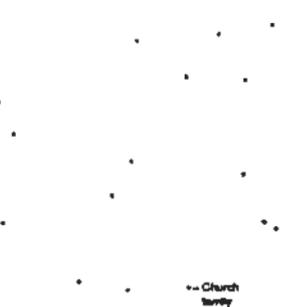
1   *Faith in the City* Report of the Archbishop's Commission on U.P.A.'s (Church House Publishing, 1985)

(iii) Locally generated pioneer plant .
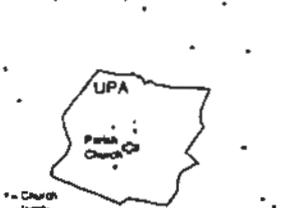

(iv) Seed-team or community plant

(v) Sparse church member distribution :


(vi) Typical U.P.A. Vicar or C.A. pioneer plant :

and it has seen many brave 'lone' planters broken by the task and little achieved. I believe this is where the seed team or community concept can play its most significant part. They can come alongside a leader and immediately provide the nucleus of a local church. Then, together their ministry is aimed at drawing in people from the community around and helping them get built up to the point that they could start to take leadership that would otherwise always be held onto by the 'outsiders'. A team able to support the vicar and committed to 'giving away' ministry and leadership, can be excellent preparation for radical new institutional plans for training and recognising local leaders in such areas.[1]

(vii) Seed-team or community assisted plant :

(c) There are other pioneer plant situations which cannot be represented diagramatically because they involve mission into an unchurched people group or cultural group which may be distributed more or less evenly through a parish/area population. There is the example of cases where an Afro-Caribbean or other ethnic church is planted and which may meet in the parish church in the afternoon. Then again there is the 'punk' church that is being planted at St. Thomas Crookes in Sheffield when the meeting starts at 9.00 p.m. on Sunday night. Their 'liturgy' hardly resembles the ASB with changing visuals flashing up on all four walls and the amplified volume level ear-splitting — but a real congregation is rapidly emerging.[2] It seems that in the New Testament great cultural differences were accepted. Analysis of the Antioch and Jerusalem churches shows that they were completely different — their rites appear to have been as widely divergent as any today (including the range from a 1662 Prayer Book to punk celebrations in the dark with special lighting effects!). We may all have our adaptability thresholds — but the challenge and injunction is not to back down from fellowship and separate ourselves (see Gal. 2.11f). These examples of radical imaginative church planting may also challenge us on a practical level. We may be found to be blocking or frustrating the energy for mission whilst we debate our theoretical objections based on either ecclesiology or on fondly held traditional church institutions, when there is a hurting, straying, starving, dying world out there without the ministry of their Saviour through an effective body of Christ. In the name of preserving the universality of the gospel and of the church we may be opposing the very moves of the Spirit which are most likely to reach the outcast and marginalized groups that we would claim to champion!
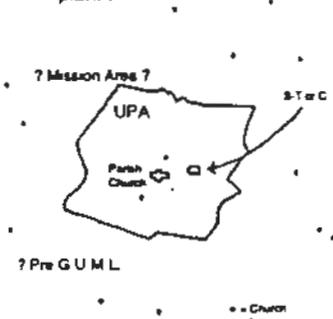
1   (G.U.M.L — the Group of Urban Ministry and Leadership is an example of this from the Liverpool Diocese).

2   Cases like this exemplify the controversial homogeneous unit principle of church planting, proposed by the Church Growth Movement (see *Church Planting — the Homogeneous Unit*, The Pasadena Consultation June 1977 and *Gospel and Culture*, the Willowbank Report — January 1978). Many have reacted against this principle which they interpret as a denial of the reconciling and unifying goal of the gospel (Gal. 3.26 - end and Eph. 2.11 - end). However, it seems to me to be the logical conclusion of the whole modern missiological movement to 'enculturate' or make the gospel culturally relevant and to exclude cultural imperialism from mission.

However, we would also be wrong if, in the name of mission, we were completely insensitive to those who feel that they have outsiders 'imposed' on 'their' church which they may have been struggling valiantly and often sacrificially to keep going. They are also part of the mission of the church and may become harder to reach if our church planting makes them feel threatened, alienated, and even hijacked!

In conclusion, as I reflect on all the models that we have reviewed in this section, I am tempted to wonder whether in fact the Church of England, despite being late in the field and having to face what once seemed the insuperable barrier of the parish boundary, could in fact be producing one of the richest and widest ranges of church planting types. There are two possible explanations for this. Firstly, it could be the somewhat fortuitous result of the fact that the barriers have necessitated greater ingenuity and inventiveness in order to work around them! But secondly and more positively, the existence of the parish boundary may have enforced a mission strategy in this area of evangelism which takes seriously the geographic population distributions and so has resulted in models which reflect the variety of the communities to be reached.

If the latter supposition has any truth in it, then I believe it is highly significant for two reasons. Firstly, it would be an extremely encouraging sign for the mission potential of our denomination. The challenge would then be both to churches and to diocesan bodies, to work together to facilitate such schemes to the maximum and to take major steps forward together in embracing the concepts of church planting as a dynamic new part of their mission philosophies. Secondly, this might point to a key in resolving certain long standing conflicts in the area of our understanding of the church. It appears to me to offer a way for the reconciliation of some differing theologies of the Church and it is to this subject of Ecclesiology that I shall now turn.

5. CHURCH PLANTING AND THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH

Another conclusion reached by Michael Griffiths in his contribution to *How to Plant Churches* was that 'Ecclesiology cannot be avoided in Church Growth and Church Planting'.[1] This is a big brief but I am prepared to try to make a contribution to the task and add to the debate. However, at the outset it is worth noting some of the points made by George Carey at our second national conference when he wondered whether 'we sometimes make ecclesiology the be-all and end-all of our theology'. He suggested that 'Ecclesiology is in fact only a subsection of the doctrine of mission. Jesus told us to "Go" . . . and our theology of the church should reflect that "out-goingness" of his people . . . ecclesiology therefore is not static but dynamic . . . it is going to be an ever changing thing'. This seems a clear warning against our tendency to let our ideas of the church predetermine our concepts and acceptable strategies of mission and evangelism.

If I understand it correctly, a longstanding difference of understanding has existed between those who would place the emphasis on the identity of the local church as a gathered body or congregation of believers, and those who would emphasize its identity as the representative sub-unit of the universal church with a specific mission and ministry to a defined area. There is either the gathered church or the church of the land.[2]

Traditionally evangelicals within the Church of England have been criticized as being weak on their ecclesiology, having tended to embrace more the gathered church understanding whilst existing within an institutional structure based on the parish system. Archbishop Robert Runcie in his address at the third National Evangelical Anglican Celebration in April, 1988, made this one of his key points and repeated the challenge to change the situation.

To me, either of these theories is inadequate. On the one hand, with the gathered church emphasis we would be happy to grow larger and larger congregations, irrespective of where the members were drawn from and with no clear focus of mission and ministry. Conversely, we surely cannot be happy with a conception of the church that can be reduced to a series of lines drawn on a map defining an area in which there is a church building and a representative minister fulfilling certain sacramental duties of the church. It seems ridiculous to think that Paul could have been satisfied with either of these extremes.

However, as we have analysed what is happening in cases of pioneer and progression church planting, we have seen on the one hand the potential of the gathered congregation as the embodiment of the ministry of Christ. Then, on the other hand, we have also seen that through a living interaction not only with the geography of the land through the device of the parish boundary, but also through the even more important demography of population distribution and cultural groupings, the life and witness of that Body of Christ has been expressed in mission and ministry *where the people are*, on the land.

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1   *Op.cit* p 125.

2   Dulles. *Models of the Church.* (Gill and Macmillan 1976). He develops these and other models at some depth.

The church local, as the church universal, should surely find its identity both as a gathered people, called out *from* the world, and also as a servant people *to* a community to declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness, a royal priestly holy nation. The true nature of the church is not one or the other but both, and the emerging church planting models truly reveal the synthesis of these twin marks of our God-given identity.

If this is true, I find it sad that it is precisely some of these church planting initiatives that have attracted criticism as being merely expressions of extreme eclecticism bordering on the sectarian! In fact as church planting puts living cells of believers in each street and establishes new assemblies (ecclesia) on each estate — many of them meeting in community centres, schools, Red Cross halls and even pub rooms — far from moving in an eclectic direction of withdrawal from the world, these churches are dynamically moving out towards the world, the land, and the communities in which they are set. We, the church, are called to be the salt of the earth. In saying this, Jesus explained that salt *with savour is* good for use on the land (Luke 14.34-5). These new initiatives provide structures to keep the salt *concentrated enough* to have savour but distribute it *widely enough* to get it to where it is needed (a true expression of the parish dream?)

However, since many in the church do not readily see it that way, we must work harder at communication and at correcting any aspects where through our blindness, our statements and our practices are not matching these ideals. This must be a high priority since I believe that many with a passion for church planting, mission and evangelism, share with us an equal passion for the unity of the whole church: twin goals that Jesus inseparably connected in his high-priestly prayer recorded in John 17.

Another challenge that Griffiths saw particularly arising out of the increasing emphasis on church planting, was the urgent need for an ecclesiology to relate the different local expressions of the church to one another and to the universal church.[1] I would propose a picture. I wonder whether we might see the different local churches (either different denominations or different church plants of a single group) rather like the fingers on our hands. The whole of the hands would be equivalent to the sum of the local churches to minister the help, healing and comfort of Jesus. But on our hands we have eight fingers and two thumbs. As well as having common functions each also has a specialized function — gripping, pointing, wearing a ring . . . etc. As the fingers (local expressions of the church) are all parts of the hand (the church in that city/town/area), so are the hands part of the whole body (the universal church).

In conclusion, I would come back to our earlier quote from George Carey. In this context, church planting may well help to focus some of the problems evangelicals have traditionally encountered in terms of ecclesiology. If ecclesiology is seen within the overall context of *mission* then church planting should be one of the activities which dictates ecclesiology and not *vice-versa.*

But the relationship between church planting and ecclesiology is not the only area where serious doubts and criticisms have been raised. There are others that we must take seriously and also attempt a response to them.

1 *Op. cit.* p 130-131 .

6. FACING SERIOUS CRITICISMS AND CHALLENGES

Another common criticism levelled against ideas of church planting in the Church of England is that they are divisive. A lecturer at one of the Anglican theological colleges, when informed of our second church planting conference, dismissed it using just these terms. It was also a challenge raised by Archdeacon Peter Coombs in his address to that conference, so we must take it very seriously.

However, as in the case of criticisms over ecclesiology, I believe that these supposed weaknesses can be shown to be the strengths of church planting. If we respond rightly to the opportunities, I would be so bold as to claim that church planting is capable of actually leading the way in new initiatives for reconciling the church and expressing living unity by not just talking together, but working together at the front line of evangelism. In the second Church Planting booklet in this series I shall try to present this case.

Some may ask, quite reasonably — all this is very well in theory, but how does it work out in practice in the day to day life of local churches? What are the actual experiences of church planters and new congregations that have made radical initiatives in this direction? Again I shall seek to answer these questions in booklet No 2, with details of our own experience and of some other selected examples to illustrate some of the different models explained here.[1] I shall also address the question of where we may go from here — can we discern ways forward?

In fact not only do I believe that we can give coherent replies to people's serious doubts and questions, I believe that the real questions still to be answered are those that church planting is posing to the institution of the church. I consider that it profoundly challenges its structures and mechanisms for self-protection and inflexibility in the face of the needs for change in order to maintain its life and relevance. This too will be a challenge that I shall develop next time and no doubt provoke many answers in turn! (which may form the third church planting booklet in the series!)

So having opened the debate we can expect to see this become an increasingly live issue for the mission and evangelism of the Church of England, as it has already become for much of the church in the U.K. Even as I have been working on this text, I have been approached by a provincial moderator of the United Reformed Church for all available church planting information to help them as they plan their mission strategy. A senior national figure in the Baptist Union has also got in touch with me for the same reason, explaining that Spurgeon's College are likely to be restructuring their ministry training to offer just two practical units for pastors or for church-planters/evangelists. I sense that we are on a gathering wave of something that God is doing in the field of mission and evangelism in this country — I pray that we may boldly thrust out upon it, to be carried as far as it will go.
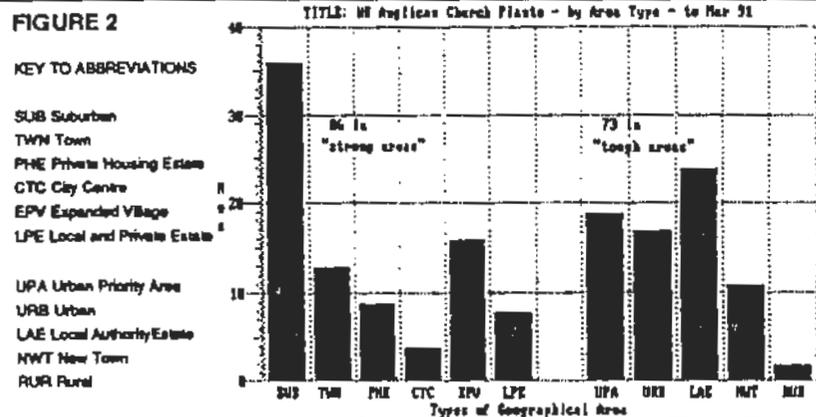
1 *Church Planting — 2. Some Experiences and Challenges* (November 1989).

APPENDIX 1

George Lings' statistical review of church planting within the Church of England was derived from questionnaires and is therefore by no means complete. Figure 1 represents the trend of the reported number of church planting projects implemented each year from 1967 to 1990. This shows that there was a very undramatic start over the first eleven years from 67 to 77 with the average just exceeding one Church of England plant report per year in the United Kingdom. However, the pattern then changes over the following eleven years from 78 to 88, with the average moving steadily up towards 20 reported plantings per year. This is a heartening prospect to set alongside the much more substantial statistics of decline and we trust it will be just one of the signs of hope in an otherwise rather gloomy picture.
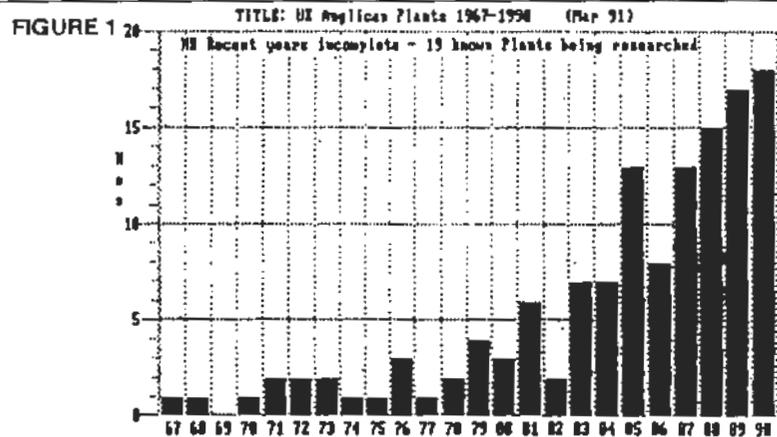
FIGURE 1

The figures also show their distribution in different types of area — from Suburban/ town through UPA/urban to rural villages. Although the suburban group leads the way, the picture is not at all one sided. There is a good spread right across the range with no classification unrepresented. There is also a surprisingly high number in the UPA/urban/local authority estate grouping which together come close to the total for the more 'middle class' grouping (73 to 86 respectively).

FIGURE 2

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

SUB Suburban
TWN Town
PHE Private Housing Estate
CTC City Centre
EPV Expanded Village
LPE Local and Private Estate

UPA Urban Priority Area
URB Urban
LAE Local Authority Estate
NWT New Town
RUR Rural

		TEAMS		
Place	Period	Number Members	Refs.	Trends
Lycaonia and	(a) ?	3	Paul, Barnabas, Mark	Act 13.1-5	
Pamphylia	(b) ?	3	Paul, Silas, Timothy	Act 16.1-5	
Macedonia	?	4	Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke	Acts 16.11 -14	Growing Groups
Achaia (Corinth)	1¼ years	5	Paul, Silas, Timothy Aquila and Priscilla, (partners in Gospel and Business)	Act 18.1-5 2 Cor. 1.19	Self-supporting (Bi-vocational Church Planters)
Ephesus (Asia)	3 years	6*	Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, Timothy, Erastus and Others	Act 18.19 Act 19 .22	Mobile Longer Stays
Macedonia	?		Aristarchus from Secundus Mace- and donia Sopater	Act 20.4	Mixed
and Achaia	3 mths	10	Gaius and Timothy from Lycaonia Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia Erastus Paul and Luke — from Judea	Act 19.22	Flexible

APPENDIX 3

### REVIEW OF CURRENT CHURCH PLANTING SCHEMES
These Contrast Typical Reorganization Schemes — viz:

Amalgamation of 3 Parishes
Just one church building, one vicar are retained, resulting in—
(a) Less clergy
(b) Less buildings
(c) Sale of sites
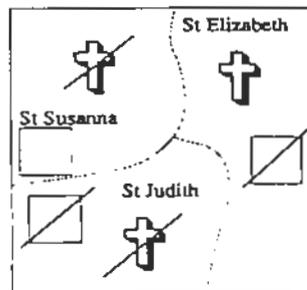
*'D' — Type Plants — Outside Parish into Deanery, Diocese, Beyond*

Harborne — Birmingham
Curate + 35 from St. John's moved in 1984. Congregation at St. Germain's increased from 20 to 150. Adjacent — crossing parish boundary.
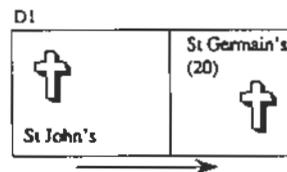
Goldsworth Park — Woking
Curate appointed in 1977. Started work alone and now congregation 135. New parish formed in 1981. Adjacent — new boundaries.
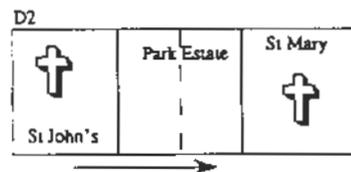
West London
Curate with 100 of H.T.B. congregation moved in 1985. St. Barnabas agreed not to oppose and block. Now the congregation has reached 300. Crossing parochial/deanery boundaries.
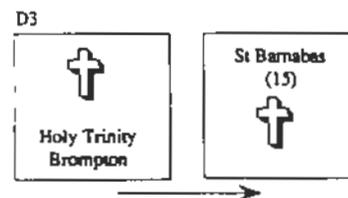

Mobile Missionary Team
Small team of 3 (incl. N.S.M. clergymen) moved from Chorleywood to St. Helens, Merseyside, in 1983, to work alongside vicar in a pioneer situation. Congregation now 200. Crosses diocesan boundaries.
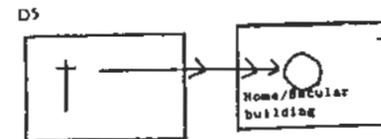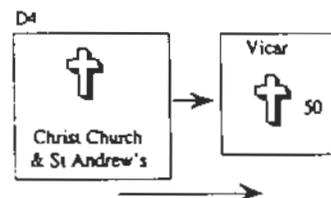
Cell—Small Team of Laity
A cell linked to a church in a nearby parish remains independent of the local parish structure.
Crosses parochial/deanery boundaries.
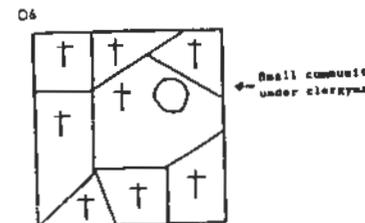
Extra-parochial Plant
This can be set up within a town or archdeaconry. It can be either a congregation under a clergyman or a small lay-led community. Either would be answerable to the Bishop.
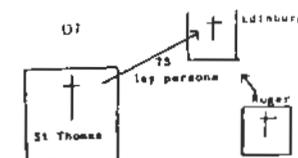
Hybrid Leader/Laity Plant
Roger Simpson had led a mission at St. Thomas in 1985. He then took 75 of that congregation with him in 1987 to re-open St. Paul's and St. George, Edinburgh, which has grown to 400.


'P'—Type Plants—Within the Parish Boundary
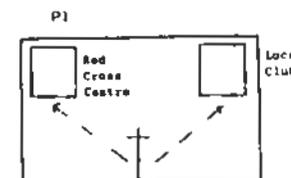
Bolton, Lancs.
After 3 extensions to St. Luke's church, in 1986 a woman deacon + 30 laity started meetings in a club on Sunday mornings only. Numbers grew to 70 by 1987 when a second 'daughter' was started with Asian emphasis.
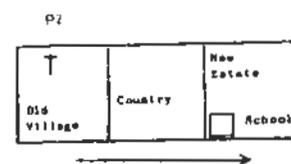
Kirkheaton—Huddersfield
No-one attended the old parish church from the Dalton council estate so a Curate with 12 laity started a morning Family Service in a junior school on the estate in 1981. It grew to 60 + 30 children by 1985.
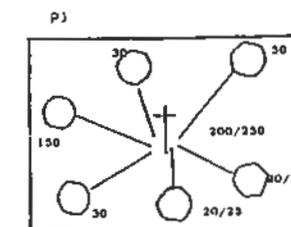
Chester-le-Street
('Strawberry Runner')
Satellite congregations started in 1979 in unlicensed buildings on estates. Family Services were held using services on tape to start with and each was semi-autonomous. The staff grew to vicar and 3 curates and the congregation to 600 in all.