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Anglo-Catholic Church Planting: An Exploration in Practical Theology.

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John Charles Wallace

ABSTRACT.

This thesis describes research undertaken into church planting in the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England as a piece of Practical Theology and engages also with areas of missiology and ecclesiology. It does it in a number of ways. It engages with literature around church planting and the tension between the whole Fresh Expressions agenda, of which church planting is one element, and the traditional role of the historic parish and its church. It also looks at specific historical Anglo-Catholic literature as the thesis aims to make a comparison between Victorian builders of new churches and church planting today, but highlights two less noted leaders in the expansion of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism and concentrates on the work of these two specific Victorians as a way of avoiding over-generalisation, but also because as they had not been referenced in much of the literature as being leaders in the revival of Catholic worship or the establishment of new churches in the Church of England. They have not been the subject of previous academic study, but as will be seen, they both played significant roles. Participant observation was undertaken in three church plants, set up by Anglo-Catholic parishes, monthly over a period of eighteen months, and detailed descriptions of these plants and my engagement with them are provided in subsequent chapters. The research method used was a limited version of Grounded Theory as it supports the methodology of Practical Theology. This then enabled me to use a thematic analysis to draw out six themes, common in differing degrees to each church. I was then able to apply these themes to the Victorian subjects and their work to establish some important similarities of approach. This leads to a conclusion with recommendations for future Anglo-Catholic church planting.

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Table of Contents.

Declaration

None of the material contained in this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree in this or any other institution. The thesis is my own work.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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source of encouragement as well as an excellent resource in helping me to look at an historical period which I had not previously studied in any detail, but only as a superficial reader of nineteenth century Anglican history. Along with these, I bracket the support and encouragement of various other DThM staff members, Rev. Dr. Calvin Samuel who admitted me to the programme, Dr. Jocelyn Bryan and Professor Pete Ward, the co-directors of the programme and very recently, Dr. Samuel Tranter, who replaced Dr Bryan. Added to these, I wish to acknowledge the support of Professor Alec Ryrie, who has enabled me to negotiate the minefields of submission.

The DThM is more than an academic programme; it is also a fellowship and the support, encouragement and critiques of fellow students has been refreshing, both informally and in research presentations. It is also positively challenging, especially being in a group, most of whom do not share my ecclesiology or theological perspectives. The fellowship has enabled me to engage with other Christian students from very different backgrounds and theological understandings and this experience has been valuable for me in widening my own ecclesiological and theological perspective. I have particularly valued the support of those in my cohort, especially Robert Amess and David Steell as well as of others who for various reasons have not been able to continue with the programme, among whom I would mention Fr. Mark Osbourne and Rev'd Cat Thatcher. Because of the way the programme runs with residential sessions, I have met students across the year groups and learned from them. I am especially indebted to the help and support of Jennifer Loop from Wisconsin, USA who attends a large non-denominational church and with whom I continue to share mutual support. Her eye for detail in spotting extra spaces and missing punctuation is greatly appreciated as is her questioning and comments as someone who had little knowledge and understanding of the Church of England and particularly the Anglo-Catholic world. Her

personal challenge and support have been invaluable and have ensured that I kept focussed, even when things were difficult.

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As a self-funding student, I am grateful for a small contribution from The Verulam House Fund Trust in the Diocese of St. Albans, as well as grants from the departmental research fund which covered the travel costs for my research visits.

Lastly, and by no means least, my amazingly supportive family, my three adult children who think I am totally mad and my long-suffering wife, Margaret who has stood by me for these six years and indulged and encouraged my retirement enthusiasm for academic activity - irrespective of the significant financial cost. Without the support, interest and enthusiasm of those mentioned here and many others, this research would not have come to fruition.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Background to the Research

This area of research interest came about as a result of the experience of the church which I attend and where I had been churchwarden previously as well as being a member of the PCC since 1984. It is a liberal Catholic church in what was a small market town forty miles north west of London but is now much more a commuter town with a number of large new housing developments and therefore attractive to commuters seeking slightly less costly housing. The parish is part of a Team Benefice with a growing population at the time of writing of around 45,000, the largest benefice in the Diocese and the parish itself is one of the /largest parishes in the Diocese.

Some nine years ago, the parish had a concern about the lack of Christian witness on the new Southern Housing Development. Prior to this, it had contributed significant funding to enable the diocese to buy a house to be designated as a vicarage so that at least some sort of Christian presence could be maintained in this new housing area. So a Christian presence was made visible with the identification of a vicarage but no other Christian activity took place on the estate. This growing concern coincided with a vacancy as the Team Vicar living in that vicarage moved on to another post.

After considerable discussion both within the parish, the wider team and the Diocesan Director Of Mission, it was agreed to appoint a Pioneer Priest to live and work in those estates. An appointment was made of an ordained and experienced Church Army captain and he was given a 'blank canvas.'[1] He said that in seven years' time, there would be an

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[1] It is interesting to note that although there was 'intentionality' there was little thought through planning.

established worshipping congregation meeting on the estate. In fact, it took less than three years for this to happen.

Seeing what was happening and that significant missional activity was taking place, I asked myself that if my church was doing this, why were other churches of the same tradition not doing similar things in their parishes? This formed the basis of my research question with the aim of demonstrating to Anglo - Catholic parishes that they can legitimately undertake church planting.[2] As can be seen from the survey of the literature in Chapter 2, most Anglican church planting activity has been supported by churches of an Evangelical and usually charismatic nature, latterly greatly influenced and supported by Holy Trinity Brompton in London [3]. I resolved to learn more about any Anglo – Catholic based church plants that were in existence, especially as the report 'From Anecdote to Evidence' supports the idea that church planting should take place in all parts of the Church of England. As regards Anglo-Catholic churches it says, 'This model is still being developed and there is on-going reflection about what planting means in an Anglo-Catholic context'[4]. It also comments that most church planting at the time of the project was being undertaken by Evangelical churches as I have already mentioned.

This was a challenge for me as co-ordinated information on Anglo-Catholic church planting was sparse. I also wanted to understand whether current church plants had any similarity with the way Anglo-Catholic churches had developed in the nineteenth century, when a significant number of new churches had been built, especially in London and whether

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[2] In this thesis, church planting refers both to the establishment of new worshipping congregations as well as efforts to revive weak congregations with the support of a thriving church, both in terms of personnel and finance.

[3] Thorlby, Tim. *A Time to Sow.*(London: Centre for Theology & Community, 2017.) p. vii

[4] *From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013*. (London: The Church Commissioners for England, 2014.). p. 20

some aspects of what had been done in that period were applicable and relevant for current church planting. I therefore felt it important to include some form of historical comparison alongside my empirical research. The link between these two parts can be summed up in the over-arching, and perhaps over-used, word 'mission'. Just as modern church plants aim to reach those outside the orbit and influence of current parish churches, so the Victorians saw their church building activities as a way of reaching the 'unchurched.' Richard Foster, one of the subjects in this study, wrote a pamphlet to draw attention to the growing population of London as something to which the Church of England needed to respond.[5] He saw a paucity of churches as a great deficit in the ability of the Church to meet the spiritual needs of men and women, especially those of the 'thronging multitudes'. The missiological methodology which he outlined could just as well have been written at the beginning of the current century; it is equally valid today. Yet he was realistic enough to realise that all of the proposed new churches might not be filled. His vision was for forty-one new churches in Tottenham and twenty-three in West Ham, based upon the House of Lords Committee Report on Spiritual Destitution (1858) which recommended that there should be church seating provision for a quarter of the population of any given area. If these churches could not be built, he proposed to plant '*sixty-four centres of Church action*' (Foster's italics).[6]

I also had the aim that my research should be a real piece of Practical Theology, something which would be of use to Anglo-Catholics who might wish to consider church planting as part of their mission and outreach. Research in Practical Theology should always support the lived experience in the life of the contemporary church. Therefore, the research question was designed to enable the reader to understand some of the realities of church planting in an Anglo-Catholic context and to learn from the experience of the churches

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[5] Foster, Richard. *Some Wants of the Church At Home and Abroad; With Suggestions How to Supply Them.* (London: Rivingtons, 1881)
[66] Foster pp. 8-9

studied as well as including an historical perspective in which to see what had been done in the past. I anticipated (as the research showed) that there would be some general lessons and principles that could be applied. I used a variety of direct contacts to obtain information and then these people provided further contacts. The acknowledgements above show the range of contacts involved.

The work on the historical element is based on the two primary sources, biographies of the subjects of the study, Fr. Richard Temple West and Mr Richard Foster. Although biographies have a danger of being over-subjective, because of the potential bias, positive or negative, of the biographer, the information they contain can often be substantiated by other documents. In the case of Temple West, there are service registers and other material from St Mary Magdalene, Paddington, accessible in the London Metropolitan Archives which confirm the claims of his biographer both in terms of offertory income and of attendance at services. In fact, as mentioned in the acknowledgements above, the London Metropolitan Archive also contains a large amount of uncatalogued material relating to St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington and so provides other evidence of Richard Temple West's ministry to corroborate what Carter has written in his biography. There is also a variety of contemporary newspaper reports both from the secular as well as the religious press; some of these contemporary newspaper reports his biographer also cites.

For Richard Foster, other corroborating information is available about the way in which he supported the building of new churches in northeast London and elsewhere, both written, particularly in the minutes of the many committees in which he was involved and in one case, engraved on the foundation stone of St Barnabas, Walthamstow. So I am confident that the discussion of their work which occurs in Chapter 4 is rigorous and as objective as the sources will allow. Both the archived editions of the Church Times and the Evening Standard,

as well as other sources, substantiate the claims made in respect of both of these men as will be seen in subsequent chapters.

There is a wealth of other written material about the Oxford Movement and its development and I have used some of this to set the context in which these two men worked. The mid to late Victorian years were times of considerable turmoil in the Church of England and it says much about the character of these men that they achieved so much to forward the mission of the church in the midst of such turmoil. I believe it to be important for a complete understanding of their work, to include a short historical synopsis of the state of the Church of England leading up to the mid eighteen-fifties.

The thesis is in a number of parts. After this introduction, there is a review of the literature, which sets the context for all that follows and then a description of the methodology employed in evaluating the empirical research. A historical chapter follows which importantly sets the historical Anglo-Catholic background. The next two chapters cover detailed descriptions of the three churches involved in the study, with demographic and geographical information as well as accounts of services and also the wider activities and evidence of the impacts of these churches in their communities. In the following chapter, common themes are identified, based on the responses in interviews and in questionnaires.

I then move on to enter into a dialogue between these six themes and the recorded work of West and Foster to see how applicable they might be to what we know about their activities and achievements, obviously taking into account the differing social and ecclesiological contexts. This is an important section as the church of today must be willing to learn from history and apply its lessons, where appropriate, to new situations rather than assuming that similar initiatives and interventions have not been attempted previously. This thread runs through this thesis both covertly and overtly.

The thesis closes with a summary of what has been achieved, and importantly, I believe, with five recommendations to encourage and support Anglo-Catholic church planting. I trust that this introduction will encourage the reader to consider seriously the issues this thesis attempts to address. For the Church of England to move forward in the twenty first century, it is vital that all parts of it are engaged and supported in mission and outreach.

N.B. Although this thesis was written during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, all the empirical research visits were carried out well before it became prevalent in England and restrictions were imposed.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1   Introduction.

This chapter looks at the literature around church planting within the Church of England over the last thirty years. Although it looks at the wider Fresh Expressions agenda of which church planting is part and sets it in the context of how mission is currently viewed within the Church of England, its thrust is aimed at understanding why the Anglo-Catholic constituency in general has failed to become involved in this missional activity and the objections which they might have in being part of such an involvement. Therefore, it considers a number of criticisms of the Fresh Expressions approach from theologians within the broad range of the Catholic wing of the church. Given the history of the Anglo-Catholic movement, mission should be a key part of that tradition.[7] This concept is important as the empirical research described in this thesis needs to be considered alongside current Anglo-Catholic concerns raised in a wide range of literature about the ecclesiological and theological validity of church planting and hence the resultant lack of significant engagement. As such the criticisms need to be taken seriously and evaluated alongside the empirical evidence from my research.

Writing in *Mission Shaped Questions,* Angela Tilby introduces the dilemma in which Anglo-Catholics find themselves:[8]

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[7] Thorlby, Tim, *A Time to Sow* (London: Centre for Theology & Community 2017), p.88

[8] *What Questions Does Catholic Ecclesiology pose for Contemporary Mission and Fresh Expressions?* In Croft, Steven J. L.(ed), *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing 2008), pp.78-9

The fresh expressions movement is a rather painful wake-up call for Catholic-minded Anglicans like myself. Difficult although it is to admit it, our current record on mission is pretty dreadful.[9]

Tilby writes about the things the tradition is good at such as liturgy, prayer and community service but contrasts that with a wide uncertainty about 'giving reasons for the hope that is in us.'[10] Instead she notes that Anglo-Catholics have become inward-looking, bickering and defensive.[11]

This is the context in which the empirical research took place and which I will address by engaging with other Anglo-Catholic writers and their views around Fresh Expressions and Church Planting. It is useful at this point to refer to Pusey's definition of Anglo-Catholicism as an indication of how most Anglo-Catholics understand the nature of the Church.[12]

- High thoughts of the two sacraments

- High estimate of the episcopacy as God's ordinance

- High estimate of the visible Church as the body where we are made and continue to be members of Christ

- Regard for ordinances, as directing our devotion and disciplining us, such as daily public prayers, fasts and feasts etc.

- Regard for the visible part of devotion, such as the decoration of the house of God, which acts insensibly on the mind.

- Reverence for and defence of the ancient Church, of which our own Church is looked upon as the representative to us, and by whose views and doctrines we interpret our own

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[9] Ibid. p.78.
[10] 1Peter 3:15.
[11] Croft, Steven J. L. ed. *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church.* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008). p. 78
[12] In David Edwards, *Christian England*, vol III (Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1984), p.181. Original in Liddon, *Life of Pusey* ii, p.140.

Church when her meaning is questioned or doubtful; in a word, reference to the ancient

Church, instead of the Reformers, as the ultimate expounder of the meaning of our

Church.

2.2 Theology and Church Planting – Introduction.

Gittoes et al. highlight that innovation and inventiveness are not only a feature of the

contemporary church nor the prerogative of one part of it, but something that has existed in

the Church of England for over the last two centuries.[13] Church planting has been and

continues to be an example of this. In the nineteenth century this innovation and

inventiveness engaged both Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics alike as each in their own way

sought to address both the spiritual and material needs of the growing and deprived urban

population. The Anglo-Catholic 'slum priests' have become part of the mythology of the

nineteenth century but they were just one element in the ways that British churches responded

to the problems of cities. Alongside them, were Evangelicals, both Anglican and non-

conformists working to relieve poverty and need and so showing the practical nature of the

gospel. In such a climate the Salvation Army came into being along with various

'settlements' in the slum areas of London. [14] Jeremy Morris comments: 'What emerges is not

so much a picture of a few heroic individuals, as of a heroic religious *culture* (his italics).'[15]

This culture pervaded the middle and latter half of the nineteenth century as part of 'the

extraordinary reach of British churches into the heart of the cities.'[16] The Victorian examples

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[13] Julie Gittoes, Brutus Green, James Heard & Ian Mobsby, *Generous Ecclesiology: Church, World and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM Press 2013). Passim.
[14] Ibid. p.25
[15] Ibid. p.38.
[16] Ibid. p.37.

in chapter four underline this statement. He contrasts this approach with the more wide-spread indifference and suspicion of religious activities common in the Victorian era. [17]

It is vital that church planting is not seen as a utilitarian or pragmatic activity, in other words a way of proving that the local church of whatever style of churchmanship is interested in mission and therefore wants to build up attendance to show its effectiveness and so be seen to be growing in purely statistical terms.[18] It needs to be grounded both in an adequate theology of mission and a rigorous ecclesiology which are true to Anglican roots. Anglo-Catholics with their high view of the nature of the church as a continuation from the ancient Church would see anything that broke this continuity as anathema. As will be shown later, critics of Fresh Expressions take issue both with its theology and ecclesiology. Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank make this clear in opening words of *For the Parish:*

> *Mission-shaped Church* is a flawed document. Yet, at present, it determines the shape of ecclesiology in the Church of England. The flaws of the report are both theological and philosophical.[19]

2.3   Why Theology and Ecclesiology Matter.

Alister McGrath importantly highlights the centrality of theology and doctrine in church growth:

> Theology matters to church growth, precisely because it aims to sustain the luminous and captivating vision of God which lies at the heart of the Christian faith, defending

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[17] Ibid. p.38. Morris cites S.C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c.1880-1939.* (Oxford: OUP 1999) as one of the best discussions of this.

[18] There is a tendency for churches to exaggerate their missional influence in order to prove that they are flourishing. Personal experience over thirty years of conducting archdiaconal inspections confirms this view.

[19] Andrew Davison & Alison Milbank, For *the Parish: A Critique of Fresh Expressions* (London: SCM Press 2010), p.1.

it against well-meaning attempts to reduce it to something manageable and culturally accessible, which ultimately robs it of its depth and vitality.[20]

This is a particular concern for the Anglo-Catholics. Angela Tilby stresses the theological importance of history for an Anglo-Catholic understanding of Church and mission.[21] She sees the Church as 'the mission of God extending through time.' In Anglicanism it is through liturgy and sacrament that this continuity is expressed and so forms the theological foundation for its ecclesiology. Any church planting activity needs to take seriously the issue of theology and it is in this respect that the different methods involved in Practical Theology are particularly useful. Practical Theology takes its starting point from a given real situation and analyses it using various methods, drawn from a range of theories both in the arts and in science, but interpreted within a theological framework.[22]

As will be seen later one of the criticisms around Fresh Expressions and the concept of church planting is that it lacks a consistent ecclesiology. This is a key issue for Anglo-Catholics. The Nicene Creed identifies four aspects that mark out the church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The oneness of the church guards against separation and stresses that all are united in one body, the Body of Christ.[23] The holiness of the church emphasises its separateness from the world. This separateness is for a purpose, that of mission, 'proclaiming the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light', (1 Peter 2:9). The catholicity of the church stresses its inclusiveness; it should be a church for everyone and everywhere. The church's apostolicity is the safeguard that preserves its other aspects. However, none of the above characteristics is specifically Anglican as the Nicene

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[20] In David Goodhew, *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* (Farnham: Ashgate 2015), pp.93-106.
[21] *What Questions Does Catholic Ecclesiology Pose for Contemporary Mission and Fresh Expressions?* In Croft, Steven J. L.(ed), *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing 2008), p.79.
[22] Osmer, Richard Robert. *Practical Theology: An Introduction.* (Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans, 2008). p.4.
[23] 1 Corinthians 12:27

Creed is a statement of faith which explicitly or implicitly underpins the beliefs of all mainstream Christian churches who are eligible to be members of the World Council of Churches. There is therefore an additional need to make clear a specifically Anglican identity. As far as a church plant is concerned, in order for it to have an Anglican identity, there must be provision both for the administration of Baptism and the celebration of the Eucharist. It is recognised that this can cause difficulties because of the often informal nature of ministerial oversight.[24] But the Eucharist is at 'the heart of Christian life' in which 'the central core of the biblical gospel is retold and re-enacted.'[25] *Mission-shaped Church* clearly stresses this: 'New expressions of church may raise practical difficulties about authorised ministry, but, if they are to endure, they must celebrate the Eucharist.'[26]

Another mark of Anglican identity is the historic episcopate. Tilby draws on Clement of Rome in 96CE to emphasise the role of the bishop in mission.[27] A proper relationship with the diocesan bishop is essential, for through the bishop, a church is linked to the wider church and so can claim to be a part of the one, holy catholic and apostolic church. *Breaking New Ground* is quite clear on this:

> The Episcopate represents the church's catholicity.[28] In summary, unless a church plant offered on a regular basis the dominical sacraments and had a good relationship with and the active support of the diocesan bishop, Anglo-Catholics would not accept that it was an authentic expression of church.

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[24] *From Anecdote to Evidence* p.17 notes that 52% of church plants are lay led and most of these leaders have received no training.
[25] *MSC* p.101.
[26] Ibid.
[27] *Tilby in* Croft, (ed), pp.78-89.
[28] *Breaking New Ground: Church Planting in the Church of England,* (London: Church House Publishing. 1994). p.3.

2.4   The Development of Church Planting since 1994.

As a response to various 'unofficial' church plants, in 1994 the House of Bishops commissioned the report, quoted above, '*Breaking New Ground'*.[29] This report aimed to highlight good practice as well as to address some of the problems caused by the unauthorised plants. The significance of this report is that for the first time church planting was recognised by the Church of England as a legitimate strategy for mission. Then in 2002, the Church of England Board of Mission set up a group to review this report by looking at what was happening in respect of church planting as well as considering the developments of what came to be known as 'fresh expressions of church'. This group published its report, '*Mission-shaped Church*'[30] (*MSC*) in 2004. In the same year, Rev'd Steven Croft, Warden of Cranmer Hall in St John's College, Durham (and later to become Bishop of Sheffield and subsequently Oxford) was appointed as Archbishop's Missioner and leader of Fresh Expressions. He was followed in this role in 2009 by Bishop Graham Cray, who had chaired the Working Group that produced *MSC*.

2.5   Mission-shaped Church – The Report.

The foreword to this report, written by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, clearly sets the agenda:

[W]e have begun to realize that there are many ways in which the reality of 'church' can exist. 'Church' as a map of territorial divisions (parishes and dioceses) is one – one that still has remarkable vigour in all sorts of contexts and which relates to a central conviction about the vocation of Anglicanism. But there are more and more others, of the kind that this report describes and examines. The challenge is not to

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[29]Ibid. passim.
[30] Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (Church House Publishing: London 2004).

force everything into the familiar mould; but neither is it to tear up the rulebook and

start from scratch (as if that were ever possible or realistic).[31]

Bishop Graham Cray in his introduction refers to the changing nature of communities and

hence the need for the church to be responsive to this if it is to fulfil the Anglican

incarnational principle [32]. The division of the Church of England into parishes, which had

begun in Saxon times, means that each part of England is the responsibility of its parish

priest. The incarnational principle of the church mirrors the incarnation of Jesus, 'The word

was made flesh and pitched his tent among us.'[33] Just as Jesus lived among the people of his

day the parish priest should mirror this. This principle is enshrined in the Canon Law of the

Church of England:

C 25 Of the residence of priests on their benefices.

> 1. Every beneficed priest shall keep residence on his benefice, or on one of them if he
>
> shall hold two or more in plurality, and in the house of residence (if any) belonging
>
> thereto. [34]

Many current vicarages are still adjacent to the parish church or in some cases physically

attached to it.[35] Therefore, the practical result of this Canon is that in many parishes,

especially in inner-cities, the priest is now the only 'professional' who actually lives in the

parish. This principle, that the incumbent resides in the parsonage house of the benefice, is

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[31] *MSC* p. vii.
[32] I refer to this later as being crucial for Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology.
[33] John 1:14 (my translation).
[34] www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england/section-c#b85 Accessed 13 May 2020.
[35] The Vicarage in my own parish, a Victorian replacement of an older house is adjacent to the church and accessible via the churchyard. Many Victorian Anglo-Catholic churches either had the clergy house attached as is the case with St Mary's, Tottenham or within the curtilage of the church as is the case with St Barnabas, Walthamstow where the vicarage door is opposite the north door of the church, separated by a path about three yards wide.

important and is vital for Anglo-Catholics who might want to consider church planting, as it negates the view that a Fresh Expression or a Church Plant is divorced from its founding parish.[36] As will be shown later, critics of *MSC* and Fresh Expressions often assume, in many cases wrongly, a disconnect between the parish and the mission initiative.

Thus the report maintains that there is no single standard form of church which can any longer meet the needs of the diverse cultures, although it insists that the parochial system is still a vital part of the way in which the Church of England delivers its mission. It is worth emphasising this as a number of critics have accused *MSC* of undermining the parish system.[37] One must also consider at this time definitions of terms as used in *MSC*, as it stresses both the importance of Fresh Expressions and of Church Planting in that planting and Fresh Expressions of church can have similar origins and similar aims. They are different but are related and both are important for the church's mission. [38]

MSC identifies 12 types of Fresh Expression.[39] David Goodhew and Rob Barward-Symmons have attempted to clarify the difference between a fresh expression and a church plant and produced a seven point definition of a 'new church'[40]. Michael Moynagh uses the metaphor of a journey to describe church planting[41]. He identifies two forms: a worship-first journey and a serving-first journey. In the worship-first journey, a congregation, from an existing large church is planted into another area, often into a church threatened with closure. The aim is to preserve and strengthen the existing congregation. The serving-first journey starts within a given community. A local church believes there is some need within a

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[36] When we were considering planting a new church in my current parish, the first thing we did was to buy a house right in the middle of the new housing development.
[37] For example see: Andrew Davison & Alison Milbank, *For the Parish: A Critique of Fresh Expressions* (London: SCM Press: 2010).
[38] *MSC* p.34.
[39] *MSC* p.44.
[40] David Goodhew & Rob Barward-Symmons, *New Churches in the North East* (Durham: Centre for Church Growth Research: 2015).
[41] Moynagh & Harrold pp.206-221.

particular part of its parish. First it tries to listen (perhaps through visiting campaigns, open meetings, or questionnaires) to identify that particular need and then respond to it in some way. Given the tradition of social action within Anglo-Catholicism, this route might be thought to be attractive to such churches as their preferred method of mission. Both of these journeys fit within the definition of church planting suggested in *MSC* whereby the mission of the church is embedded in a particular context to bring to faith new disciples.[42] This is in line with many current diocesan strategies which have as one of their (usually three) aims, the making of new disciples so that new converts become disciples, committed to the lifelong journey of following the way of Jesus.

2.6   Mission-shaped Church – Its Underpinning Theology.

MSC devotes a chapter to 'Theology for a Missionary Church.'[43] It sees mission as derived from the nature of the relationships within the Trinity and in fact speaks of 'the mission of God' (*missio dei* - the sending of /by God. In classical grammatical terms we are considering both the subjective and objective genitive – and the ambiguity of the grammar enables us to use both interpretations). The giving of the Spirit is linked with the sending of the apostles into the world: 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'[44]

David J. Bosch, whose missiological writing has been hugely influential in the past half a century and very much underpins *MSC,* sees mission as the work of the Triune God in that mission comes from the heart of God who is 'the fountain of sending love.'[45] Mission therefore, is understood as being derived from the very nature of God. So it sits within the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not as one might expect, within that of ecclesiology or

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[42] *MSC* p.32.
[43] Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (Church House Publishing: London 2004), pp. 84-102.
[44] John 21:22.
[45] David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission – Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2011), p.402.

soteriology as the doctrine of the nature of God is foundational, as the rest of Christian

doctrine springs from it. The classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending

the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet

another *movement* - the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit sending the church into the world to

be an example of incarnational presence. Key to the outworking of *missio Dei* is the doctrine

of the incarnation. *MSC* emphasises this by stating that the incarnation took place at a

particular historical time in a specific geographical location and in a particular culture.[46]

Angela Tilby from her Anglo-Catholic standpoint is concerned 'how the church as

part of the *missio Dei* retains its continuity through time.'[47] She sees Fresh Expressions as a

bridge into the church. This may be applicable to some church plants but not to all, for, as

will be seen later some, by her definition, are churches in their own right.[48] As a result the

question is raised as to how far the church should go to meet and adapt to the challenges of

different cultures as it seeks to present and live out the Gospel in the light of this Trinitarian

relationship. Critics of *MSC*, especially Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank strongly object

to what they see as its segregationist emphasis which can be seen as antithetical to the

concept of the social Trinity.[49] Pete Ward writes: 'Debates around the Trinity, for instance,

have incorporated notions of relationship and community as central to their themes' and he

cites a number of theologians in support of this statement.[50] So any tendency towards

segregation militates against the concepts of relationship and community which are essential

elements of the application of the doctrine of the Trinity into present day church life.

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[46] *MSC* p.87.
[47] In Croft, Steven J. L.(ed), *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing 2008) p.88.
[48] Ibid. p.79.
[49] Davison & Milbank. *For the Parish.* pp. 64-92
[50] Ward, Pete. *Introducing Practical Theology:Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church.* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic. 2017) p. 123.

Such criticisms will be covered in more depth later, but they show the tensions that can arise in any planning for a church plant or new congregation. Is the new church aimed at reaching and engaging those within a particular cultural or social group or covering a particular geographic area (which in turn could also have cultural implications)? Quoting Donald McGavran, *MSC* concedes that this is probably 'one of the most contentious issues that arise in connection with church planting.'[51] McGavran posited what he called the Homogeneous Unit Principle. He believed and evidenced from his mission field experience in India in the first half of the twentieth century, that people who become Christians did not want to move out of their culture, class, caste groups; they were more comfortable with people 'like themselves.' It is possible to find scriptural support both for and against this principle but it is important to recognise the huge gap both in culture and time that exists since McGavran proposed this theory. Nevertheless, those who are engaged in church planting need to have a very clear rationale of what they are trying to achieve and whom they are aiming to reach, underpinned by a coherent theology combined with a reflexivity that enables them to understand and justify their approach within the demographic and cultural milieu in which they work. This is where it is important to engage with the principles of Practical Theology in order to provide that coherent theological and ecclesiological rationale, rather than allowing just a pragmatism in 'mission' to drive the activity. In Luke 14:28ff. Jesus uses illustrations of building a tower or preparing for war as reminders of the cost of discipleship and the need to ensure that all the relevant issues are properly considered and taken into account. His emphasis on proper planning and preparation serves to underline the importance of the approach outlined above, both from a theological stance as well as from a more practical position. So Anglo-Catholics would look at any suggestions of starting a

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[51] *MSC* p.108.

church plant, not only from the physical practicalities but also how such an activity would enhance the mission of the church through the ministry of word and sacrament. This concept is referred to in later chapters as 'intentionality'.

2.7. Recent Literature about Current Anglo-Catholic Church Planting.

The literature around current church planting and especially Anglo-Catholic activity is relatively sparse. The Centre for Theology & Community published a report *Love, Sweat and Tears* in 2016.[52] The report is the first fully researched and published account of church planting undertaken in east London through the Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) Network. It relates the experience of five churches of a range of churchmanship which have benefited from planting over the ten year period from 2005 – 2015, beginning with St Paul's, Shadwell. It attempts to tell the stories honestly and as a help to others engaged in Church Planting.

As far as this research into Anglo-Catholic church planting is concerned, the most significant of these studies is that of St. Peter's Bethnal Green. This was an Anglo-Catholic parish which was declining and which has been revived by church planting, as HTB had been approached by the PCC to come in and offer support. This was eventually agreed but it is significant to note that the traditional 10am Sung Eucharist was maintained. The parish describes itself on its website:

> At St Peter's we're a 'cross-tradition' Anglican church, so we **worship God** in many styles, encountering God through the **scriptures**, the **sacraments** and the **Spirit**.[53]

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[52] The Centre for Theology and Community, *Love, Sweat and Tears: Church Planting in East London* (London:2016). [http://www.theology-centre.org.uk/resources/research/. Accessed 11th June 2019.
[53] http://www.stpetersbethnalgreen.org/worship/ . Accessed 11th June 2019.

The report ends with these words:

> Any revival of the church's fortunes will require a mix of approaches, working
> together. The model of church planting described in this report is not a 'cure all' for
> every place or situation, but it certainly appears to have a role to play. *It demonstrates
> what can be done within the traditional structures of the church.*[54] *(my italics)*

The other significant report, again from The Centre for Theology & Community is *A Time to Sow*.[55] Although its aim is to describe growing Anglo-Catholic parishes, its final section puts that growth into perspective and addresses Anglo-Catholic church planting – or rather the lack of it.[56] Tim Thorlby identifies the drive for Evangelical church growth and planting with the leadership and support of a handful of large churches which have also encouraged plants to become involved in the supportive networks which they have set up.[57] He was not able to identify any Anglo-Catholic church that was currently undertaking such a rôle. Given the history of Anglo-Catholic church planting particularly in the nineteenth century, he sees it as strange that there is such a lack of willingness to do so today. As an example from the nineteenth century, in Walthamstow in 1840, there was one Anglican church, by 1911 there were eleven, mainly Anglo-Catholic, funded in part or in whole especially by the generosity and theological zeal of Richard Foster (1822-1910).[58] Thorlby contrasts the enthusiasm for mission that led to the building of these churches with what he sees as happening today in Anglo-Catholic circles today. He relates how that from the 19th Century through to the second world war, many Anglican Catholics were actively involved in

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[54] The Centre for Theology and Community, *Love, Sweat and Tears: Church Planting in East London* (London:2016), p.91. http://www.theology-centre.org.uk/resources/research/, Accessed 11th June 2019.
[55] Thorlby, Tim, A *Time to Sow: Anglican Catholic Church Growth in London* (London: The Centre for Theology and Community. 2017).
[56] Thorlby pp.83-91.
[57] www.htb.org/network. Accessed 11th June 2019.
[58] Steven Saxby, *Anglican Church Building in Victorian Walthamstow* (London: Walthamstow Historical Society, 2014), pp.3-4.

setting up new churches where London was expanding.[59] At the same time they were also

leading new missions to the slums of the inner city.[60] He concludes:

> …… [T]he tradition's profound understanding of the importance of incarnational
>
> ministry and the rootedness of its worship in age-old truths is surely more relevant
>
> than ever in a city typified by constant change and rootlessness. Yet it is clear that the
>
> tradition has a challenge on its hands to recover the vision and energy it once had for
>
> growth and mission.[61]

This comment illustrates how slowly Anglo-Catholic churches have moved in the past ten

years, in spite of the national drive towards church growth and church planting. Steven Croft

wrote in 2009:

> I believe this movement {Fresh Expressions} has theological integrity within every
>
> tradition of the Church of England, including the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Through it
>
> the gospel is bearing fruit in every place.[62]

David Goodhew and Anthony-Paul Cooper's jointly edited *The Desecularisation of

the City* shows the changes that have taken place in church life and the formation / planting of

new churches in London across the denominations and it includes a digest of Thorlby's

work. [63] There is also a useful chapter by Bob Jackson on the trends within the Anglican

Church in London since 1980 which highlight both numerical growth in parishes as well as

the establishment of church plants.[64] Also in this category is the research conducted by David

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[59] See Walford, Rex, *The Growth of "New London" in Suburban Middlesex (1918-1945) and the Response of the Church of England* (Lewiston NY & Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press 2007).
[60] Thorlby p.91.
[61] Thorlby p.91.
[62] Croft, Steven & Mobsby, Ian (eds.) *Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition*. (Norwich: Canterbury Press 2009), p.50.
[63] David Goodhew and Anthony-Paul Cooper, *The Descularisation of the City: London's Churches, 1980 to the Present*. (Abingdon: Routledge 2019).
[64] Goodhew and Cooper, *Desecularisation,* pp.262-280.

Goodhew and Rob Barward-Symmons in the North East.[65] This research covers wide range of churches of different denominations so is not directly comparable to the other two works to which I have referred. Nevertheless, it gives an insight into what is happening outside London and the way in which new churches are being planted across different traditions.

2.8.   Criticisms of *MSC* and its approach.

Since the publication of *MSC*, there has been a significant number of books, articles and pamphlets published, aiming to substantiate or evidence its conclusions, as well as others which set out to challenge the underlying basis and assumptions of Fresh Expressions and Church Planting. There has also been a number of 'evaluations' such as Nelstrop and Percy's *Evaluating Fresh Expressions.*[66] This section describes the criticism of *MSC* by a number of, mainly academic, theologians and is offered to balance what is written in *MSC* and advocated by those involved in church planting. Any church that is considering a plant should look at these criticisms and see how valid they might be in their situation.

The strongest of these criticisms is *For the Parish*[67] *(FTP)*. The authors, Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank, both stand in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Philosophically, *MSC* is accused of separating form and content, so that the metaphors of clothing and fashion, used frequently in *MSC*, imply that the rejection of outward forms does not destroy the content of the gospel. 'The gospel may have many clothes but there is only one gospel.'[68] Davison and Milbank object to this concept as, along with the idea of choice of

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[65] David Goodhew and Rob Barward-Symmons *New Churches in the North East* (Durham: Centre for Church Growth Research, 2015).
[66] Louise Nelstrop & Martyn Percy, *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church.* (Norwich: Canterbury Press 2008). This piece of work is more in the nature of subjective assessment rather than a rigorous academic research project which can be challenged or authenticated on the basis of the research methodology and findings. Nelstrop and Percy published their evaluation only four years after the publication of *MSC* so any findings must be seen as provisional and relating superficially to very embryonic forms of Fresh Expressions or church planting.
[67] Davison, A.& Milbank, A. *For the Parish.* (London: scm press, 2010).
[68] *MSC* p.97

denominations, being a matter of style. They hold strongly to the view that the Church of England is not simply one denomination among many both because of its history but also its legal status as the Established Church which differentiates it in its governance and position from all other churches. So they see the historic place of a parish with its parish church as the key to mission and as such believe it to be undermined by Fresh Expressions and church plants. They state that a Fresh Expression only meets one situation, whereas 'the inherited church' has faced and can continue to face a variety of situations. They believe that the parish church can adapt to meet new challenges.[69]

Much of the criticism made by Davison and Milbank is based on their view of the make-up of the Working Group that produced *MSC*. The members were all involved in some form of parish ministry or held diocesan managerial roles for ministerial or mission support. Davison and Milbank decry the absence of academic theologians in the membership of this working party and name a number of those whom they believe should have been involved. This view colours much of the rest of their analysis and they return to it in their concluding chapter where they comment that the lack of academic theologians contributes to the lack of credibility of the report.[70] Yet they decry the useful analytical and theological tool of the Pastoral Cycle.[71] It might be however that the criticisms of FTP are only of those that are formally badged as Fresh Expressions and therefore often labelled as 'church' in order to tick a box on an official form? In the understanding of Davison and Milbank, Fresh Expressions appear to have developed in a vacuum, divorced from the life of a parish. This is far from the case as most such activities are run by loyal church members, with the blessing and encouragement, usually combined with financial support, of incumbents and church councils,

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[69] Davison & Milbank, *For the Parish,* p.9.
[70] Davison & Milbank, *For the Parish* p.225.
[71] Davison & Milbank, *For the Parish* p.128.

and more frequently than not, within the boundaries of the existing parish. Yet the underlying theme of *FTP* seems to be a divorce between Fresh Expressions and traditional parish life. They state:

> So far, Fresh Expressions is the common wisdom of our experience. Where we part company is in the idea that the book-group is 'Church' by itself; that the exclusive group can be separate from the Body, or be the Body on its own.[72]

A significant part of the book relates to mission and particularly how it relates to modern culture, which they perceive as one of the reasons for the concept of Fresh Expressions. Davison and Milbank see it as a response to a consumer driven society and hence the introduction of an element of choice in the way people might want to meet their spiritual needs. However there is a significant lack of empirical evidence to back up this claim. What evidence they offer is anecdotal and concentrated on what might be classed as unusual examples, like 'the book group' the 'card-making church' or 'knitting group church'. They manifestly fail to acknowledge that informal groups are, and always have been, legitimate ways of introducing people into the social life of a church as a bridge towards an understanding of and an encounter with the gospel. The journey to faith is a very varied one and it is invidious to criticise techniques that are being used to help people make that journey. Such methods echo what St. Paul wrote: 'I have become all things to all people , so that by any means I might save some' (1 Cor 9:22). Churches have always had separate interest groups and some people never 'progress' from them into full worshipping church life. The problem with making such a criticism is that one could be left needing to castigate traditional and long established groups such as women's fellowships, The Mothers' Union, men's groups or other similar activities, which many people see as 'their church'. It might be

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[72] Davison & Milbank, *For the Parish,* p.166.

however that the criticisms of FTP are only of those that are formally badged as Fresh Expressions and therefore often labelled as 'church' in order to tick a box on an official form.[73] Therefore, Davison and Milbank see the lack within many Fresh Expressions of the formal structures of worship - the formal preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments - as a significant negative approach to mission compared with that played by the historic role of the parish church – 'A Christian Presence in Every Community' as the Church of England describes itself.

2.9.   A Response to Criticisms of *MSC.*

The criticisms of *MSC* and activities that flow from it, by Davison and Milbank would be easier to accept if they were based on solid empirical data about the vitality of the traditional parish church. These criticisms, together with what seems a break with the historical tradition have led many Anglo-Catholics to regard any form of Fresh Expression and Church Planting as not something with which they wish to engage. As will be seen later, there are parishes in which church planting is taking place and lessons can be learned from these. They write: 'Sociology is allowed to triumph over theology.'[74] Such an analysis leads them to deny the suggestion, which they see as being implicit in *MSC,* that the Church is just another voluntary organisation among many others, whereas it is 'the Body of Christ and the bearer of his mission in the world.'[75]

The only evidence on which these criticisms are based is a short generalised statement about the parish church and its historical links with its community whereas those of us who

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[73] The Annual Statistics for Mission Form that parishes are asked to complete has a question about Fresh Expressions. When conducting inspections on behalf of the Archdeacon over more than thirty years, I have seen many of these forms and what I would regard as normal parish activities are often included – probably to show to 'The Diocese' that a parish is engaged in the Fresh Expressions agenda.
[74] Davison & Milbank, For *the Parish,* p.80.
[75] Ibid. p.81.

have been involved in the wider pastoral and missional oversight of the Diocese, in many cases see things very differently. There is an obvious gap in *For the Parish* between the theological critique and an understanding of the realities of much of parish ministry. The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 made reorganisation of parishes a much easier process.[76] This has resulted in the creation of many more multi-parish benefices in order to ensure that resources (both human and financial) are used in a much more efficient way. The monochrome and optimistic view of the role of the parish and its life, described by Davison and Milbank, is very hard to evidence in the life of today's church and serves to reveal the gap between their theological critique and an understanding of the realities of much of parish ministry. If their belief about the parish were grounded in what is happening in the 16,000 or so parishes that make up the Church of England, there would be no need for Fresh Expressions nor any other type of mission initiative; all would be well and thriving. They see the parish itself as being the centre of mission, culture and Christian education.[77] Sadly this is not always the case and reports such as *From Anecdote to Evidence* as well as the annual statistics published centrally by the Church of England provide the evidence for this. In many parishes, both rural and urban, the church is seen to be beleaguered and demoralised. Clergy, particularly in rural areas, have an increasing number of parishes to oversee and they minister to a diminishing number of active and ageing worshippers as the Annual Statistics for Mission evidence:

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[76] Church of England, *Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.* www.churchofengland.org/more/parish-reorganisation-and-closed-church-buildings/mission-and-pastoral-measure-2011-and-code. Accessed 21st April 2020.

[77] Davison & Milbank, *For the Parish,* p.169.

The total Worshipping Community of churches across the Church of England in 2018 was 1.12 million people, of whom 20% were aged under 18, 48% were aged 18-69, and 33% were aged 70 or over.[78]

The current agenda therefore, is often of church retrenchment rather than church planting and growth. Even where there is the opportunity to reduce clergy work pressures, like joint PCCs in a multi-parish benefice, these opportunities are rarely grasped because of a reluctance to accept change.[79] In a similar vein, Evelyn Underhill wrote:

> Departure from the ordained routine always produces a feeling of discomfort, and usually arouses hostility; as anyone well knows who has tried to introduce "desirable changes" into the worship of an English village church.[80]

The comments of Davison and Milbank about choice, which they see *MSC* as advocating, are also ill-considered. It is worth at this point noting that choice has always been the case in larger towns and cities, whereby people attend the Anglican (or other) church which is more sympathetic to their theology or preferred style of worship rather than the parish church where they live, as would have been the case in earlier centuries with far less ease of travel. In London, does one attend All Souls, Langham Place or All Saints, Margaret Street, St Helen's Bishopsgate or Holy Redeemer, Clerkenwell? This is choice based on a number of different factors, not just a simple preference but with underlying issues of aesthetics, style of preaching, forms of liturgy, type of building to name but a few of these factors. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Charles Booth commented: 'But most

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[78] Church of England (b), *Statistics for Mission.* www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/research-and-statistics/key-areas-research#church-attendance-statistics. Accessed 21st April 2020.

[79] David Pytches tells the story of a visit Archbishop Robert Runcie made to a parish, just after becoming Bishop of St Albans. He met an elderly churchwarden who had held that position for over thirty years. The Bishop remarked to the churchwarden that he must have seen many changes. The response was 'Indeed I have, bishop, and I have resisted every one of them'. In N A D Scotland (ed) *Recovering the Ground*. (Chorleywood: Kingdom Power Trust Publications 1995), p.22.

[80] Underhill, Evelyn. *Worship.* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1936), p.34.

people simply seek the kind of service that suits them, wherever it might be found within range.'[81] As can be seen, such choice is not new. The London School of Economics website gives this description of Booth:

> Charles Booth was one of those remarkable English Victorians who can justly be described as one of the great and the good. Profoundly concerned by contemporary social problems, and not a pious nor even a religious man, he recognised the limitations of philanthropy and conditional charity in addressing the poverty which scarred British society. Without any commission other than his own he devised, organised, and funded one of the most comprehensive and scientific social surveys of London life that had then been undertaken. Booth also added his voice to the cause of state old age pensions as a practical instrument of social policy to alleviate destitution in old age, established as one of the commonest causes of pauperism. Simultaneously he was a successful businessman, running international interests in the leather industry and a steam shipping line.[82]

Davison and Milbank's optimistic vision of the role of the parish is to be commended but it is at variance with much of the reality that those of us involved in parish ministry encounter on a daily basis. It looks very much like a Platonic Form of Parish, rather than what a parish is actually like. The book does raise serious questions which those involved in or considering church planting need to recognise and consider, but its general message is too negative so does not support the church's mission in the challenging environment of the twenty-first century.

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[81] Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London. 3rd Series: Religious Influences*. (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. Volume 7,) p.4.
[82] https://booth.lse.ac.uk/learn-more/who-was-charles-booth. Accessed 17th June 2021. His research is archived at the LSE.

It is these kinds of perceptions that have made the whole Fresh Expressions movement (and I include church planting in this) seem alien to Anglo-Catholics. The continuity of the Church, expressed in the concept of Apostolic Succession from New Testament times, was one of the key features of the Oxford Movement and still remains important for today's Anglo-Catholics. Fresh Expressions can appear to put this continuity at risk by divorcing a form of mission activity from the wider sacramental life of the church and thereby setting up what can seem to be an informal and competing system. This can lead to the negative criticisms like can be seen in *For the Parish.* Other parts of the Church of England sit more lightly on this concept of historic continuity and the sacramental life and therefore seem more willing to adopt a more flexible and informal approach. However this is the core of Anglicanism: A M Ramsey put it like this:

> What is there then in the contemporary world which has continuity and identity with the pure church of antiquity? In continuity, the Anglican church is his [John Henry Newman] answer, for he sees a real continuity in belief, sacramental order, also in the supernatural life between the Anglican church in principle and the primitive church.[83]

This statement of Ramsey's encapsulates Anglo-Catholic thinking about how Anglicanism is seen as being in continuity with the primitive church, the last point of Pusey's definition already referred to.[84]

A similar critique is made by Martyn Percy, who has been a critic of managerialism and the introduction of 'business-speak' into the life of the church.[85] This position underpins many of his strictures around Fresh Expressions especially in Chapter 4 of *Shaping the*

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[83] Ramsey, A.M., John Henry Newman and the Oxford Movement, *Anglican and Episcopal History,* Vol. 59, No. 3 (September 1990), pp. 330-344.
[84] in David Edwards, *Christian England*, Vol. III, 181 Original in Liddon *Life of Pusey* ii, 140
[85] Percy, Martyn, 'Growth and management in the Church of England: some comments', *Modern Believing*, 55: 257-70. 2014.

Church.[86] Percy's criticisms look at the way in which Fresh Expressions have developed. He sees the concept as part of a continuum of initiatives that have occurred, particularly in the Evangelical charismatic wing of the Church of England over that last few decades- but an initiative which, this time, carries the approval of General Synod and hence episcopal support and approval, backed by finance, in virtually every diocese.[87]

His critique, in essence, is that Fresh Expressions is part of the packaging of the Christian message into marketing terms to fit in with modern ideas of choice, newness and cultural relevance, what might be termed as 'commodifying the Gospel'.[88] He challenges the idea that 'new' is better than 'old' and sees Fresh Expressions as a way of avoiding some of the current complexities and difficulties of church involvement. Rather in his view, they 'mirror contemporary secular preoccupations: with pragmatism, growth, freshness, alternatives and newness'. [89] He agrees that Fresh Expressions make some positive contribution to church life but only a small one. He sees the church with its structure of parishes, deaneries and archdeaconries within a diocese as fundamental to this. He recognises the value in this traditional system which links different types of churches across a relatively small area into Area or Rural Deaneries and so enables the provision of a variety of ministry. However, like Davison and Milbank and their view of the parish, his vision of 'deanery' is, in my experience, a very idealistic one, which does not always hold true in reality. It might be true of an urban deanery which just covers one whole town, e.g. Luton, and so has some sort of natural focus and cohesion, but many deaneries, just like many parliamentary constituencies, are much more diverse and lack a focal centre, a collection of parishes which

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[86] Percy, Martyn. *Shaping the Church: The Promise of Implicit Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate: 2010).
[87] Ibid. p.73.
[88] Ibid. p.70.
[89] Ibid. p.78.

occupy a geographical area which can be delineated on a map to make up a reasonable

population total. [90] He sums up his views by writing:

> And that without the institution of the church, all we'll have left is multi-choice
>
> spirituality, individualism and innovation. And that simply won't be enough to sustain
>
> faith in future generations.[91]

Although not within the Anglo-Catholic constituency and also with a contradictory

ecclesiology of being an Anglican layperson but also a URC elder, the views of John Hull

have some resonance to the Anglo-Catholic views expressed by Davison, Milbank and Percy.

There is some divergence but his concept of Deuteronomic self-fulfilling prophecy has

validity, as he sees Fresh Expressions and Church Planting as panic driven initiatives to make

the church relevant to today's culture and so keep it alive. Angela Tilby raises the same sort

of question when she asks:

> But am I wrong sometimes to discern in fresh expressions thinking an itchy
>
> restlessness which may itself be a product of our media-saturated consumerist
>
> culture?... ...Have we just become too good at identifying people's needs and
>
> producing a version of the gospel that apparently meets the need, but fails to
>
> transform it?[92]

The concerns raised by Davison and Milbank as well as by Martyn Percy are based on

their understanding of what the Church is and the place of the Church of England within it as

well as an objection to what they see as a purely sociological response to mission. These

writers share a vision of the Church that is one, holy, catholic and apostolic and see in fresh

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[90] I write from first-hand experience as having been a deanery lay co-chair of a quite disparate deanery for over 30 years. Sadly this approach is seemingly being adopted by the Boundary Commission for parliamentary constituencies. www.bcereviews.org.uk. Accessed 24 June 2021

[91] Ibid. p.78.

[92] In Croft, Steven J. L.(ed), *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing 2008), p.87.

expressions a watering down of this description in favour of novelty and choice. They stress the continuity of liturgy and worship which is the essence of Anglicanism. They decry what they see as a 'pick and mix' approach to worship and church life. 'The risk for 'Catholic' Fresh Expressions is that 'Catholic practice' is seen as a box of odds and ends.'[93] Because Catholic practices are employed outside of their traditional and structured liturgical context, they become devoid of their underlying meaning and so lack substance and in reality become purely decorative. As will be seen later, Victorian commentators had concerns about ritual for the sake of ritual.

2.10. The Church Growth Agenda.

An important question that now needs to be raised is how Anglo-Catholics understand 'church growth' and whether it is part of their ecclesiology. The Victorians built new churches as a response to growing urbanisation. How does this relate to Anglo-Catholics today? The incarnational principle embodied in the parish system, emphasises place and together with the view of historic continuity already referred to, this is part of the Anglo-Catholic mindset. The importance of good liturgy is also an important factor. There is also the element of serving the community which in the past fired much of Anglo-Catholic mission. One would therefore expect that church planting would be as important an element in current Anglo-Catholic mission, just as it was in the Victorian era.

An important contribution to Church Growth literature is '*Church for Every Context'* co-authored by Michael Moynagh and Philip Harrold. Chapter 11 describes a process by which those who are involved in church planting can best achieve their objectives. Moynagh offers a theological interpretation by reflecting on Luke's account of the ministry of Jesus,

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[93] Ibid. p.109.

although his interpretation is open to a number of questions as the process he claims to see in the Gospel narrative is nowhere near as obviously linear as he asserts. He concludes this chapter by commending a 'serving-first journey' for three reasons in that it helps to clarify the strategy and what is put in place to implement it. It emphasises the role of the community rather than 'churchiness' and finally, it brings to the forefront the love of neighbour, so important in Jesus's teaching, rather than seeing people as objects for conversion. This serving model should commend itself to Anglo-Catholics but its rejection of 'churchiness' could well be a barrier for those who see worship as a way of bringing the community into a relationship with God. 'Both…and' rather than 'either…or' might seem more acceptable. The Victorian Anglo-Catholics placed equal value on the beauty of worship as well as their social service. Peter Doll writes: 'Ritualism is a sort of excursion train on Sunday, to bring the poor man out of his dull, squalid, every-day life into a land of beauty, colour, light and song'[94] Even if Anglo-Catholic mythology has exaggerated the influence of the slum missions, the moral imperative and spirit of sacrifice that priests and religious brought to their work and worship were nevertheless genuine and powerful.[95]

In his introduction to Moynagh and Harrold's book, Stephen Croft expresses the hope that the essays contained will be of benefit and support for all engaged in church planting[96]. One of the key drivers identified is a phrase originally used by Rowan Williams when he was Archbishop of Wales – 'a mixed economy church'[97] By this he meant that traditional forms of church based on the parish system and the parish church should co-exist with different

[94] Reed, John Shelton, *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism* (Nashville TN: Nashville University Press 1996), p.150.
[95] In Brown, Stewart J. (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017)
[96] Moynagh and Harrold p. x
[97] *MSC* p.26. This is a phrase from the introduction to a report *Good News in Wales* p.3. The full quotation is: 'We may discern signs of hope [in Wales]. These may be found particularly in the development of a mixed economy of church life … There are ways of being church alongside the inherited parochial pattern.'
[97] Steven J. L. Croft, (ed), *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing 2008).

ways with new ways of 'being church', whether it be a new type of activity or a newly established worshipping community. This can actually be seen as an extension of what happens in practice, particularly in a large church. So there is already in place some form of a mixed economy. Any new Fresh Expression would merely widen the available choices.[98]

Mission-shaped Questions devotes a significant number of its chapters to exploring the nature and role of the church especially in regard to Fresh Expressions.[99] Importantly it looks at some of the ecclesiological issues regarding church order, sacramental worship and the relationship of the church to current culture and society. The way in which church plants are formed, shaped and grow is not fixed, nor ever will be, in the same way that many traditional churches continue to evolve in their response to need. Croft sums up the challenge that faces the church in its mission by emphasising the need for the best theological and other resources to be available to those engaged in Church Planting – or any other form of Fresh Expression.

Another recent important piece of thinking around church growth of which church planting is one of the essential elements is *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* published in 2015.[100] It contains contributions from a number of theologians from across the ecclesiological traditions of the Church of England; it therefore cannot be accused of being biased towards any one type of theology or ecclesiology, nor of coming from one particular viewpoint about church growth. It is important also to recognise that any form of church

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[98] As an example, in my own liberal Catholic parish, a monthly 'Messy Mass' has extended the reach of All-age Communion to those who want an even more informal style of worship and this has now been further augmented by a quarterly 'Forest Church' in which the involvement with the physical world as created by God can be seen as a door to the Kingdom.

[99] Croft, Steven J. L. ed. *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church.* London: Church House Publishing, 2008.

[100] David Goodhew, (ed.), *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* (Farnham: Ashgate 2015).

growth must include the idea of planting new churches, as well as looking at ways in which existing congregations can grow. In his introduction, Goodhew states:

> The volume argues that the numerical growth of the church should be of central concern for churches and individual Christians. But it also seeks to guard against ill-thought-out justifications of church growth which draw less from theology than from pragmatic notions of what constitutes 'success'.[101]

He emphasises that growth is a wide concept that includes, but not exclusively, the numerical. He quotes some words from an address of Rowan Williams to the General Synod of the Church of England in November 2010 in which he proposed a three-fold definition of growth: personal holiness, the transformation of society and the numerical growth of church congregations. [102] While accepting the validity of this definition, Goodhew intends to focus particularly on numerical growth as he agrees that there is a need to challenge some of the assumptions that are commonly made, which are critical of the idea of looking at numerical growth.

The first part of the introduction in effect pulls out the main themes of each of the subsequent chapters, using particularly significant quotations and so is a very helpful pointer for what is to follow and enables the reader to focus on specific areas of interest. He then engages in a 'questioning of church growth in the context of late modernity.'[103] He maintains that the idea of context is problematic and reflects as much on the context of the research theologian as on the context of any given church. This is important in research terms as it deals with the area of subjectivity in any form of qualitative research. Goodhew maintains that the church is trapped in a theology of decline, leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy. This

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[101] Ibid. p.3
[102] Ibid. p 5
[103] Ibid. Goodhew p 27

echoes John Hull's critique in *Mission-shaped Church: A Theological Response*.[104] Goodhew would want to stress an alternative view, that the local congregation is of value and has a significant role to play in the bringing to life the Kingdom of God. The values of the Kingdom, enshrined in neighbourly love in all its individual and communal aspects, need vibrant and live local congregations to reflect these values. This statement is one that should be welcomed by Anglo-Catholics as it incorporates the incarnational principle of 'place' and links it both with worship and service, so again mirroring what was happening in the nineteenth century when new Anglo-Catholic churches were being built. Goodhew believes that by developing a clear theology around church growth, there will be a place for considering numerical growth as real evidence of the building of the Kingdom of God.[105] This echoes McGavran's statement, 'The numerical approach is essential to understanding church growth'.[106] In this way the church with an emphasis on growth can challenge the secular western culture, rather than adopting a strategy of growth as merely a pragmatic act of desperation in the face of an apparent continued decline.[107]

As far as official follow-up of church growth / planting issues is concerned, *From Anecdote to Evidence* was published in 2014 as a report of a two year research programme looking at why churches grow (or do not)[108]. It ran for 18 months between 2011 and 2013 aiming to look at factors that influenced church growth in the Church of England, concentrating on areas of numerical growth to find the reasons for this.[109] Pages 17-19 summarise the research on church planting. Twenty-seven plants were researched qualitatively, with a number of different models investigated, mostly centred around worship.

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[104] Hull, John M., *Mission-shaped Church: A Theological Response* (London: SCM Press 2006), p 20
[105] Goodhew, *Shaping the Church* p.35.
[106] McGavran *Understanding Church Growth*, p.83.
[107] Goodhew, *Shaping the Church* p.33.
[108]*From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013*. (London: The Church Commissioners for England 2014).
[109] Ibid. p.3.

Nearly all of the models originated from charismatic or traditional Evangelical churches, and as such are moulded by both those theological and ecclesiological considerations. However there is reference to an Anglo-Catholic model. The report states:

> …. [A] model based around the catholic understanding of presence and sacrament as the heart of mission. Those visited were planted and supported by parish churches in their own parishes. This model is still being developed and there is on-going reflection about what planting means in an Anglo-Catholic context.[110]

The report quotes Rev'd Dr. Graham Tomlin, now Bishop of Kensington, as saying that what makes church plants grow is the quality of ordained leadership.[111] This is particularly true in Anglo-Catholic church plants where the report notes a comment by an Anglo-Catholic priest with a church plant that 'Catholics are not affirmed in church planting' and 'there is no support for catholic initiatives in church planting.'[112] So the ordained leaders believe that they are left in isolation because of their ecclesiology.[113] The case studies later in this thesis will demonstrate the vital importance of high quality ordained leadership for the flourishing of the newly planted or revived church.

The important issues of finance and longer-term sustainability are addressed. Dioceses have different policies and expectations with regard to funding but there is a general expectation that a church plant will become financially self-supporting, including the payment of parish share within a reasonable period of time, often stated as five years. Inevitably there will be exceptions which will continue to need support, as there is little chance that they will ever be self-supporting and dioceses do not want them to fail. It then

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[110] Ibid. p.19.
[111] Ibid. p.49
[112] Ibid. p.49
[113] Leadership will be addressed in the following chapters.

becomes a question of to what extent and for how long, the diocese (or perhaps the 'sponsoring' church (or other funding organisation) continues to subsidise the plant.[114] This indeed depends on the mission strategy that is being implemented and the 'value' that is put on the continued existence of the plant, by the plant itself, by the sponsoring church and ultimately by the diocese. There is an unspoken assumption in many dioceses about particular plants, that they simply cannot be allowed to fail. Again, the case studies will show how this has worked out in practice as the three plants each had a different financial structure.

The report looks at how church plants engage with their local communities. Some engage in the sense of offering activities which are in general evangelistic. Others offer activities which fill some unmet community need. However, the picture is a continually changing one as plants look at different ways of engaging, alone or with others, with their local communities. The original vision is likely to be modified over time as a church plant is seen as dynamic and so is quickly able to adapt to changing circumstances.

In considering the area of growth, the report agrees that this not easy to assess, either in crude numerical terms or in levels of discipleship and commitment. Some large charismatic churches see growth in terms of self-replication, i.e. when a plant grows to a certain size, it itself spawns a new plant elsewhere. On this subject, the report concludes that plants need to be sufficiently reflective to work out both what they want to become and to assess what they are actually becoming.[115] In their concluding remarks, the authors refer to the many different types of approach. They say:

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[114] My own parish after 7 years of our church plant, continued until the end of 2020, as part of our mission giving, to contribute towards its stipend cost and the Diocese also contributes through Mission Support Grants.
[115] Ibid. p.68

Flexibility, variety, innovation and creativity are all needed to reach a diverse world of many contexts. A missiology of welcome and embrace is needed in our hurting world.[116]

2.11. The Victorian Anglo-Catholics.

As noted above, the seemingly lack of enthusiasm for mission and evangelism on the part of much of today's Anglo-Catholic constituency, is in marked contrast to that of its Anglo-Catholic forbears. Pickering in *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity*, devotes a whole chapter to mission.[117] He recounts the activities of many renowned Anglo-Catholic priests e.g. Fr Walter Hook, Fr. Charles Lowder, Fr. Mackonochie, Fr. Dolling, Fr. Benson with his founding of the Cowley Fathers and Fr. Stanton. Their exploits have been well documented in other studies, so will not be covered in this thesis.[118] However, I will be looking in Chapter 4 in detail at the work of two lesser known Anglo-Catholics, whose lives are only recorded in biographies, long out of print, but it is important to introduce them at this point as they provide a link with church planting activity in the past. They each exemplify in different ways the spirit of Anglo-Catholic mission and church planting / building in the Victorian era.

The first is a priest, Fr. Richard Temple West (1827-1893) who was responsible for the building of St Mary Magdalene, Paddington. The information plaque on the nearby canal towpath states: 'The parish was founded in 1865 as a *church plant (*my italics*)* from All Saints, Margaret Street in a densely packed slum district by Fr Richard Temple West.'

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[116] Ibid. p.70

[117] W S F Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity* (London: Routledge 1989). Reference is to paperback version (London: SPCK 1991) p.65-87.

[118] e.g. Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1983 (paperback Clarendon 1991), George Herring, *What was the Oxford Movement?* (London: Continuum 2002), John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle* (Nashville TN: Vanderbilt University Press 1996).

St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington

His biography, verging on a hagiography, was written by the renowned Anglo-Catholic priest, Fr. T. T. Carter of Clewer who was an older contemporary.[119] There is also a collection of service registers from St Mary Magdalene, held at the London Metropolitan Archive, which show something of the activity and finances of the church, although as far as celebrating the Eucharist, West left much of this to his colleagues, except for festivals and a regular Thursday service. What his biography does cover is the range of activities designed to respond to the social and educational deprivation that West found through his parish work and the finance that was raised to support these as well as other causes both outside of the parish and abroad.

The second person is Richard Foster (1822-1910) a banker and merchant of the City of London, mentioned briefly above in connection with Walthamstow.[120] His biographer was his son William so the biography is written from a much more personal perspective than that of West. He also has the advantage of the intimate knowledge from his involvement in what appears to be a close-knit family. In addition, because of Foster's position in the City, he was a member of a number of committees and charities and their records concur with what is in his biography. Foster provides significant evidence of the rôle that philanthropy played in the

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[119] T.T. Carter, *Richard Temple West – A Record of Life and Work.* (London: J Masters & Co. 1895).
[120] William F Foster, *Richard Foster* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood Ltd. 1914. For private circulation).

building of new churches in the Victorian era[121]. As many of his donations were given anonymously, it is only from his biography that we can have some indication of the scale and range of these donations, the information having been derived from the records that were meticulously kept by his secretary and confidante, Mr Townsend (the biography does not refer to him by any other name).

2.12. Conclusion.

In this chapter, I have sought to engage with theological and ecclesiological issues for Anglo-Catholics around the Fresh Expressions agenda and especially around church planting. I have shown some of the aspects around Church Planting towards which Anglo-Catholics might have negative views. They see that there is the lack of a clear ecclesiology. Again, although *MSC* affirms the need for the dominical sacraments as a mark of being an Anglican church, it acknowledges difficulties in putting sacramental worship into practice; Anglo-Catholics could see this as a significant barrier to engagement. Thirdly, the lack of an obvious continuity with what has gone before in the life of the Church would raise serious concerns for Anglo-Catholics.

Through engaging with literature I have described the history and context of the Fresh Expressions and Church Planting initiatives which have become an important feature of the way in which the Church of England sees mission in the twenty-first century. I have related some of the criticisms and objections raised by a number of Anglo-Catholic theologians whilst also challenging a number of the assumptions that lie behind these. I have also drawn attention to the most recent literature which deals specifically with church planting in an Anglo-Catholic context. In addition, I have pointed to the activity of church planting of two

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[121] For a very full account of Victorian Philanthropy see, Flew, Sarah, *Philanthropy and the Funding of the Church of England 1856-1914* (London: Pickering & Chatto: 2015).

Victorians who had a vision for mission and the role of new churches and who, in their differing ways, put this vision into practice for the extension of the Kingdom of God. These areas will be further expanded in the later chapters of this thesis as three current church plants are described on the basis of participant observation and brought into conversation with the activities of Richard Temple West and Richard Foster.

CHAPTER THREE

MY METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.

3.1. Introduction.

This chapter describes the methodology of my research into current Anglo-Catholic church planting to investigate whether such an activity is a reasonable and viable option for this part of the Church of England. It considers and describes the approach that was used and gives the rationale for its choice. The thesis as a whole aims to answer the question: 'Is Church Planting a viable and valid option for present day Anglo-Catholic Churches?' Three current church plants were studied over a period of eighteen months to gain insight into this present activity and two Victorian pioneers were the subject of biographical study. The importance of conversation between current context and the Victorian period is that, unlike today, in the Victorian period many new Anglo-Catholic churches were planted. What lessons that can be learned from them is an important facet of this research and will help towards an understanding both of the current situation as well as pointing to possible future action.

One of the aims – perhaps the major aim - of this research, as already stated in Chapter One, is to demonstrate to Anglo - Catholic parishes that they can legitimately in the context of their ecclesiology, undertake church planting. By using the methodology of Practical Theology, I believe that I can help to translate my research experience into something more widely useful. Church Planting raises a critical question for many Anglo-Catholics as they might not be able to replicate their style of worship in its entirety; for instance, will a secular building, if that is where the plant is to be based, allow the use of incense? It is likely that there might have to be some diminution of external practices in

order that the core message of the Gospel, in word and sacrament, can be delivered. Therefore, a purist Anglo-Catholic model may not work; but that depends on the relationship of the plant with its sending church and its location for worship. If a church wants to stick rigidly to its tradition, the plant may find its situation at odds with the way of worship that has to be conducted in a different environment. As part of the description of each church, I will give a detailed account of a typical service. The rationale for this is to show that church plants do not have to be identical in what they offer. In this case, one size does not fit all. I will also be introducing each study with a vignette which enables the reader to experience some of the reality and the idiosyncrasy of each of the churches, rather than relying on a bald, two-dimensional account of worship. John Van Maanen uses the phrase 'impressionistic tales' to describe this approach.[122] The aim, as in an impressionist painting, is to give a flavour of what is happening, and using a few selected details which will be enough to convey the sensory impressions of an incident or scene.

In his co-edited volume *Congregational Studies in the UK*, Mathew Guest quotes Al Dowie:

> [Congregations] do not exist apart from their peculiarity, which in certain respects is like that of all others, like some others, and like no other congregation.[123]

Later in the same book, Frances Ward, quoting Beverley Skeggs, states that 'doing ethnography is a messy business.'[124]

As will be shown later, my East Midlands site did not meet the expectations of the founding parish unlike the other two churches studied. The reality has to be that the

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[122] John Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (Chicago IL.: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[123] Guest, Mathew, Karin Tusting, & Linda Woodhead. *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian context.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). pp.72-73.

[124] Ibid. p. 125 The quotation is from Skeggs, B. (ed) *Feminist Cultural Theory: Process and Production.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.)

proclamation of the Gospel in an unchurched area has to be paramount and may involve compromise in liturgy and praxis. This fits in with St. Paul's view of evangelism: 'I have become all things to all people, so that by any means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.'[125]

When planting a new church in an area which has had little church impact, styles of worship and ecclesiology might be seen as second order matters – they can come later as the congregation matures. But on the contrary, underlying ideas of conforming to a pre-conceived idea of what 'church' should be like are very strong, even sometimes among people who have little current church experience. As an example James Hopewell in his book *Congregation* describes how he started a weekly simple Eucharist for a group of people who had been meeting regularly for fellowship and now wanted a more liturgical form of worship than that which they were experiencing in their regular Sunday congregations. [126] In spite of wanting this gathering to stay simple, Hopewell found that as the weeks went by, it developed into something more like a 'normal church', with all the trappings that conventionally accompany this – even down to holding a bazaar. This was something I also noticed in the East Midlands church over the time I was visiting. The church meets in a school hall. It now has a hand built altar and seasonal frontals, designed by the children in the school. There is even a suggestion that the clerestory windows around the hall might be modified to incorporate an element of stained glass, so that it looks more like a 'church'. Therefore, although ostensibly a gathering in a basically secular building, the priest, the school and those that attend feel the need to make it 'churchy'. Hopewell's experience seems to be being replicated more than thirty years later in a very different cultural context.

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[125] 1 Corinthians 9:22b-23.
[126] Hopewell, James F., *Congregation: Stories and Structures.* (London: SCM Press, 1988), p.4.

It is important to note at the beginning that a purist approach to any particular theoretical research model does not work in this type of project, where the researcher is interacting with human subjects in a continually changing situation. Inevitably there are personal relationships involved and this makes it more difficult for the researcher to distance himself in order to be objective[127]. Therefore, the approach that was taken was a qualitative study with a very pragmatic use of Grounded Theory; my claim is that this fits well within the discipline of Practical Theology and so is a valid approach.

3.2. What is Practical Theology?

This project, then, is an exercise in Practical Theology, which Swinton and Mowat define as follows:

> Practical Theology is critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world.[128]

Practical theology is a discipline which thus operates both critically and theologically. This thesis is a piece of practical theology in that it investigates both the theology of church planting as an academic pursuit as well as critically engaging with its outworking in today's church as each plant interprets its task of Christian mission and worship. As a researcher, I had to be constantly aware that I needed to read situations and activities hermeneutically and not merely see how theology was being applied in a superficial way, that is, to notice the

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[127] I use the masculine pronoun as I am the researcher.
[128] There has long been an overlap in the use of the terms 'pastoral theology and 'practical theology'. Woodward and Pattison attempt to clarify this. Whilst noting the differences in background and usage, and particularly between the contexts of the United States and Great Britain, they conclude that the difference 'seems in the present context, to be more one of emphasis than substance'. They therefore provide the following definition which they had previously offered in their co-authored 1994 publication: 'Pastoral / practical theology is a place where religious belief, tradition and practice meet contemporary experiences, questions and actions and conducts a dialogue that is mutually enriching, intellectually critical, and practically transforming.' In this thesis I am following the British terminology 'Practical Theology'. John Swinton & Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research:2nd ed.* (London: SCM Press, 2016), p.7.

difference between the espoused theology (how a group articulates its beliefs) and the operant theology (the actual practices of the group).[129]

Swinton and Mowat contrast *situations* and *practices.* They refer to 'complexifying situations'.[130] What they understand by this is the breaking down of a situation into any number of component and contributory tasks. In the descriptive analysis of my three fieldwork sites, I will be considering a wide range of issues in order to produce a clear picture of each church, not just a snapshot but a clear analysis of the components, overt and covert, which make up the life of each plant. These will be described in detail in subsequent chapters. Swinton and Mowat write:

> Situations are complex, multifaceted entities which need to be examined with care, rigour and discernment if they are to be effectively understood.[131]

Likewise their definition of practices is content laden. It is not superficially 'what we do in church' but rather the beliefs, assumptions, traditions that underlie them and have been developed over the years in a specific situation and context.

Walter Bruegemann wrote in 1991:

> There is no one single or normative model of church life. It is dangerous and distorting for the church to opt for an absolutist model that it insists upon in every circumstance. Moreover, we are more prone to engage in such reductionism, if we do not keep alive a conversation concerning competing and conflicting models. Or to put it positively, models of the church must not be dictated by cultural reality, but they must be voiced and practised in ways that take careful account of the particular time

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[129] These two descriptors are used in Helen Cameron et al., *Talking about God in Practice* (London: SCM Press, 2010), pp.53-56.
[130] Ibid. p.13ff.
[131] Ibid. p.15.

and circumstance into which God's people are called. Every model of the church must be critically contextual.[132]

Nancy Ammerman comments in *Studying Congregations* that church cultures are shaped by their theological tradition, the secular culture in which they are located and the ethnic groups that attend. [133] This is echoed by Grant Osbourne.[134]

So, ecclesial practices are by their nature varied. If we look more widely at the Church, it is often hard to see much commonality even within one denomination like the Church of England, even more so if we consider the wide range of practices across all the diverse places of worship which we call churches. As an analogy, we recognise that Great Danes and Chihuahuas are both dogs, but what are the essential components of 'dogginess'? For churches, there are likely to be underlying documents, such as statements of faith, constitutions etc. but these are not visible as practices and situations; so the on-looker still has to identify what it is that makes any religious gathering 'church'.

As an example the celebration of the Eucharist in Anglo-Catholic parishes is particular to each church, even though the same liturgy is being followed. There are variations of practice according to the celebrant at different services, even within the same church. Personal experience as a server and liturgical deacon and sub-deacon certainly confirms this. So the role of religious practice is not only to fulfil the human needs of the congregation, although that will be included. The important factor is 'whether or not it [religious practice] participates faithfully in the divine redemptive mission'.[135] The practical theologian is tasked with ensuring that what the Church does stays faithful to the Gospel

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[132] Bruegemann, Walter, 'Rethinking Church Models through Scripture.' *Theology Today,* 48, no. *2* (July 1991):128-138.

[133] Ammerman, Nancy et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press 1998), pp.79-82.

[134] Osborne, Grant R., *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010), p.431.

[135] Ibid. p.21.

message of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that in the outworking of its mission, what it does is congruent with what it professes. So it is important to differentiate between Practical Theology and Applied Theology in any such analysis. This is a significant distinction as there is often some confusion. Applied Theology takes principles from doctrine or scripture and uses them in a 'one-way fashion'.[136] Practical Theology, with its emphasis on critical theological reflection, provides a more rounded way of analysis and understanding; it is deductive, the evidence comes from the research and the practice. This is what is being attempted in this thesis.

3.3.   The Role of Qualitative Research in Practical Theology.

Swinton and Mowat contend that, like Practical Theology, Qualitative Research is open-ended and hence difficult to define and tie down.[137] But by aligning it with Practical Theology, the concepts of *situations* and *practices*, noted earlier, can be seen to be relevant. Therefore, qualitative research aims to interpret observed human phenomena in any given situation, through a wide range of researcher skills. It does not provide an 'answer' as some forms of scientific quantitative studies might do; rather it provides evidence which can be interpreted. Swinton and Mowat, in their understanding of qualitative research, emphasise the role of *constructivism* which assumes that knowledge and how it is perceived is constructed by individuals and the communities to which they relate.[138] So 'reality' for the Practical Theologian does not exist as a singular reality in objective isolation, but rather there are multiple realities, depending on the viewpoint of the observer. So 'meaning', as Swinton and Mowat see it, evolves from shared understandings and interactions. This is a contentious issue but the researcher has to negotiate this complexity as she / he seeks to identify what is

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[136] Ibid. p.31.
[137] Swinton & Mowat, *Practical theology and qualitative research* (2nd edn.), p.28.
[138] Swinton & Mowat, *Practical theology and qualitative research* (2nd edn.), p.34.

relevant to the research question and the relative validity of these understandings and interactions in response to that question.

The task therefore becomes one of description of 'the lived realities of individuals and groups in particular settings' but a description in such a way that can give the reader a sense of how comparisons can be used in other situations where similar phenomena might exist.[139] The Latin phrase *mutatis mutandis* sums up what is being attempted. Swinton and Mowat put it thus:

> Theoretical generalization allows the researcher to develop theoretical perspectives which, while not statistically generalizable, have the theoretical potential to move beyond the particularities of the situation being examined.[140]

The research method which allows this to happen is described in the next section. As an exercise in Practical Theology, this thesis draws together theological and ecclesiological issues and compares them with current praxis as well as drawing on examples of two Victorians who in different ways were engaged in church planting.

3.4.   Qualitative Research and Grounded Theory.

As noted earlier, the type of research which I undertook did not lend itself to a quantitative approach. Engaging in real situations in the churches studied, highlighted the need for a descriptive method, out of which theories could be derived and potentially generalised, rather than relying on and imposing an external prescriptive framework.

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[139] Ibid. p.43.
[140] Ibid. p.47.

Strauss and Corbin refer to qualitative research as appropriate when involving both people's lives and lived experiences alongside other more abstract concepts such as organisation and culture.[141] They describe qualitative research as,

> [a] non-mathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme.[142]

It is the nature of the research question that can therefore lead to the choice of a qualitative research method. This is especially true when investigating areas which have not previously been researched and about which there is little existing systematically arranged data or published research. As far as research into current Anglo-Catholic church-planting activity is concerned, there is a significant dearth of research as noted in the previous chapter.[143] But qualitative research needs to be more than an abstract concept existing in a vacuum; there must be a structured logical process which enables the research and the results to be evaluated in order to produce a meaningful and rigorous outcome to support the transferability and applicability of the findings into other situations.

Swinton and Mowat include a table from a paper by Bunniss and Kelly which describes four research paradigms and their accompanying methodological assumptions.[144] The methodology underlying constructivism refers to the way in which the researcher using Grounded Theory focuses on understanding the phenomenon by participating and interacting

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[141] Ibid. p.11.
[142] Ibid. p.11.
[143] Although at least one non-academic report has been published about seven London church-plants involving Anglo-Catholic churches. This is a very useful study but it does not claim academic rigour; rather it is a valuable descriptive piece of work with some conclusions, based on the author's experience. Thorlby, Tim, *A Time to Sow* (London: Centre for Theology & Community, 2017).
[144] Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research (*2nd edn.) pp. 70-1.

'in the natural environment' so gaining a range of interpretations from this participant observation.

Given the claims I have made thus far, the method which I followed that best meets the needs of my project was that of G*rounded Theory*, a method originated by two US sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. They developed the theory whilst working with dying patients in order to help fellow clinicians in their work.[145]

Strauss and Corbin in 'Basics of Qualitative Research' published in 1990, define Grounded Theory as follows:

> A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. … …One does not begin with a theory, then prove it, rather one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that is allowed to emerge. [146]

Therefore, Grounded Theory is the outworking of my methodological understanding of Practical Theology in that it provides a way of linking research activity with an objective theological understanding which will enable the research to be of use to those in the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England who want to engage in this form of missional outreach.

Wisker later quotes the eight characteristics of Grounded Theory, laid down by Strauss and Corbin.[147] Grounded Theory is:

- a scientific method of investigation used by researchers

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[145] For me, this is vitally important as I want this research to be of value not only to academic theologians who may be researching forms of church growth, both now and in years to come, but also of practical use to enable diocesan senior staff, parish clergy and others in the Anglo-Catholic constituency to see that church-planting is a valid form of mission activity.

[146] Cited in Wisker, Gina, *The Postgraduate Research Handbook,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave,2001), p.188.

[147] Ibid. p.189.

- inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents

- discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis

- representative of the reality that has been researched

- comprehensible to the persons who were studied

- comprehensible to those who inhabit the area that was studied

- specific to the phenomenon that has been studied

- capable of providing in generalisation when the validity of the theory has been established.

She goes on to argue for the rigour of Grounded Theory as it gives the opportunity to interrogate the data as well as explore any contradictions that arise. She maintains that it is a 'flexible, sensitive approach' but that the findings need to be seen in the context from which they were derived.

As a method, it is in the control of the researcher who is able both to be flexible and put into context the findings as they emerge. As the researcher starts from the data, the theory can be built on what the data is showing in the way of insights and understanding rather than being imposed from an external source. To develop the grounded theory, the researcher has to take a number of steps. Strauss and Corbin describe these.[148] First there needs to be description, as without a rich and thick description of the phenomenon being observed, it is not possible to proceed any further. The description is the bedrock and context on which the research sits.[149] Secondly, out of the description, it is necessary to identify and categorise its

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[148] Strauss, Anselm & Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research – 2nd edn* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications Inc., 1998), pp. 15-25.

[149] Richard Osmer describes an apparently trivial example of the moving of a swing in the grounds of his first church. This caused an immense upset to the donor of the swing. By analysing the situation using a practical theology approach, he was able to see the underlying reasons for what seemed at first sight an extreme reaction. (Osmer, Richard R., *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008).

various elements. Strauss and Corbin refer to this as *conceptual ordering.* This is a way of organizing data into discrete categories by assessing the properties, importance or underlying meanings of the data and then using these properties to categorise it into groups. This then leads on to the third stage, that of theorising. In this process the data is interrogated and considered from a number of angles. From this activity, robustly and rigorously undertaken, a theory and themes can be derived. These are the results of questioning and reflexion on the different perspectives that are revealed through the research process. In my research, the theory, with the aid of *thematic analysis* led back to my research question about the viability of Anglo-Catholic church planting. [150]

There is a debate as to whether *thematic analysis* is a method in itself or a 'meta-analytical technique in qualitative research'.[151] Terry et al. contend that it can be used to support any methodology as a way of analysis.[152] Bryman describes it as 'an emphasis on *what* is said rather than *how* it is said'.[153] Thematic Analysis fits well with my limited version of Grounded Theory rather than other analytical methods, e.g. interpretative phenomenology, as it allows the freedom to interpret what is said. I had also beforehand done a considerable amount of investigation both on the theological and ecclesial issues which supported my research. As a result the themes for the analysis had already been partly determined from the study of the literature; the way in which I formulated the questionnaires and the format of the interviews later evidenced this. However the data from interviews and questionnaires provides the more substantive evidence. This is also corroborated by the participant observation that I undertook with each of the three churches on a monthly basis over a period of about eighteen months, around forty visits in all. It became obvious from these visits that

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[150] Bryman, Alan. *Social Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.) p. 412
[151] Terry, G. et al. in Willig, Carla & Wendy Stainton Rogers, (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology.* (Los Angeles: SAGE. 2017.) p. 18
[152] Ibid. p. 21
[153] Bryman, Alan. *Social Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.) p.13

the themes I was beginning to identify, were being clearly expressed. For example, the sense of community and shared purpose was very obvious in each church in terms of relationships as was the clear leadership role that each priest played in the life of their church.

Because of the nature of a doctoral research project where I was looking at completely unknown situations, before engaging in the practical research activity, I had to identify a significant number of pieces of background information relating to each of the three churches, and thus a purist *tabula rasa* approach as in the classical version of Grounded Theory was not possible.

As Grounded Theory has developed as a research method, different researchers and academics have modified the way in which it can be used to meet the requirements of a research project, whilst maintaining its key feature - that the data produce the theory. As noted above, in its pure form, the researcher is expected to undertake the research, without preconceptions. Amongst the plethora of literature endeavouring to explain and justify Grounded Theory as a valid qualitative research method, Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber comments:

> This tenet of Grounded Theory is a difficult task to accomplish and some researchers suggest it is simply unrealistic and may force researchers to fit their ideas into pre-existing categories.[154]

She goes on to quote Strauss and Corbin to justify this statement:

> Researchers carry into their research the sensitizing possibilities of their training, reading and research experience as well as explicit theories that might be useful if played against systematically gathered data, in conjunction with theories emerging from the analysis of these data. [155]

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[154] In Bryant, A., Charmaz, K. (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory.* London: SAGE 2007. p. 325
[155] Strauss, Anselm & Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research* – 1st edn. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications Inc., 1994. p. 277

Such a concept I describe in the conclusion of this chapter as a 'a more limited form of Grounded Theory' and this aligns with the 'myth' debunked by Timonen et al. '*Engaging with the Literature and Existing Theory Spoils Grounded Theory.*' [156]

They recognise that current academic requirements and conventions demand engagement with existing literature to focus on and identify the research area and so the *tabula rasa* is no longer a realistic proposition for the use of Grounded Theory in an academic research project. The important factor which needs to be at the forefront of the researcher's activity is to see the data that is gathered as describing the world **as is**, and not, forcing the data into a straitjacket based on previous theoretical accounts or descriptions, however useful they may be in validating the research.

Timonen et al. stress this when they address a number of core principles of Grounded Theory. Because of the general academic expectation of an engagement with a review of the literature in a doctoral or any other research programme , they insist that the word 'Grounded' is taken seriously. The pre-existing knowledge needs to be put into the back of the researcher's mind so as not to force the data into some sort of previously defined categories - but it cannot be ignored. The *cyclical process* in which I engaged whilst researching and then analysing, was a 'toing and froing' between literature and the research activity. I asked myself on my research visits whether some of the themes in the literature were confirmed by the data I was collecting or whether the reality of the research sites was at variance with the views both of the academic or the ecclesiological theorists. Timonen et al. describe this process in these words:

> An iterative dynamic (*my cyclical process)* between the varied parameters of the inquiry, data collection and data analysis in the pursuit of concepts, conceptual frameworks and theory is the core principle shared by all grounded theorists. [157]

This is what I have attempted to do in the production of this research by correlating the themes that I encountered in the literature around church planting with what I found to be, overtly or covertly, existing in the life of my research sites and indeed what I did not find. As

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[156] Timonen, Virpi, Geraldine Foley, and Catherine Conlon, 'Challenges When Using Grounded Theory: A Pragmatic Introduction to Doing GT Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. Volume 17: p.4

[157] Timonen, Virpi etc. p.7

an example, which I explain in a later chapter, the theme of the sustainability of a church plant, which is frequently mentioned in the literature as an important factor, only appeared when I interviewed the clergy. It was taken for granted (or ignored) in the daily life of each church, as is the case I would suggest, in the vast majority also of traditional congregations. The question of long-term survival is only raised when a church seems no longer viable both in financial and numerical terms. Even then, the closing of an Anglican church is a complex, time-consuming and legal process. With a church plant, as there has generally been considerable external investment both of financial and human resources, that closure would be very much a last resort and call into question the original rationale for the plant. So the view prevails that sustainability is not an issue.

The contemporaneous writing of a research log made this analysis an easier process when trying to assimilate and explore my experiences. Hence my adaptation of 'classical Grounded Theory' fits in with the way that many current academics have employed this method.

Therefore, although I had found out particularly the history and context of each plant, I still believed that I could enter upon the research with no preconceptions as to what my findings would be. The histories and contexts will be related in chapter 5.

As stated earlier, my research is looking at whether Church Planting can be a valid activity for Anglo-Catholic churches. By engaging with the discipline of Practical Theology and using Grounded Theory as the method of investigation, I was aiming to identify by my fieldwork those situations and practices that can evidence its validity as well as, conversely, those situations or elements within them, which might have a negative and opposing effect.

3.5.   My Approach to the Research Activity – Introduction.

My research activities comprised of a number of elements. Initially I used websites and through various networks made a number of contacts, all of whom were supportive and engaged. I intended to use participant observation by regular attendance, interviews both formal and informal, a questionnaire as well as interrogating the relevant literature.

3.5.1. The Parameters of the Research.

I had set a number of parameters for this process. The churches needed to be relatively accessible in terms of geography, (this was important as a self-funding part-time doctoral student) as well as being different both in terms of maturity and also in their location across the range of Anglo-Catholic churchmanship. I regarded this to be an important element for my research, as a significant number of self-identifying Anglo-Catholic parishes do not accept the ministry of women priests and bishops and so are under Alternative Episcopal Oversight, (in the case of London, this responsibility is delegated to the Bishop of Fulham who holds a traditionalist view). It was important for me to have examples from both integrities, the 'traditional' and the 'liberal', as they could be used to test the viability of different models of church planting and to evidence that the activity can be used by both of them and also, as a by-product of the main thrust of the research, to show that there is still vitality and enthusiasm for mission in the traditionalist wing, something that has been open to question as it is often seen by its opponents to be insular and inward looking.

Having identified theoretically, the three sites, two in London and one in an East Midlands industrial city, I contacted each parish priest and asked to arrange an initial meeting to discuss the possibility of using their church as a research site. This suggestion was well received in all cases. For the London sites I also had the active support of the appropriate Area Bishops who had provided me with background information, both in written form and also with one of them in physical meetings. Once I had received ethical approval for my research, I wrote again to these priests (Appendix 1) explaining how I intended to carry out the work. I then set up a meeting with each of them to formalise these arrangements, to

clarify any issues and to address any concerns. Once this was done I started my fieldwork on 14th January 2018 and finished on 28th July 2019.

3.5.2. The Research Activity.

My research activity consisted of a number of elements. As well as a literature search, there was a regular attendance at the main Sunday service, writing up details of the service as soon as possible afterwards in my research diary, a simple questionnaire and after the completion of the research visits, a recorded discussion with each of the clergy. Between the dates listed above I attended the regular Sunday service of each of the churches on a monthly basis, an eighteen month commitment and a total of nineteen visits to each London site. The East Midlands site only met monthly in school terms on a Sunday afternoon on the second Sunday of the month, although by the end of my research period it had decided to meet twice monthly. The two London churches met weekly at different times (10am and 5pm) so I was able to attend them both in one day, the fourth Sunday of each month. On my first visit, the priest at each site introduced me and explained briefly why I was there; this was useful as a talking point in the after service coffee. A comprehensive description of the churches and my findings from each of them appears in chapters 5 and 6.

My research approach for each church was intended as far as possible to be identical for the sake of comparability. I was attempting to make sensible correlations as any possible valid comparison between qualitative research sites must involve some standardisation of research method. I aimed to arrive well before the start of the service. I believed this to be important so that I could see who was arriving, whether I recognised them as 'regulars' and to find out if anything different or special was taking place. For instance, in each of the churches, I witnessed at least one baptism. I also wanted to engage with the priest who was leading the service, especially if it were not, as often in one of the London churches, the

parish priest, to ensure he/she was comfortable with my presence or whether any significant issues had arisen since my last visit. There were no problems in this respect and clergy were very open and willing to update me on any issues.

For every service that I attended, I wrote up a log in my research diary in order to provide evidence towards answering my research question about the viability of church planting for Anglo-Catholic churches. Participant observation was key to this so I was looking at the service as a whole. I found it important to count or estimate attendees as this gives some indication of commitment as well as the visual impact of the number of people in the building. A sparse congregation, scattered around a large building does not give much evidence as to the viability of the plant. It is worth noting at this stage, and I will elaborate on this in further chapters, that regularity and frequency of attendance are difficult areas to assess, even in well-established congregations. In new congregations it becomes even more difficult. This factor plays an important role in the interpretation of the overall data but should not be allowed to over-rule other findings.

Quantitative data such this this can be seen as an 'easy win' for a researcher but only scratches the surface of what is really going on and the motivation for attendance. The current emphasis throughout the Church of England on calculating 'Usual Sunday Attendance' is one of the drivers for this approach. For me the retail concept of 'footfall' is a more useful one as indicating the numbers of people who have some attendance at or contact with a church but not on any basis which can be defined as usual, regular or frequent. One of the London research churches has a regular attendance of around 35, but the priest has over 500 names on his email contact group to whom he sends a weekly newsletter and there are many of these people who attend on an irregular and infrequent basis. In hindsight, it would have been useful to attend services on special / festival days to see how many of the 'fringe' people attended but personal and parish commitments made that impossible. Even in established

congregations of all denominations and churchmanship, measuring and understanding

patterns of attendance pose significant difficulties.[158]

Another factor which complements attendance and can give supporting evidence of

viability is the engagement of the congregation with the worship offered. If worshippers

appear bored and disengaged, it is likely that they will soon stop attending. In both of the

London churches, the main service was the Eucharist, so engagement was key. I noted that

the level of engagement was generally high; the musical elements were well sung, all joined

in the said responses and were attentive to the readings and the sermon.

After I had been attending each church for around a year, I asked members of the

congregation to complete a simple questionnaire. This was intended to elicit basic

demographic information and to find out how long they had been attending and what their

previous church-going pattern, if any, had been, together with a simple statement about what

they liked about the church. I had already realised that a more complex questionnaire would

not work, because of the nature of the congregations in which I was being involved and the

time that such an activity would incur. The reason I developed this questionnaire was that I

wanted to explore some of the common myths around church planting, especially in the area

of mission and outreach, as the thrust of much church-planting / church growth literature is

focussed on making new disciples, *Mission-Shaped Church* being a prime example.[159] Dr.

Angus Ritchie refers to a number of myths that he believes that Anglican Catholics hold

about church-planting, in particular 'It's all about sheep-stealing – no-one is really making

new disciples.'[160] This comment will be seen to be echoed in chapter six by a vicar of one of

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[158] I see this in my own well-established congregation; the attendance (pre Covid) usually is good but often, when some of the regulars are absent their place is often filled by more infrequent worshippers and visitors. At almost every service there will be someone whom I do not recognise, even a sparsely attended Evening Prayer.
[159] Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing,2004).
[160] Angus Ritchie quotes this comment in his Afterword in *A Time to Sow*. It is not otherwise attributed.

the research churches when he was in a meeting discussing church growth. *A Time to Sow* goes some way to debunking that myth.[161] In another monograph, Tim Thorlby estimates that 20% of attenders at church plants come 'from outside'.[162] When my analysis is complete, it will be worth examining if that is the case, providing there is sufficient evidence, as well as looking at what other reasons people give for their church attendance. However, as a caveat, it needs to be stated that the response to the invitation to complete the questionnaire was much lower than I had hoped. In reality it was limited to those who stayed to the after service coffee. The East Midland site in particular had a very low return as the number of attenders was decreasing from spring 2019 onwards, and was often in single figures. Yet the responses provided some useful insights into the way members of the different congregations viewed their churches and their reason for attendance.

In the initial meetings with the clergy, to which I have already referred as part of the process of identifying the research sites, one area of the discussion was around the origins and circumstances of their particular church. This information I substantiated with external documentation both in terms of general diocesan policies as well as, in one case, specific information about the future of one of my research churches, provided by the Area Bishop; I am grateful to him and the other diocesan officials who supplied me with this material. This enabled me to approach the research visits with a good background knowledge and an understanding of something of the history of each church as well as the underlying rationale for the plant and any potential issues or tensions that might arise.

After I had finished my visits, I was able to meet with each of the clergy and hold a recorded conversation. I used a very open ended, semi-structured approach to the interview

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[161] Thorlby, Tim, *A Time to Sow* (London: Centre for Theology & Community, 2017),p.9.
[162] Thorlby, Tim, *Love, Sweat and Tears* (London: Centre for Theology & Community.2016).

around the theme 'Where does your church go from here?' Bryman describes semi-structured interviewing as follows:

> [the term] covers a wide range of types [of interviews]. It typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview guide but is able to vary the sequence of questions. The questions are more general in their frame of reference from that typically found in a structured interview schedule.[163]

These interviews took place some months after I had completed my research visits. I felt it important to leave a lapse of time between the end of my visits and the interviews to enable me to consolidate the experiences in my mind with the help of my research diary. I recorded the interviews, so for the first phase of analysis I listened to them several times and identified what I saw as significant comments. Following that I transcribed them, using commercial software, so that I could undertake a more detailed analysis and be sure that I had not missed anything important. The transcription was about 80% accurate so my first task was to undertake a very close reading, whilst listening again to the recordings, to correct the inaccuracies of the transcription[164]. This gave me an early appreciation of the substance of the interviews and the possible emerging themes. I then colour coded each of the printed transcripts according to what I saw as emerging themes; six themes emerged through this analysis and corresponded closely with what also I had found in the literature[165]. Each of the three churches evidenced all of these themes but with differing levels of emphasis. This was dependent on location, maturity as well as the rationale behind the plant.

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[163] Bryman, Alan. *Social Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.) p. 543
[164] Some of these responses are quoted in chapter six.
[165] See Chapter 6.2 for an explanation of these six themes

Unsurprisingly, the results reflected the length of time the church had been in existence. I used this method of interviewing in order to elicit a wide range of responses, particularly around the future of each of the plants as they all are closely identified with the current vicar. So what would happen if that vicar were to leave? Would such an event threaten the continuation of the plant? Vacancies in parishes are often times when church attendance and activities decline, even in established and well-resourced parishes.

3.5.3. Evaluation of the Research Process.

I approached the research activity with some trepidation as I did not know whether it would be sustainable over the period of time that I had planned or even if it would realistically provide me with sufficient research evidence from which to develop a useful outcome. The welcome, interest and support that I received from the three churches involved very soon allayed these fears and I found the experience to be a very positive one, both personally and academically. Each time I attended, several people, and not always the same ones, would ask me about the progress of my research and sometimes when I met people for the first time, I would be asked to explain what I was doing and the reasons for it. These conversations involved a wide range of people, not just those who understood academic research. Practically, I found that by writing up my research log as soon as possible after each service, I was able to keep a good overview of what had happened on each occasion and have the information available for later analysis and discussion.

3.6. Conclusion.

This chapter has described in detail the methodology and then the methods that I employed in my research. The discipline of Practical Theology answers the methodological question, bringing together theory and practice as it provides 'the link between critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the

world'.[166] This is important for any Anglo-Catholic consideration of church planting because it links theology with praxis.

To align Practical Theology with the research activity, I chose as my method Grounded Theory. I defined Grounded Theory as entering an area of research and letting the theory emerge from the data. In its pure form, it is devoid of preconceptions; the researcher begins the research as a tabula rasa. I chose to use a more limited form of Grounded Theory as I had already undertaken a significant amount of literature and on-line research as a way of selecting my research topic and planning my fieldwork. This, as noted earlier,[167] fits within the way that different researchers have adapted Grounded Theory to make the approach relevant to their projects. I had also done a considerable amount of investigation both on the theological and ecclesial issues so that I would be aware of some of the potential issues that might arise. In addition, I was researching new sites for which I needed to gather background information about the history of and reasons behind the churches beforehand rather than entering a known field as Glaser and Strauss had done. I was seeking to identify the factors which make church planting a viable option of Anglo-Catholic mission and outreach. As a method of empirical research I saw Grounded Theory as a valid approach as I had no preconceptions about what I would find during the research process other than some of the suggestions that I had found in my literature research. Unlike in some scientific research, I was not trying to prove an hypothesis.

I therefore engaged with the research in a number of ways. The preparatory stage as mentioned above involved desk based activities. There was then the necessity of holding meetings with the clergy of potential sites both to explain my plans in detail and to gain their understanding and agreement. This being done, I attended services at each of them, monthly

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[166] Swinton & Mowat, *Practical theology and qualitative research* (2nd edn.), p.10
[167] pp. 69-71

for eighteen months, to engage in participant observation. A research diary was compiled

after each visit. Later in the process, a short questionnaire was issued. All the information

gathered was processed and contributed to the research findings. I was looking to establish

whether there were common themes across the three churches which could assist others who

were considering church planting. These themes will be identified in later chapters.

In chapter seven I make a comparison with what I found in these three sites and with

the Victorian Anglo-Catholics and their activities in starting new churches. From this I want

to ascertain what lessons may be learned from their methods and experiences that may be

applicable to some of today's Anglo-Catholic churches as they consider the viability of

church planting as an appropriate method of mission.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANGLO-CATHOLICISM AND CHURCH PLANTING – AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

4.1 A Definition of Terms.

This chapter aims to give an historical context in which to set the work of Richard Temple West and Richard Foster in the second half of the nineteenth century and then to describe the life and work of these two men. Although the phrase 'Anglo-Catholicism' is used both in my title and in this chapter, in the nineteenth century and subsequently, a number of different terms, including 'Anglo-Catholic' were in use and their meanings were often confused, overlapping and not clearly defined. For the sake of clarity and consistency, I will use the term 'Anglo-Catholic' whilst recognising that it might be regarded in some contexts as anachronistic.

The particular beliefs of Anglo-Catholicism can be described in two ways. First there was an acceptance of the general formulation by the late fourth century monk, St. Victor de Lerins: *'quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est.'* This continued to be one of the touchstones of Anglo-Catholic belief. [168] However it is obviously open to dispute as beyond the creeds, particularly the Nicene Creed, the status and existence of other beliefs and practices were much more in doubt. [169]

Secondly there is Pusey's much more specific definition which clearly encapsulated the beliefs of those who would later become to be called Anglo-Catholics and which would

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[168] 'What is to be believed, is what has always been believed, everywhere, and by all.' Pickering, W.S.F. *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity.* Cambridge: Routledge, 1989. p. 156.
[169] This was the creed defined at the Council of Nicaea in 325CE, refined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451CE and used in the service of Holy Communion.

still be generally accepted today in most Anglo-Catholic parishes, whether liberal or traditional. [170] This has been described in detail in Chapter 2, It can be seen therefore that the thrust of the Anglo-Catholic position was a resort to antiquity and a link to the apostolic and post-apostolic church as recorded by the early Church Fathers. Pickering regards this concept as 'static and backward looking' and as a result, out of keeping with the needs of the church at this time. [171]

4.2. Introduction and Historical Background.

The late eighteenth century Church of England is often portrayed as a quiescent church, comfortably existing in what was believed to be the God-given social structure of the squire and the parson, in which every member of the parish knew their place. This was especially true in the countryside where most people still lived. This superficial and often accepted view is not necessarily an accurate description of the significant variations in the practices across the church during the Hanoverian Period, as Mather contests. His article about the Georgian church gives examples of widespread disparities. Later Mather documents the range of worship activity in parish churches, using archdiaconal visitation records. He shows that a large number of churches held two Sunday services (double duty), a long one in the morning, consisting of Morning Prayer, Litany, Ante-Communion and Sermon and a shorter one of Evening Prayer in the afternoon, usually, but not everywhere, without a sermon.[172] The infrequency of the celebration of Holy Communion was one of the factors that the Oxford Movement wanted to address. Again, Mather shows that the picture was not a monochrome one; rather there were significant variations across England and Wales.[173] The

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[170] It will be seen later that there were also a number of liturgical acts that could be added as identifiers of Anglo-Catholic practice and were seriously challenged in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a result of The Public Worship Regulation Act 1874.
[171] Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism* p. 156.
[172] Mather, p. 265.
[173] Mather, p.269ff.

general themes of Mather's arguments are accepted by Walsh *et al.* In their introduction they refer to the 'great residual vitality of High Churchmanship' during this period.[174] Further in the same chapter they refer similarly to the growing strength of Evangelicalism.[175]

There were, however, significant social distinctions in parish churches. Rented box pews were the norm in most churches for those parishioners who could afford them. The rented pew system provided a steady source of income for a church and those who opposed its abolition did so as much for financial reasons as for any other motives. Pew rents paid for the upkeep of the church building and subsidised the ministry. If they were abolished, how would the financial shortfall be made up? Against this, the later Anglo-Catholics looked to the Offertory and Tithing as the proper way of funding parishes; but this was still a contentious issue.[176] At the same time the Church and the State were seen as a unity and it was the role of the Crown to uphold this arrangement as through Parliament it ordered the affairs of the church.[177] Indeed, even as late as 1848, Cecil F. Alexander, the wife of William Alexander, the future Archbishop of Armagh, would write:

The rich man in his castle, The poor man at his gate,

God made them high and lowly, And ordered their estate. [178]

The *status quo* was seemingly fixed in the early Victorian church.

However in the first part of the nineteenth century, this social view and the demography of the nature of the Church had already been significantly challenged. The repeal in 1828 of the Test and Corporation Acts, the Emancipation of Roman Catholics in 1829, followed by the 1832 Reform Act meant there was now the situation in which

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[174] Walsh, John, Colin Haydon & Stephen Taylor, (eds.). *The Church of England, c.1689- c.1833 : from Toleration to Tractarianism.*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). p.32.

[175] Walsh et al. p49

[176] As an aside it is worth noting that in the contemporary Church of England, most Evangelicals would support tithing and direct giving, but other parts of the church still very much rely on 'fundraising activities'.

[177] Rowell, Geoffrey. *The Vision Glorious.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1991.) p.1.

[178] A verse of the hymn ' All Things Bright and Beautiful' now expunged from modern editions of hymn books.

Parliament, with Dissenters and others, could legislate for the Church of England. Parliament was now seen by many churchmen to be tainted by the inclusion of non-Anglicans and so unfit for the purpose of the governance of the Church. Additionally, what many believed to be innocent and sensible proposals, were put forward by the then Whig government to reduce the number of Irish dioceses.[179] This caused a great upsurge of antagonism and claims of Erastianism, a sign of the control of the State over the Church. [180]

At the same time there were also serious concerns in the University of Oxford that the equivalent dilution of Anglican identity as was being seen in Parliament could also happen in the University following the admission of Dissenters and Roman Catholics both as undergraduates and to College Fellowships. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge at that time were still the main training ground for the clergy and most unmarried college fellows were ordained.[181] They saw the Anglican identity of the University as *sine qua non.*

Sociologically things were also changing. The industrial revolution was bringing people into towns for work and the parish structure and church provision were becoming inadequate for the growing population. Whatever else the Reformation had accomplished in theological terms, it had not changed the mediaeval parochial structure of the church of England which was still heavily biased towards rural parishes. The ancient endowments of the church were not linked to any form of pastoral need and advowsons (the right of a patron to present a clergyman to a living) were openly traded. In contrast, in the growing urban areas, many churches had insufficient income to support a priest and so the pastoral needs of

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[179] The Church of Ireland, the Established Church, in effect a branch of the Church of England, was very much in the minority in a 'country' in which Roman Catholicism was the predominant denomination in the South and Presbyterianism the dominant force in the North. Hence it was sensible and logical to reduce the number of bishoprics. This today is reflected in the Diocesan titles of many current Irish bishops such as the Bishop pf Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, which includes the names of these abolished bishoprics..

[180] The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines this as ' the theory of the supremacy of the State in ecclesiastical affairs.'

[181] University College, Durham had been founded in 1832 and Kings College, London in 1829 but it was a number of years before their graduates were acceptable for ordination.

parishioners could not be met.[182] There are some resonances here with the way in which current Anglo-Catholic plants are supported financially (see Chapter 7).

Those clergy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who held a 'high' view of the church also linked this with a high view of the state and hence the role of the Crown in Parliament. The High Church ideal of the late eighteenth century was 'of a practical and orthodox faith rooted in the Church of England's doctrines and sacraments.'[183] During the premiership of Lord Liverpool (1812-1827), a number of High Churchmen were promoted to the episcopal bench and the group known as the 'Hackney Phalanx' prospered.[184]

However, their influence diminished after the resignation of Liverpool who was succeeded briefly by George Canning and then by the Duke of Wellington, under whose premiership the Corporation Act was repealed in 1828 allowing Nonconformists to hold office in public life. The Roman Catholic Relief Act passed in 1829 gave similar rights to Roman Catholics. This appalled high churchmen generally as a betrayal of the Constitution and their fears were further raised when a Whig Government was elected in 1830 with Earl Grey as Prime Minister. On this government's agenda was 'Reform' of government in general as well as its relationship to the Church. This caused concerns in the minds of many with the possibility of disestablishment and the severance of the relationship between Church and State as had happened in the 1790s in France.

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[182] Pastoral needs cover what now are generally referred to as 'Occasional Offices' as well as parish visiting which was seen to be a key area of a parish priest's work outside of the duty to provide worship.
[183] Strong, Rowan, (ed.) *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume III: Partisan Anglicanism and its Global Expansion 1829 – c1914.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. p. 144
[184] Ibid. pp. 144-145

4.3 The Assize Sermon and Tracts for our Times.

The perceived danger facing the Church of England was expressed most clearly by the Oxford poet and priest, John Keble, in his Oxford University Assize Sermon of July 14th 1833 which he entitled 'National Apostasy'. He identified that the current trends in political life were alienating society from the church and thereby were damaging the spiritual life of the nation. To counter this Keble and others developed a strategy which involved writing tracts under the general title '*Tracts for our Times'* seeking to address the important issues facing the Church at that time. The final tract, Tract XC, written by John Henry Newman of Oriel College and vicar of the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin, was the most controversial.[185] It was entitled *Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles.* Its aim was to show that the Book of Common Prayer and the Church of England had a Catholic rather than a Protestant identity. It was on this basis that what we now call Anglo-Catholicism developed.

4.4.Reactions to Tract XC and The Crisis of 1845.[186]

The period following the publication of Tract XC continued to be one of controversy. Newman struggled to convince both his supporters and antagonists as to his *bona fides* as a loyal and orthodox Anglican. Newman's opponents were not slow in circulating copies of the Tract both to the Heads of Colleges within the University as well as to a number of Bishops. What most damaged Newman was Bishop Bagot's charge at a clergy assembly in Newman's church and in his presence. [187] This statement was in direct contradiction to Newman's view that the Articles had been written in a deliberately ambiguous way in order to gain wider

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[185] Ninety

[186] This period has been documented in depth in chapters by Michael J. G. Pahls and Kenneth L. Parker as well as by Sheridan Gilley in Brown, Stewart J., Peter Nockles, and James Pereiro, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). This chapter sketches an outline in order to put the work of West and Foster into their historical context.

[187] Richard Bagot was Bishop of Oxford from 1829-1845.

acceptance. Furthermore, it led to a wider range of episcopal condemnation and Newman began to realise that his views were becoming increasingly unacceptable across the Church of England. His reaction was to resign as Vicar of St. Mary's in September 1843 and to withdraw to Littlemore, a hamlet south-east of Oxford where, in 1836, he had established the Church of St. Mary and St. Nicholas as a daughter church of St. Mary's. Newman resigned his fellowship of Oriel College on 3rd October 1845 and was received into the Roman Catholic Church on 9th October 1845.

4.5 The Years Following 1845.

After Newman's conversion to Rome, the role of standard bearers for the Anglo-Catholics fell to Pusey, Keble and Charles Marriott, the Dean of Oriel College. Newman's conversion, and that of others, gave a lie to the claim that Anglican Orders were shared on an equal footing with the other two 'branches' of 'The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic church', the Church of Rome and the Orthodox Churches of the East. [188]

However, Pusey had other interests which took precedence over the departure of Newman. He had, anonymously, endowed the building of St. Saviour's Church in Leeds, with the acquiescence of Walter Hook, the Rector of Leeds. Pusey's view of Newman's departure was summed up in a very charitable and forgiving statement:

> [Newman] seems then to me not so much gone from us, as transplanted into another part of the Vineyard, where the full energies of his powerful mind can be employed, which here they were not.[189]

Keble was looking for a safe way out of the dilemma. He found comfort in Bishop Butler's words a century previously that the 'safer way' is always to be preferred even in the teeth of

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[188] A phrase in the Nicaean Creed
[189] McNab in Brown et al. p. 576.

seemingly contrary evidence.[190] He found this a sure foundation to continue in the Church of England 'that one is bound to continue thankfully in that Branch of the Church in which Providence has placed him'.[191] The next challenge that arose, almost as an unexpected but probably inevitable consequence, was ritualism with which Anglo-Catholics became aligned.

4.6. Ritualism.

One of the central tenets of Anglo-Catholicism is that the public worship of the church should mirror its theology and ecclesiology and this should be seen to be worthy of the message of the Gospel. This view also coincided with the growing interest in medievalism, antiquarianism and romanticism in England generally and especially among many younger clergy. Matins and Evensong were the normal forms of worship and Holy Communion was celebrated in most parishes on a monthly or less frequent basis with few communicants, as many laity felt uneasy about receiving the Sacrament.[192] Richard Foster (of whom more later) in the middle of the nineteenth century wrote in a letter:

> To me it seems absurd to suppose that persons with little or no education and without religious convictions or feelings will ever be drawn into our churches, or kept when there, by the perpetual monotonous reading of 'When the wicked man…' and 'Dearly Beloved…'[193]

This statement, from a very devout Anglican who attended church most days for Matins, demonstrates the gap between churchgoers and the population at large. Geoffrey Rowell quotes a similar view from an essay by the Revd. James Edward Vaux written in 1868:[194]

> Without laying ourselves open to the charge of a morbid craving after unhealthy excitement, we may venture the opinion that the repetition of 'Dearly Beloved

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[190] Ibid, p. 577.
[191] Foster, W.F. *Richard Foster.* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood Ltd., 1914) (private circulation) p. 63
[192] Mather, F, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered; Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830.' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 36, No.* 2, April 1985. p.272.
[193] These phrases occur at the beginning of both Morning and Evening Prayer.
[194] Rowell, Geoffrey. *The Vision Glorious.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1991). pp. 121-122

Brethren' at the least seven hundred and thirty times each year, is calculated to

become a little wearisome by the time we have reached mid-life.

Although Ritualism has been linked with the Oxford movement, its origins go back much

further. Bishop William Van Mildert, Bishop of Durham from 1826-1836 as far back as 1797

commented:

> Some of the most admired parts of our Book of Common Prayer are taken almost
>
> literally from the Romish Ritual: and this, far from being any just objection to it,
>
> proves that the compilers were guided by the genuine spirit of moderation and
>
> Christian candour.[195]

The drive for more solemnity and seriousness in worship, reflected in a more defined ritual,

was also influenced by two antiquarian societies that were in the most part dominated by

clergy, the Cambridge Camden Society and the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of

Gothic Architecture.[196] There was a growing belief in many quarters that the worship of God

demanded the highest quality of response that human beings could give, and in the minds of a

growing number of clergy, that implied a more structured ritual. In many cases initially that

meant no more than a strict adherence to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer.[197]

Yates comments:

> It has, however, to be remembered that Keble was one of the most cautious of the
>
> Tractarian leaders and never moved much beyond the traditional brand of very firm,
>
> but also very undemonstrative, High Churchmanship in which he had been brought
>
> up.[198]

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[195] Quoted in Nockles, Peter B. *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). p. 219
[196] Yates, Nigel. *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830-1910*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). p. 219.
[197] Pickering, W.S.F. *Anglo-Catholicism: a Study in Religious Ambiguity*. (Cambridge: Routledge, 1989). p. 19.
[198] Yates, Nigel. *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830-1910*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). p. 55

However, after Newman's defection in 1845, the move for a more elaborate form of ritual grew. A strong view now arose that the church building was set apart, sacred for the worship of God. Thus worship should be more in keeping with St. Paul's command, 'that all things should be done decently and in order.'[199] Pews were moved to face the altar, which was given prominence.[200] As a result the large three-decker pulpits which had often dominated the nave were side-lined. More regular services were established and clergy began to dress in more appropriate robes, e.g. cassock and surplice, although for many years there was still a backlash against wearing a surplice for preaching instead of the traditional black gown. This ritualistic movement grew and is relevant to the churches to which I will refer later as two of them use Anglo-Catholic ritual which is identifiable with what 'the ritualists' were propounding.

What then emerged as the great area of contention was the 'Ornaments Rubric' in the Preface to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. It stated, quoting Section XIII of the Act of Uniformity in 1559, the first year of Queen Elizabeth I reign,

> Provided always, and be it enacted, that such ornaments of the church, and of the ministers thereof, shall be retained and be in use, as was in the Church of England, by authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI, until other order shall be therein taken by the authority of the queen's majesty, with the advice of her commissioners appointed and authorized, under the great seal of England, for causes ecclesiastical, or of the metropolitan of this realm.[201]

This posed two problems, one was obvious and the other more arcane. The first was how to identify what ornaments had been in use nearly three hundred years previously, with very

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[199] I Corinthians 14:40
[200] Sir Henry Baker wrote a hymn which contains these words: 'We love thine altar, Lord, Oh what on earth so dear'.
[201] Section XIII of the Act of Uniformity 1559, accessed 20th August 2020, https://www. history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er80.html

little documentary evidence, therefore what did 'ornaments' comprise? Were they fixtures like statues, or did they include vestments or even what was done in the liturgy? There was no agreement on this. The evidence was scarce and there was an over- reliance on funerary ornaments in churches which often were a matter of artistic interpretation rather than a liturgical statement.[202] Secondly there was no agreement of the exact dating of the 'second year of the reign of King Edward VI.' The way of calculating this was a matter of dispute and so could not be agreed. Hence there was recourse to the earlier and less 'reformed' editions of the Prayer Book (e.g. the 1549 Version), its rubrics and injunctions. These issues caused confusion and dissension but equally provided an opportunity for some to take advantage of this ambiguity to establish their own positions.

Over the next decades those early Anglo-Catholics attempted to introduce a number of practices into their regular worship which they claimed, under the terms of the Ornaments Rubric, to be legal, but were contested by their opponents. These are generally agreed to be:

- the use of Eucharistic vestments such as the chasuble, alb, maniple and stole.

- the use of a thurible and incense.

- the use of "lights" (especially the practice of putting six candles on the high altar) when light was not required for reading.

- the use of unleavened (wafer) bread in communion.

- eastward facing celebration of the Eucharist (when the priest celebrates facing the altar from the same side as the people, i.e. the priest faces east with the people, instead of standing at the "north side" of the "table" in the chancel or as required by the rubric in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer).[203]

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[202] Sculptors would usually portray their subjects in the best and most imposing way, even if the vestments they portrayed had never been worn by the subject.
[203] There has always been confusion about what this means. The historical view is that the Holy Table was placed lengthwise in the chancel and the people gathered opposite the priest who therefore was on the north side. In those few churches which still aim to follow this rubric, it seems that the minister (they would not use

- the mixing of sacramental wine with water.

For mission minded Anglo-Catholics, the aim was to ensure that those who engaged with their worship, should experience something numinous, something of 'the other' however that might be conceived. As Pickering puts it 'congregations should be made aware that they were worshipping in the House of God, a building set apart and held to be sacred'. [204] This was particularly true in the poorer parts of towns and cities where many Anglo-Catholic priests worked. Peter Doll writes[205]:

> R. F. Littledale in 1868 pointed out that London gin palaces were complete with 'internal decorations, abundant polished metal and vivid colour, with plenty of bright lights'. Why should the church not use the same means? 'Ritualism is a sort of excursion train on Sunday, to bring the poor man out of his dull, squalid, every-day life into a land of beauty, colour, light and song' [206]

The natural concomitant to the highly decorated building was an elaborate and matching ritual but one that should not be ritual for ritual's sake. Ritual was to be seen as the action that must express doctrine. Pickering comments 'Ritual is of no value and a vain thing if it is not based upon sound doctrine.'[207] Ritual should have a far more important role than just making churches pretty, colourful or less boring – although by default, it had accrued this role to itself in the eyes of many who attended. The controversy over ritualism continued over the

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the word priest) officiates from the narrow north end of an eastward located 'table'. This almost looks like a game of table tennis, especially if there is a curate at the south 'side'.
[204] Pickering, W.S.F. *Anglo-Catholicism: a Study in Religious Ambiguity.* (Cambridge: Routledge, 1989). p. 20.
[205] Brown, Stewart J., Peter Nockles, and James Pereiro, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). p. 368.
[206] The original of the quotation from Littledale which Doll cites is to be found in Reed, John Shelton. *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism.* (Nashville TN: Nashville University Press, 1996). p. 150.
[207] Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism*, p. 21

second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Evelyn Underhill quotes from

W.H. Frere's *The Principles of Religious Ceremonial*:

> No one can hope to judge fairly of matters of ceremonial who does not see that the
>
> reason why they cause such heat of controversy is that they signify so much,[208]

But by the middle of the twentieth century many of these practices had become part of the

normal style of worship in much of the Church of England.[209]

This section has outlined the context in which I can proceed to describe the life and

work of Richard Temple West and Richard Foster as examples of what can now be described

as ways of nineteenth century Anglo-Catholic mission and church planting. The details of

their work are described most clearly in two original biographical sources that of T. T.

Carter's biography of Richard Temple West and of William Foster's biography of his father,

Richard Foster.[210] It is acknowledged that biographies are clearly open to bias. Carter's is

almost an hagiography, whereas Foster's has the bias of a son towards a greatly loved and

respected father. However, both the contemporary records of the *Church Times*, the *Evening

Standard* and other organs, as well as original material currently held in archives, either

physically or in a digital format, supply corroboration of statements in the biographies.

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[208] Underhill, Evelyn. *Worship.* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd. 1936). pp.23-4

[209] A significant number of clergy currently would be wearing some form of vestments, at least an alb and stole, candles were *de rigeur*, although six was a marker of a 'high church', wafers were usual in the majority of Anglican churches, as much for convenience as for any theological reason, the eastward facing position had been adopted until after Vatican II when most Anglo-Catholic clergy followed the Roman position and adopted the westward facing position with altars moved into the body of the church. Today only traditional Anglo-Catholics as a norm take the eastward facing position. Others may do so on specific occasions.

[210] Carter, T.T., *Richard Temple West – A Record of Life and Work.*(London: J Masters & Co., 1895).

Foster, W.F. *Richard Foster.* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood Ltd., 1914) (private circulation). Both of these biographies, long out of print, are accessible in the British Library and the Cambridge University Library.

4.7. Reverend Richard Temple West.
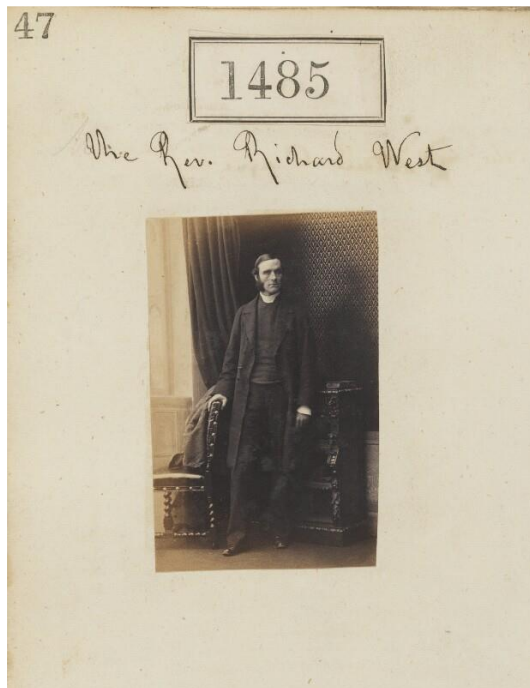
Photograph of Richard Temple West: National Portrait Gallery by Camille Silvy, 20th October 1860. Downloaded from website.

In the introduction to his biography of Richard Temple West, T.T. Carter states that he was not intending to describe a life but rather to portray the 'attractive and influential personality of one who seemed to keep with true consistency a high religious aim'.[211] He locates this in the context of the difficulties faced by clergy who had enthusiastically embraced the Oxford Movement. He further quotes the Bishop of Nassau, a friend and supporter of West, as saying that West encouraged 'a spirit of hopefulness' which was part of the mission of the Church of England.

4.7.1 Early life and Education.

West was born on 29th April 1827 to John West, a barrister who was also a Commissioner in Bankruptcy and to Lady Maria West, daughter of the Earl of Orford and

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[211] Carter, p. iii.

also distantly related to the Earl of Delaware. He was sent to Eton College in 1839 and went as an Exhibitioner to Christ Church, Oxford in 1845.[212] He was known for his devoutness but he was also a keen sportsman. Christ Church was not involved in The Oxford Movement, which had its academic base at Oriel College. In contrast, it had arranged for its compulsory services to take place at the same time as those of churches which were supporting the Oxford movement in order to prevent its students and fellows attending and being influenced by the teachings of Newman and his followers.

On graduating, West moved to London where he became a pupil barrister at Lincoln's Inn from 1850-1853. He was much in demand at society events as a skilful dancer, but his religious devotion was obvious as he started visiting the poor. This religious devotion was the spur which took him away from the law to prepare for ordination.

4.7.2. Ordained Ministry 1853-1860.

In 1853, West went to Cuddesdon Theological College, recently established by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, and was subsequently ordained. His initial curacy was at Leeds, where the rector of the parish church was Walter Hook, a formidable high-churchman. It would seem that West's curacy was not a happy one as he only stayed in Leeds for a year. Although Carter skates over the reasons for his departure, it can be surmised that Hook and West had a difficult relationship as West was a stickler for the rigid adherence to the Prayer Book rubrics whereas Hook wanted to ensure that his services were accessible and so 'bent the rules' to make this happen. Richard Foster's view about Hook's services is referred to later in this chapter.

In 1854, West moved to St Mary's, Hemel Hempstead as curate. *De facto* he was in charge of the parish as the vicar, Henry Mountain, was very frail and usually not well enough

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[212] An Exhibition at Oxford for an undergraduate is an academic honour with a small financial allowance attached to it.

to lead worship. Mountain did not want any changes made to the style of worship, but West caused an outrage when he inserted The Prayer for The Church Militant before the Blessing in the Ante-Communion Service.[213] He caused further upset when he provided bookmarks, embroidered with crosses, for use in the service books. Another cause of dissension was his invitation to Edward Monro to preach at the opening of the new school building. Monro was Vicar of Harrow Weald and a noted preacher and writer but was a firm supporter of the Tractarians. There were demonstrations which Carter regards as being on the same level as those at St Barnabas, Pimlico and St George's-in-the-East some years previously.[214] West was burnt in effigy, alongside that of the Pope at the Guy Fawkes Day commemorations in 1856.[215] These 'innovations' were in themselves fairly trivial but they introduced an element of change which was unacceptable to the conservative views of the worshippers who could not condone this. This factor is as important in the reaction to the introduction of Anglo-Catholic practice as any doctrinal argument against such practices. From many years of personal experience church congregations are very conservative and unwelcoming of change.

However, the crisis which ended West's curacy in 1857 was a result of his intransigence in respect of what many would now consider to be a matter of secondary importance. Queen Victoria had given birth to a daughter, Beatrice, on 14th April 1857. The Privy Council issued a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Queen's safe delivery of the baby and commanded it to be read in churches. West objected as it had been issued by a secular authority and not by the bishop and so he refused to use it. George Murray, Bishop of

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[213] It needs to be noted that in this period with the growth of the influence of the Oxford Movement, any changes to the Prayer Book liturgy, however small, were met with deep suspicion.

[214] These are both well-documented examples of the resistance to the introduction of Anglo-Catholic practices. See Herring, George. *The Oxford Movement in Practice.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). p. 174.

[215] The Prayer Book at that time contained an order of service for November 5th. It was entitled 'A FORM of PRAYER with THANKSGIVING to be used yearly upon the Fifth Day of *November;* For the happy Deliverance of King JAMES 1, and the Three Estates of E N G L A N D , from the most traitorous and bloody-intended Massacre by Gunpowder: And also for the happy Arrival of His Majesty King WILLIAM on this Day, for the Deliverance of our Church and Nation'. This service was discontinued in 1859. (Capitals as in original text.)

Rochester, refused to issue it in his name as he believed it already had been lawfully issued. He was unable to persuade West to accept its authority as West had declared that he would not use the prayer unless it were personally authorised by Murray. In a letter published in the *Morning Post* on 18th August 1857, West set out his version of events. His main contention was that in his oath of canonical obedience, he had sworn only to use those forms of service laid down in the Book of Common Prayer. In addition, as he was not the vicar, only an assistant curate, he had no authority to change anything and as noted above, Mountain did not want changes made. Stalemate ensued and Murray felt that in face of such disobedience, he had no option but to inhibit West's ministry.

In spite of these difficulties, West's three years at Hemel Hempstead had many positive aspects. He was known in the parish as an assiduous visitor and energetically sought children for baptism. One Sunday he baptised thirty-five children and the following week another twelve. He was responsible for the rebuilding of the church school, as well as the removal of the box pews from inside the church. As a parting gift to the parish, he had the Norman west door restored. He was fondly remembered by many in the parish for the faithfulness of his ministry in spite of the difficulties there had been, which for most of his congregation were irrelevant.

West next moved as curate to William Gresley who was rector of the newly-built church of All Saints, Boyne Hill, on the outskirts of Maidenhead. The church, designed by George Street, had been paid for by three wealthy women to provide a church for Anglo-Catholic worship. Gresley had in 1851 written *The Ordinance of Confession* which had caused great controversy. Many in the Oxford Movement were encouraging individual confession to a priest as a laudable spiritual practice which had a rightful place in the Church

of England. However, this was condemned as popery by Evangelicals and others.[216] It was this alleged use of confession that led to West's departure from Boyne Hill.

The circumstances are as follows: on one occasion he had visited a seriously ill woman who had led a very dissolute and profligate life.[217] Using the Prayer Book Office of the Visitation of the Sick, he encouraged her to confess her sins openly and receive absolution in the form prescribed.[218] A neighbouring incumbent complained to Bishop Wilberforce that West had forced this woman to make an personal confession.[219] Bishop Wilberforce was reluctant to act against West but, under pressure from *The Times* (which at that time was taking a close interest in church affairs, especially when there seemed to be a challenge to the Protestant nature of the Church of England), he eventually set up a commission to hear the accusations against West. It is worth noting that, on hearing of this, Walter Hook of Leeds asked to appear 'to give evidence against Mr West.' This perhaps sheds some light on the reason that West's curacy in Leeds only lasted for a year. The hearing lasted for eleven hours at the end of which West was cleared of the charge of forcing a confession. However, West felt unable any longer to remain at Boyne Hill as he was sure his opponents would always be looking to find reasons to make further complaints against him.

W.J.E. Bennett had been forced to leave St. Barnabas, Pimlico, as a result of his extreme ritualistic practices and he became vicar of St. John the Baptist, Frome in Somerset in 1852 which he established as a significant centre of Anglo-Catholic worship. West was invited to work with him on a temporary basis. He was very popular and Bennett asked him to stay at Frome to take charge of the Choir School. Much as West might have been tempted,

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[216] Pickering, W.S.F. *Anglo-Catholicism: a Study in Religious Ambiguity.* (Cambridge: Routledge, 1989). pp. 77-84.
[217] Carter. *Richard Temple West* p. 28.
[218] The Rubric states: 'Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special Confession of his (sic) sins if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter.'
[219] This type of complaint was quite common between the different factions in the church at this time.

another opportunity was offered to him, which was to prove to be the most significant part of his ministry.

4.7.3. Ministry in London – The Establishment of St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington.

The Margaret Street Chapel had existed near Oxford Street since the mid-eighteenth century. It had more recently become influenced by the Tractarian Movement and in the 1840s Frederick Oakeley, the vicar, conceived a plan to have it replaced with a building more fitting to Tractarian worship. Oakeley became a Roman Catholic in 1845, following the example of Newman. His curate, Upton Richards, became vicar. Richards continued to support Oakeley's plan for the replacement of the chapel with a church more in keeping with the Tractarian style of worship. He was strongly encouraged in this by the Cambridge Camden Society which strongly believed that Gothic architecture was the most appropriate vehicle for the fitting worship of God. The old chapel closed on Easter Monday 1850 and the foundation stone of the new church, designed by William Butterfield, was laid by Edward Bouverie Pusey on All Saints' Day (November 1st) the same year. The building took over eight years to be completed but was consecrated on 28th May 1859. It was to this church that West came as curate in 1860. As was his pattern, he was conscientious in his ministry, especially in visiting the sick and the poor. The seeming arrogance which had caused him problems both at Hemel Hempstead and at Boyne Hill appeared to have been ameliorated. Booth notes that All Saints' did not have a parish of any size but the poor were helped by it as well as by two other fashionable parishes, the firmly Evangelical All Souls, Langham Place and the high church St Andrew's, Wells Street. Because of its reputation for supporting the

poor, it was even suggested that the rents in the poor streets around All Saints were affected.[220]

   After a number of years, a few of the residents of Paddington, who worshipped at All Saints, came up with the idea of founding a Mission in the Paddington area with a similar style of worship to that of All Saints to avoid the necessity of a tedious journey to Margaret Street.[221] West, with the enthusiastic support of Upton Richards, was asked to look at ways in which to realise this vision. Every Saturday he went to Paddington to look for a site on which he might build a church. He eventually found one, a cramped sloping site between the Paddington Arm of the Grand Junction Canal and a crowded slum area. The church is in the centre of the map below.[222] A modern information board on the towpath of the canal describes St. Mary Magdalene as 'a church plant from All Saints, Margaret Street'.

As can be seen from the legend, the immediate area around the church consists of housing for poor people. Booth, around fifty years later, described it as ' a most unsatisfactory spot'.[223] He goes on to relate that houses are let on a daily basis, often to different tenants by day and by night and that thieves and prostitutes formed much of the population. Obviously the area

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[220] Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London. 3rd Series: Religious Influences.* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1902). Volume 2. p.199
[221] This was both a convenience but also a mission opportunity to a very deprived and depraved area.
[222] Reproduced from Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London*: *3rd Series. Religious Influences Volume 3*. (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1902). See Chapter 2 for information about Booth.
[223] Booth. Volume 3. p.121.

had declined since the church was first built as Booth says: 'This district is an example of what has gone wrong' - a prescient comment that could now be applied to the area of Melchester in which St. Pauls Community Church is situated.[224]

West was renowned as a skilled collector of charitable funds and he soon had sufficient funding to start work and a temporary 'tin tabernacle' dedicated to St. Ambrose was opened in February 1865. He started with six services on Sundays and soon instituted a daily celebration of the Eucharist. The *Church Times Supplement* of 7th April 1866 describes the Three Hours' Agony service on Good Friday. 'The people were most devout – indeed throughout Lent, as *John Bull* observes, the congregation in this church have been, perhaps, the most remarkable in the diocese of London.'

4.7.4. The Life of the Church of St Mary Magdalene.

West's skilled fund-raising enabled work to begin on the church building, designed by George Street, and when it was decided to enlarge the original plan, two ladies sold their house, furniture and jewellery which just met the additional cost of the extension as well as paying for some of the ornaments and fittings, and donated this to West. The altar was carried from the temporary church and the Eucharist was first celebrated in the still incomplete church on October 21st 1868. The *Evening Standard* the following day described this event. 'The church was crammed, hundreds of people were standing and many others were turned away. The service was conducted in accordance with the principles of the advanced High Church School.'[225] All was due to be finished by St. Mary Magdalene's Day (July 22nd) 1872.

Unfortunately, whilst the roof was being completed, a workman set fire to the roofing felt. It quickly took hold and the roof crashed into the nave, causing significant damage. The

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[224] Ibid. p. 124
[225] Evening Standard, 22nd October 1868. Accessed via British Newspaper Archive.

altar and other furnishings were saved and removed to St. Ambrose's Chapel where ten services were held the following day, the first at 4am.[226] Rebuilding began straightaway and West at St. Mary Magdalene's set a standard for devout and sincere worship. Pews were all free and the sexes sat separately, which a chronicler thought ' a wise precaution that ought to be adopted in all places of worship'.[227] Another journal records that on Easter Sunday 1872 there were six celebrations of the Eucharist, no fewer than 1122 communicants and an offertory of £1180.[228] This shows the significant influence that West had in encouraging support for the work of the church. Unfortunately there is no breakdown in the Services Register to show how these amounts were made up.[229] St Mary's was not unique in this respect as on Easter Day 1876 at St. Augustine's, Kilburn, the offertory amounted to £1343 with 621 communicants.[230] Thirty years later the *Daily News* Census of 1902 – 1903 recorded a Sunday attendance at St Mary's of 863, 152 men, 646 women and 65 children. However the census only recorded attendances at one morning and one evening service.[231] It would therefore appear that the attendance at St. Mary's was holding up thirty years after its opening and nearly ten years after the death of Richard West.

West's ministry was not confined to worship. The educational and social needs of his parishioners also occupied his mind, as there was little other provision. In time, St. Mary Magdalene's gained responsibility for a Choir School, a Sisters' Home, a Penitentiary Home, a Working Men's Club, a Nurses' Institute, private Schools for different classes and a daughter church, St. Martha's which offered a simpler style of worship. The Bishop of Nassau , a friend and supporter of West who had been a priest in London prior to his

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[226] Carter, *Richard Temple West*. p.36.
[227] Ibid. p.39.
[228] This is over £192,000 at today's value according to the Bank of England inflation calculator.
[229] The Service Registers are held at The London Metropolitan Archive.
[230] Church Times 21 April 1876.
[231] Mudie-Smith, Richard (ed.). *The Religious Life of London.*(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904). p. 101.

consecration, commented that it was one of the most notable home missionary efforts in any English parish.[232] The work was augmented by two establishments in other parishes, one a facility where female prisoners could complete their prison sentences and a Sanatorium for Inebriates. All of these activities were under West's care and support.[233] He also aimed to undertake five hours visiting a day. Booth in 1902 notes other areas of social support like a thrift organisation, sick clubs and a goose club. He says:

> In such ways the church makes itself felt, and also through its schools. In the day
>
> school there are no less than 1200 children, including many of the roughest.[234]

West's conduct of worship was reverent and devout. He took it seriously and was intolerant of any sloppiness or casualness in the vestry or during the service. His curates were impressed by this as were 'outsiders' who attended St. Mary Magdalene. His pastoral care, both towards his parishioners as well as towards the many others with whom he communicated by letter, was assiduous. This extended even to animals. Carter records that on one occasion West saw a horse struggling to pull an over-loaded cart up a hill. He immediately went to push the cart and encouraged bystanders to join him in this effort.[235]

During the mid- eighteen sixties, there was a move for Parliament to reform parts of the Prayer Book. West vigorously opposed this as he did with any other attempt to influence or regulate the conduct of worship by a secular authority which he believed to be wrong. He financially supported clergy who were being prosecuted for their ritualistic practices, although he had not by any means adopted these himself. He regarded such legislative interference as unconstitutional. He only adopted the wearing of vestments when others were

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[232] He also contributed a chapter to Carter's biography.
[233] Carter, *Temple West* p.44.
[234] Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London. 3rd Series: Religious Influences.* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.: 1902). Volume 3, p.123.
[235] Carter, *Temple West* p.61.

being prosecuted for doing so. In 1871, he among other clergy wrote to John Jackson, the

Bishop of London protesting against a judgement of the Judicial Committee of the Privy

Council which admonished Rev. John Purchas for performing certain ritualistic liturgical

acts. The Bishop's reply to West, supporting the judgement was published in full in the

Church Times.[236]

Two other aspects of West's ministry need to be considered, both of which can be

said to be relevant to modern church planting. First was his devotion to the work of the

Sunday School. He would try to call in every Sunday to greet the children who attended and

they saw this as a high point of the day. They would be upset if he failed to appear.[237] He

always joined the Sunday School summer treat to the fields around Harrow. In the early

years, the children travelled by barge, but when the numbers became too great and hence

dangerous, the journey was made by train. West joined in the games for as long as his health

allowed, but he always aimed to take part in some way. Many church plants today (as well as

other more traditional churches) place great emphasis on working with children as a way of

gaining an opening into the wider community[238]. The Fresh Expressions concept of Messy

Church relies on this by involving parents in the craft and other practical activities arranged

for children.

The other important aspect was his involvement with the wider church. West took a

prominent role both in the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign

Parts, as well as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. He saw his

involvement in these as a way of countering the influence of the Evangelical wing over the

missionary activity of the Church of England. From 1882, he was also on the Governing

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[236] Church Times, 26th May 1871. p. 233
[237] Carter, *Temple West*. p.65.
[238] See Chapter 6 where Fr. Francis at St. Pancras, Rushey Common describes the importance of Sunday School as a way of bringing adults into church.

Council of Keble College, Oxford which had been founded in 1870. This shows a breadth of vision which should be an exemplar for those involved in church planting. A plant/new church does not exist *in vacuo*; it is an integral manifestation of the Body of Christ and so should relate to other parts of that Body for mutual support and influence.

4.7.5 The Final Years.

All of this activity eventually had an effect on West's health. For the last ten years of his life, he would spend part of the winter in Cannes as chaplain, to counter the winter weather and air pollution in London which was causing him severe chest problems.[239] He was forced to reduce his workload because of repeated bouts of uncontrollable coughing. He had typhoid fever in the winters of 1887 and 1888. His visits to Cannes led him to say, 'all coughing and sneezing gone.'[240] He seemed to recover some of his strength in 1891 but by May 1892, his health was further declining. Christmas Day 1892 was the last time he was in St. Mary Magdalene's. He was too weak to celebrate the Eucharist but administered the chalice. He attended Evensong and received the Offertory and gave the Blessing. During this time and until his death, he was cared for by one of the Sisters of Mercy from their Community at Clewer. He received communion for the last time on February 2nd when the Reserved Sacrament was brought to him from the church. He also wanted to see his sister in Bournemouth and although he was very weak, his doctor thought it would be of benefit to him to be away from London. On 9th February, he was taken by ambulance to Waterloo Station and went by train to Bournemouth. However, the journey proved too much for his weakened body and he died the following morning at 2am.The next day his body was transported to Waterloo where it was met by his clergy colleagues. The dining room of his

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[239] Having independent means he could support this, although on several occasions he was supported by the Prince of Wales.
[240] Carter, *Richard Temple West* p. 91.

Vicarage in Delamere Terrace was converted into a chapel of rest where his body remained until it was taken into church on 13th February where a vigil was kept. His funeral took place the following day followed by a Requiem High Mass. He was buried in Willesden Churchyard. He had begun his work at St. Mary's on 14th February 1865 and was buried on that same day twenty eight years later.

4.7.6 Assessment and Summary.

West was a truly remarkable priest. In his obituary in *The Times* he was referred to as 'one of the most prominent and respected High Church clergy of the metropolis.'[241] The *Church Times* also carried a very extensive obituary, as did other publications; as an example *The Indicator* of 17th February 1893 carried a very fulsome tribute as well as an extensive description of his funeral.[242] His energy for his parish work and his care for his parishioners and all who came to him for spiritual support were exemplary. The social and educational work which he established at a time and in an area where few such resources were provided, shows a man who put the social implications of the Gospel into practical effect. By doing this, he foreshadowed the words of Bishop Weston to the Anglo-Catholic Congress of 1923:

> Go out and look for Jesus in the ragged, in the naked, in the oppressed and sweated, in
> those who have lost hope, in those who are struggling to make good. Look for
> Jesus.[243]

His legacy continues today. St Mary Magdalene's is still open for worship. Although it had fallen into some disrepair, it is now being restored for the worship of God and as a place to support the wider community and the arts.

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[241] *"Obituary". The Times.* 11 February 1893. p. 10.
[242] Church Times 17th February 1893. p.168
[243] Rowell, Geoffrey. *The Vision Glorious.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1991). p. 242.

4.8. Richard Foster, A Merchant of London and Philanthropist.

Photograph of Richard Foster from the Frontispiece of his Biography.[244]

Introduction.

The biography of Richard Foster was written by his son William. He wrote:

It seemed right, to us, his children, that the life and work of Richard Foster should be

written for the encouragement and benefit of his descendants.[245]

William had the benefit of access to the notes and diaries that his father had compiled over

the years and the biography contains copious verbatim quotes.

4.8.1 Foster's Background and Early Life.

Foster's family came from Stainforth, near Settle in North Yorkshire, where they had

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[244] Foster, W.F. *Richard Foster.* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood Ltd., 1914) (private circulation).
[245] Ibid. Preface – no page number.

lived for many generations. His grandfather was a blacksmith and ran a smallholding, but although the family had once been prosperous, by the time of his great-grandfather Thomas, 'the family had fallen on bad times'.[246] So Thomas, the eldest son, was sent to London, where his uncle, a clergyman lived. His brother John later joined him as did the other brother William (Foster's grandfather). William gained employment in the Bank of England. The brothers prospered in business, as Commission Merchants (Importers) trading with Portugal and Brazil.[247] This was the family background into which Foster was born on 4th September 1822 in Finsbury. His father was forty seven years old and his mother thirty seven. He was an only child and his parents had thought that they would never have children. He was baptised on 11th October 1822. His schooling was of a private nature and at one stage he boarded with a clergyman.

When he was thirteen and a half, Foster's father decided that he should make a decision about his future and gave him two options: he could study for Holy Orders or go into his uncles' business. As he had a strong disliking for Latin and Greek, he stated that he would prefer to work in the office. Although called a clerk, he was more of an office boy as his uncles believed that he should start at the bottom, doing mundane tasks such as cleaning. Foster's father died in 1837. Foster remained as a clerk until 1852 when he became a partner in the business with his cousin. He continued to live with his mother even after his marriage in 1858, until he bought a house on Clapton Common in 1862.

4.8.2. Foster's Reaction to the State of the Church.

Richard Foster was very devout and would attend Morning Prayer at West Hackney parish church each day and then walk to his office in Moorgate. This devotion to worship was

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[246] Foster, *Richard Foster* p. 7.
[247] Like many families in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, sons were given the same names as their fathers so confusion is very possible.

one of the drivers of his life. William notes that the times in which his father lived was one of great change in society with a growing emphasis on the need for reform. The church was no exception to this. William Foster wrote about the state of the church:

> The bulk of the clergy had become apathetic and dull, performing with an easy-going acquiescence the perfunctory discharge of formal duties. The church as it had been in the eighteenth century was scarcely adapted to the needs of more stirring times.[248]

Into this context came the Oxford Movement which 'deeply affected my father, and from it his work received its inspiration'.[249] Besides the emphasis on regular worship and the sacraments, William Foster emphasised Dean Church's view that the Oxford Movement led also both to an increased study of the Gospels as well as more self-discipline. As a result, it became very clear to many that the structures of the church no longer met the missional and pastoral needs of the nation.

Richard Foster had been taking an interest in church extension since before 1848. He regularly attended West Hackney Parish Church and was concerned that there were not enough 'free seats for the poor'. [250] (This was before the abolition of box pews and pew rents). He is recorded as being disappointed that he 'did not succeed in stirring up the West Hackney people to take up the subject of Church extension.'[251] He earlier had been so concerned about the lack of mission activity that he donated the £2 that his mother had given him (from her very limited resources) on his twenty first birthday, anonymously, to the National Society. This set him on the course which he was to follow for the rest of his life.

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[248] Foster *Richard Foster* p. 40. For an alternative view see earlier in this chapter, especially the references to Mather.
[249] Ibid. p. 42.
[250] Ibid. p. 44.
[251] He wanted to build two side aisles to increase the capacity of the church.

4.8.3. Foster's Philanthropy.

Much of the financial support in the middle of the nineteenth century that the Church of England received both for its ongoing worship and the maintenance of its building came through philanthropy.[252] The first new church in which Foster was involved was that of St. Matthias, Stoke Newington. Together with Dr. Richard Brett and others, he held a public meeting on 16th October 1848 to consider whether a new church was needed to minister to this area. The decision was in the affirmative. The Church School was built and used for worship just over a year later. The erection of the church followed and it was consecrated on 13th June 1853. Foster wrote in considerable detail about this project as he also did about his last project, the building of St. Barnabas, Walthamstow in 1902. His view on philanthropy can be seen as follows:

> From the year 1858 my Book, which I call my Charitable Gifts Book, gives an
>
> account of the chief amounts of what I have given away under the name of Charity.[253]

This book records that between 1858 and his death in 1910, he gave away about £380,000 – a sum documented in his biography - sometimes in small but often repeated amounts. It contains nearly ten thousand entries. He was also open to appeals for support but objected on principle to bazaars and raffles as ways of funding church building. To such requests he would send a pamphlet that he had written giving his reasons.[254] His secretary, Mr. Townsend, kept the record and oversaw the distribution of the donations which covered a wide range of recipients. The main ones were either individual building funds or centrally

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[252] For a comprehensive and well-researched account of this, see Flew, Sarah. *Philanthropy and the Funding of the Church of England, 1856-1914*. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015).

[253] Ibid. p.53.

[254] Unfortunately, in spite of the assistance of extensive research by a number of supportive librarians and archivists, I have been unable to trace an extant copy of this leaflet. At that time, Anglo-Catholics were promoting the Offertory and Tithing as the way of funding the Church, whereas Evangelicals were holding fund-raising functions such as bazaars and whist drives.

organised schemes such as the Bishop of St. Albans' Fund which was to support churches in the eastern part of London, which at that time were in that diocese. In 1872, he set aside £100,000 for charitable giving but gave away far more. He seemed on occasions almost to be embarrassed by his business success. He ensured that funds were paid through the right channels because as a businessman he saw that 'finance is a matter over which the average clergyman is not infrequently a sad bungler'. A complete record of his donations no longer exists but numerous reports in the *Evening Standard* over the period of his lifetime refer to donations to and involvement with both the repair of churches as well as the building of new ones. I cite six examples:

1. 19th May 1873, Foster is referred to as 'a munificent contributor' to St. Faith's, Stoke Newington. The *Church Times* of 28th March 1872 when reporting the laying of the foundation stone on 25th March 1872 describes his 'known liberality in Church building'.

2. 30th December 1874, Foster laid the foundation stone of St. Peter's Vicarage, Hoxton Square as he had been a generous benefactor to the District.

3. 29th October 1875, the Bishop of Rochester used Foster as an example of 'wealthy generosity'.

4. 30th January 1879, Foster chaired a meeting to look at the spiritual needs of Hackney Wick. He offered £100 towards the £1000 needed to purchase a site for a church and additionally offered to add £5 to every £100 collected.

5. 20th October 1881, Foster offered to pay for the repairs to the outside of the decaying church of St. Mary, Haggerston, provided that the parishioners would cover the cost of the interior refurbishments.

6. 26th November 1906, in an article about a visit by the Bishop of London to St. Michael's, Shoreditch, Foster is described as 'a rich London merchant who

contributes to a group of churches in the area.'

4.8.4 Foster's Views on Worship.

The way in which the normal worship of the church was seen to be boring seriously concerned him. His view was confirmed and his outlook enlightened when he attended a service conducted by Walter Hook in Leeds Parish Church.[255]

> [This] taught him also that there could be no fixed rule as to what type of service was right, and that in different times and in different congregations a different degree of ritual might be desirable.[256]

He wrote at length about how Morning and Evening Prayer, which, with their repetition of seemingly incomprehensible scriptural sentences and the recitation of 'Dearly beloved brethren', were alien to the masses and almost in an unknown language.[257] He wanted something to stir the imagination - energetic sermons that would be relevant to the thoughts and feelings of the poor. Churches should contain what is stirring and beautiful as a witness to the honour due to God. He concluded a letter on this subject by writing:

> The highest form of worship on earth should be a reflection of that which is rendered in heaven, and the great end of all the subordinate ministries of the church should be to prepare souls to this end in their measure and degree.[258]

It was to those churches that were providing worship in line with this view or as new churches would follow this example, that he gave his support.

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[255] This was the same Walter Hook to whom Richard Temple West had been curate some ten years earlier.
[256] Ibid. p. 61.
[257] The introductions to Morning and Evening Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer.
[258] Ibid. p. 64.

4.8.5 Merchant of London, Supporter of Church Building and of the Clergy.

Foster firmly believed that as his money had been made in and through the City of London, it should be used to support London (in its broadest definition). He was particularly concerned about the growing area of Walthamstow. It had been a small Essex village with a population of 3006 in 1801 and just over a century later had become an urban part of London with a population in excess of 120,000.[259] In 1840, there was one Anglican church, the historic parish church of St. Mary, by 1911 there were eighteen. Of these Foster, with his cousin John Knowles, paid entirely for the construction of St. Saviour's Church in 1874. He also contributed to the funding of the building of other churches in Walthamstow. His uncle James had lived there and, in his legacy, had asked Richard Foster to remember Walthamstow. This he did and his passion for church building is seen in a pamphlet that he wrote in 1881 entitled *Some Wants of the Church at Home Abroad with Suggestions How to Supply Them.*[260]

> A great and terrible fact meets our eyes at every turn, and it is this, that, in all our dense
> centres of population, by far the greatest portion of our people are as yet unreached by
> the working machinery of the Church, and for want of it, are, in too many cases, living
> a life of utter ungodliness.[261]

This is echoed by George Haw in Mudie-Smith's *The Religious Life of London* writing at the beginning of the twentieth century. He laments the fact that what were previously rural

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[259] Saxby, Steven. *Anglican Church Building in Victorian Walthamstow.* (London: Walthamstow Historical Society, 2014). p.3.
[260] Ibid.p.10 quoted from p.2 of Foster, Richard. *Some Wants of the Church At Home and Abroad; With Suggestions How to Supply Them.* (London: Rivingtons, 1881). Facsimile edition, printed to order by Lightning Source UK, Milton Keynes. This pamphlet was reviewed in the Church Times of 4th February 1881,
[261] Ibid. p. 9

hamlets, and he included both Walthamstow and Tottenham in this category, have become replicas of the East End. He records a former council chairman as saying :

> Tottenham … … has practically become another Bethnal Green. Formerly it was a middle-class residential place, but almost all the good houses have been removed to make way for working-class dwellings. The place fell a prey to the jerry-builder when cheap railway fares were introduced, and the evils then committed have never been remedied.[262]

For Haw all the negative aspects of East End life were now replicated in places like Walthamstow and Tottenham. Foster was involved in the building of St. Michael's, Walthamstow but his *piece de resistance* was the Church of St Barnabas. He had already purchased a site and had erected a 'tin tabernacle' in 1899 but intended later to provide a permanent building. [263] He laid the foundation stone for this building in 1902 and on it were inscribed these words, carved by Eric Gill:

> This church of St. Barnabas Walthamstow is to be built at the cost of Richard Foster a merchant of London as a thanksgiving to Almighty God for numberless mercies during a long life. This stone was laid by the aforesaid Richard Foster on 4th September 1902, being the day on which he completed his 80th year.[264]

The building was completed and consecrated on 7th November 1903.

In 1862, Foster had moved from his family house in Stoke Newington to a house on Clapton Common; his mother also moved. By 1879 he was finding London too polluted and crowded; so, he bought a house in Chislehurst, called Homewood, where he lived until his death. The house in Clapton was loaned to the London Diocese to house the newly appointed Area Bishop of Bedford, William Walsham How, who had responsibility for churches in

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[262] Mudie-Smith, Richard (ed.). *The Religious Life of London.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904). p. 341
[263] This is still in use by a secular organisation. Saxby p. 20.
[264]Personal observation.

Northeast London. Foster had also offered £12,000 towards the stipend costs of Bishop How. This offer was never taken up as the vacant living of St Andrew Undershaft was given to the bishop, the endowment of which was more than sufficient to support his ministry.

The move to Chislehurst did not lessen his support for the North London churches and he was involved in a plan to establish five district parishes in Tottenham. In addition, as he travelled by train each morning into the City, he also saw the crowded districts in South London with few churches. He therefore became a firm supporter in 1883 of the plan by the Bishop of Rochester to build ten new churches and he offered funding for two clergy for two years in two Mission Districts in the hope that these districts would eventually become new parishes. He also was keen on the idea of 'associated parishes', that is the linking of a rich parish to support a poor parish both in workers and finance. Thus, he supported the linking of the parish of Chislehurst, where he was by now worshipping, with the deprived parish of St. Katherine's, Rotherhithe and hoped other wealthy parishes would follow that example.[265]

But Foster was not only concerned with church building and expansion. He was a founding member of the Candidates Ordination Fund, which aimed to support young men who had little financial backing of their own, to train for ordination. He saw this as important as widening access to the ordained ministry. He also actively promoted and supported, as one of the founder members, The Sustentation Fund for Parochial Clergy (later renamed The Queen Victoria Clergy Fund) which sought to raise all stipends to £300 a year. He said that:

> … the time had now come when we must think of the incomes of the Clergy. It is no use building Churches and having no Clergy to minister in them. … … The living voice would make itself heard, but the building without the voice would not.[266]

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[265] Church Times 7th March 1884. p. 175
[266] Ibid. pp 129-130.

The condition of the clergy continued to cause him significant anxiety until his death. His oft-repeated phrase was, 'Living voice rather than buildings of brick and stone.'[267]

Foster was also involved in more secular charitable work, such as the London School Board. He was Treasurer of the London Hospital and established a Convalescent Home in Brighton. He was involved in a number of Housing Improvement Schemes and introduced co-partnership into the South Metropolitan Gas Company in which he was a large shareholder. An acquaintance, Rev. W.T. Brown, wrote of Foster; 'His life was in every way ideal. I have never known anyone who loved to do good as he did'.[268]

As he grew older, he reduced his visits to the City office to once a week, although a desk was always made available for him. He spent more time at home but also often visited his married children and he celebrated his Golden Wedding in 1908 at Romsey Abbey where he had been married, in the company of all his children and their families.

By the summer of 1910, Foster realised that his health was failing and he began to make arrangements for his death. He sorted out the cheques he expected to send at Christmas to parishes and other beneficiaries and said farewell to his children. His favourite daily prayer at that time was the *Te Deum.* He died surrounded by his family on 23rd December 1910. His body was taken into Chislehurst Church on 27th December and he was buried in Chislehurst Churchyard. The *Te Deum,* his favourite devotion, was sung instead of a closing hymn at his funeral. The Bishop of St. Albans later paid tribute to him as 'one of the heirlooms of the church.'[269]. He saw the needs of the church and used his wealth to meet some of them. But he was a visionary; he saw beyond bricks and stone to the needs of those to whom the church seemed irrelevant. He wanted to plant a Christian presence where there was none; so, the presence of a priest was in the immediate term more important than the existence of a church

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[267] Ibid. p. 130.
[268] Ibid. p. 138.
[269] Ibid. p. 155.

building. He was pleased to use his influence as well as his wealth as a way of ensuring that this would happen. Although describing himself as a 'Prayer-Book Churchman' he could clearly see that there was need of other ways in which the Church should engage with the growing population with a more accessible form of worship. Above all, he saw that faith needed to be put into practice rather than being imprisoned in buildings, important as these might be.

4.9 An Assessment of West and Foster as Victorian Examples of Church Planting.

When one considers the lives of these two men, who in differing ways worked towards the outreach of the mission of the Church of England into areas where it seemed to be absent, one is struck by the similarities of character and approach. West was a priest and Foster was proud to be a lay merchant.

When West's ministry in Paddington is considered, there is an overwhelming sense of intentionality and of being driven. West's earlier altercations with episcopal authority had given him the ability, where necessary, to tread lightly on the 'rules' if he saw them as an impediment to his ministry. His establishment of St. Mary Magdalene was driven by his vision for that place. Nothing, not even a devasting fire, would stop him from setting up this church with a large functioning building. He was so successful that he was eventually embraced by 'The Establishment' as his obituary in *The Times* bore witness.[270] This parish had become his life's work and his relational, pastoral and missional engagement with a very different social class is evidence of this. He was a man with a clear vision of what he wanted to achieve. This was for him essential in his planning for a new church. He was not willing to accept any obstacles so that when the fire took place, he immediately continued his work as if

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[270] "Obituary". *The Times.* 11 February 1893. p. 10.

nothing had happened. He wanted this church to succeed and he did everything to ensure its success, even to the extent of sacrificing his health through overwork.

In the same way, Foster was driven. After the first setback at West Hackney, where his plan for expanding the church building was rejected, he ensured that his money would be used for extending the witness of the Church. The way in which he organised his philanthropy made certain that it was not wasted. His giving was focussed on specific projects in which he had the confidence that his financial contribution would be well used and the projects would be successful. He became engaged in the different organisations that were supporting the physical growth of the church in London but also was not afraid to challenge them. His moral and financial support for a new bishopric to support the work of the church in East London is testimony to this.[271] His commitment from his early years to the expansion of the witness of the church is key to how he made sure that his giving would be appropriately used for the mission of the church in that historical period.

West and Foster, in very different ways, had a clearly focussed vision for the growth of the church in Victorian England. Whilst doctrinal and ecclesiological arguments were raging and threatened to tear the Church of England apart, their commitment to the preaching of the Gospel and the church's witness to it, made all of these arguments irrelevant. They both provide striking examples of how the work and the witness of the church can continue on a local level in spite of more widespread controversy and dissension. Both West and Foster saw a church building with its priest, located in a community as the focus for Christian ministry and mission, although as has been noted earlier, Foster placed a priority on the priest. It is also true that in Foster's case, new parishes were also created around the churches whose building he had supported. The vision of both men was to ensure that the church was

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[271] The Suffragan See of Bedford was revived in 1879 in the Diocese of London after being supressed since 1560. As noted above, Foster offered his house in Clapton for the bishop.

openly present among the people to witness through Word and Sacrament to the saving love

of God in Jesus Christ and to serve them as he would desire.[272] This also is the vision behind

modern Anglo-Catholic church planting.

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[272] Mark 10:45.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE THREE RESEARCH CHURCHES.

5.1. Introduction.

I have described in an earlier chapter, the methodology and methods of my research, how I selected the three churches which form the basis of my study and the ways and lengths of time in which I engaged with them. The origins of the three churches are very different and this was one of the reasons for their selection. They are all situated in parishes with an above average level of deprivation, in fact all of them are also located within the bottom twenty-fifth percentile of parishes in England. This was not part of the research design but provides a useful counter to the 'urban myth' that church plants work best in middle-class areas and attract young middle-class worshippers.[273] Therefore in this chapter , I will describe these three churches on the basis of my monthly attendances over a period of eighteen months. I believe that this regular and consistent in-depth involvement in the Sunday life of these churches will enable important lessons to be identified which will have implications for those clergy and others who might be considering similar developments. As far as possible, the descriptions of each church will follow the same structure to allow some sort of comparability. Statistical information is given for each parish as a whole.[274]

Each section will begin with recounting an incident which seems to me to say something important about the church and its setting. I will then provide statistical data around population, deprivation index, ethnicity and religious affiliation for the area in which

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[273] The two books by Tim Thorlby, cited in the Bibliography, also demolish this myth.

[274] I need to add a caveat to this statement. In the case of St. Paul's, Melchester, the church is a plant in a very large existing parish, Christ Church, so statistical information exists for the parish as a whole, rather than for the immediate area served by the plant. It is difficult to assess if the area served by the plant is very different demographically than the parish as a whole. A similar problem but with less significance arises in respect of Holy Cross, Greystone in that it is situated in the parish of St. Clement's; however this is a much smaller parish in area and is very much more uniform in its types of housing so there should not be significant differences.

the plant is located.[275] I will complement that with a physical description of the church, its surroundings and the parish as a whole. The next section will give the background to the establishing of the plant. I will then proceed to describe a typical service both in terms of liturgical style and also the make-up of the congregation and other factors that I believe to be significant. I will conclude with any issues that may not have been covered in the above framework. The purpose of these descriptions will be to show the variety of worship and other aspects of church and community life in church plants founded across the spectrum of current Anglo-Catholicism. These descriptions and my later analysis are designed to provide evidence that Anglo-Catholic church planting is an acceptable way in which churches can meet the needs of their communities and wider groups of worshippers and so engage (and be seen to be engaging) in mission. They can also provide 'lived examples' for others to emulate.

The purpose of this type of description is to link the real life experiences of participant observation research with a later theological analysis. John Van Maanen uses the phrase 'impressionistic tales' to describe such a process.[276] This helps to remove some of the element of subjectivity from the account and also helps locate the description in place and time and show that 'lived reality'. This also shows that clergy and others in ministerial roles engage with the real lives of their congregations rather than using an abstract theological theory.

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[275] The statistics in this chapter are taken from the 2018 Diocesan figures based on the most recent published data from the Office of National Statistics. The deprivation index runs from 1 – the most deprived to 12,500 – the least deprived

[276] John Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (Chicago IL.: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p.4.

5.2. St. Pancras, Rushey Common.

The morning of Sunday 23rd September 2018 dawned grey and very wet with a large amount of surface water on the roads. Trains and tubes were inevitably delayed and when I reached the bus stop outside Rushey Common tube station, I saw that the bus, which stopped right outside the church, was late as well. My regular practice had been to get to church early so that I could see the congregation gathering. This was not going to happen today. The bus did come and I arrived at church at 958am. I went in and saw just two people, the churchwarden Susan and the vicar, Fr. Francis. Others slowly came in ones and twos. However by ten past ten, after we had struggled through the opening hymn, 'Lord God, your love has called us here....' there were twenty five adults, ten children and a dog. (This animal was brought most weeks by his owner and generally sat quietly on the pew beside her, except when it joined in to share The Peace). This unpunctuality of those who attended, although not usually as extreme as on this particular Sunday, was typical, as it was of the two other churches in this study.[277] I have considered what this means both specifically in regard to St. Pancras but also more widely for these three churches. I was brought up to be in church well before the start of the service. I conclude that it is one indication of the more informal nature of twenty-first century society, just as many people now attend church services dressed in a much more casual way from previous generations who would always wear their 'Sunday best'.

5.2.1. Background to the Plant and its Development.

St. Pancras was built in 1915 and was part of a large benefice. There was the parish church, St. Martha's and another church, St. Augustine's. There is also another parish with a

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[277] I make this observation as a matter of interest that I have noticed and wonder whether it might be a feature of less well-established congregations.

church in the centre of Rushey Common, St. John's. This arrangement lasted for many years but by the second decade of the 21st century, it became obvious to the diocesan authorities that it was no longer fit for purpose and the churches were seen to be 'failing'. A report from the Area Bishop in 2014 about future plans, put it thus:

> However, times and demographics move on, and we have to organise the church for our contemporary missional challenges and not stick with structures that have served us well in the past but may not be fit for purpose in the present.[278]

In 2014, with the retirements of the vicar of St. Martha's and the move to another post of the vicar of St. John's, there occurred the opportunity for 'pastoral reorganisation'.[279] The Bishop felt that this was an opportunity not to be missed. St. Martha's was to be joined to St. John's and with it part of the parish of Rushey Common. St. Augustine's had ceased having regular services and after being used for a short time by another Anglican congregation, had been made redundant. The Diocesan Board of Finance had tried to sell it for housing but was unsuccessful. It was therefore decided to detach it from the parish of Rushey Common and reopen it, linked to a nearby thriving Evangelical church, St. Matthias. This left St. Pancras. The plan was to ask a nearby well-attended and active Anglo-Catholic church (St. Paul's) to take responsibility for it as a 'graft'[280], but obviously the agreement of that church was needed as it would have resource implications, both human and financial. The alternative was that St. Pancras would be closed. The purpose of the graft was set forth as follows:

1. To renew St. Pancras in worship and mission
2. To enable a refreshment of the congregation with some new blood from St. Paul's
3. To help St. Pancras focus on outward-facing mission

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[278] From an internal diocesan document supplied to me by the Area Bishop.

[279] Pastoral reorganisation in the Church of England can involve rearranging parish boundaries, merging separate parishes into a combined benefice and even closing churches.

[280] This is the preferred term in the Diocese of London for linking a 'failing' church with a thriving church to attempt to bring it back to life.

4. To improve footfall in a building that is "hidden" to many parishioners.[281]

This was agreed, with the Vicar of St. Paul's writing:

> Further to our meeting, and your letter of the 20[th]June 2014, our PCC (Parochial Church Council) has met to discuss the proposal. I am delighted to say it received an extremely positive response and we are very interested in exploring the proposal even more. The PCC wish me to say what an interesting and exciting prospect this is for us a church which we believe will have wider congregational support too.[282]

Obviously this could not be achieved overnight. The Vicar and a newly arrived associate priest, Fr. Francis, spent time sharing their vision for St. Pancras. They described the vision in these terms:

> We wish to re-evangelise Rushey Common by building a strong sense of community and a solid worshiping and engaging congregation within the Anglo Catholic tradition, and serving the Local Community through social transformation.[283]

They wanted St. Pancras to be:

> A place for those seeking meaning and purpose in their lives and where walking through the door would mean getting into a world of caring, and a deepening of their spiritual lives where nobody feels excluded and all can be open to experience the love of God in Jesus Christ.[284]

They envisioned the church building to be a 'place where locals can meet, a place for art, music, dance, social and cultural events, a place for meeting neighbours and other members of the community'.[285] This is now happening with the church being used for Mindfulness

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[281] From an internal diocesan document sent to the PCC of St. Pauls and supplied to me by the Area Bishop.
[282] From the document referred to above.
[283] From PowerPoint presentation provided by the vicar of St Pancras.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.

classes as well as musical and theatrical events in addition to the regular worship; the acoustics of the building are particularly suited to such things. The most important thing was to 'keep the doors open' to show that the church was 'in business'. Very early on in the life of the graft, a barn dance was arranged to take place in the church hall. At the last minute, it was decided to use the main church, as it provided a larger space. This made a powerful statement about how the church wanted to be seen.

A very robust strategy was devised to ensure the implementation of these proposals. Together, with the associate priest, a number of parishioners committed themselves to moving from St. Paul's to St. Pancras towards the end of 2015 to reinforce the small congregation. Some of these people still worship at St. Pancras, whilst others have either moved away from the area or returned to St Paul's. In legal terms, the vicar of St. Paul's is the vicar of St. Pancras but *de facto* the associate priest acts as vicar and he has built up a solid core group of worshippers some of whom have taken on the lay leadership of the congregation as churchwardens and PCC members.

Attendance as in many churches these days is an issue. As others have argued, the time when most members of a congregation attended church every Sunday has passed.[286] My experience at St. Pancras was that there was a very regular weekly core of about 15 people and then others who came less frequently, to make the usual congregation of between 35 and 40. Additionally, there would be children ranging from 1 to 10 in number and aged up to about 11 years old. That being said, the priest has a contact list of over 500 people to whom he sends regular information about what is happening at St. Pancras.

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[286] Trying to date the beginning of this phenomenon is very difficult and varies from denomination to denomination and even between churches of the same denomination. Callum Brown in *The Death of Christian Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge. 2009 2nd. edn.) p.1 refers to 1963 as the start of a 'downward spiral' in church attendance, but attendance had been slowly seeping away for many years prior to this.

5.2.2. Statistical Material.

The tables that follow provide some basic data about the parish.

St. Pancras – Population and Age Profile

Deprivation	Population	Area (Sq. Miles)	Density	% 0-4	% 5-17	% 18-29	% 30-44	% 45-64	% 65+
2412	16478	0.5	31334	8.5	13.5	17.6	29.8	21.4	9

St. Pancras – Ethnicity

% White	% Asian	% Black	% Mixed	% Other
66.8	11.1	13.1	4.7	4.3

St. Pancras – Religion Profile

% Christian	% Buddhist	% Hindu	% Jewish	%Muslim	% Sikh	% Other	% None	% Not Stated
48.8	1.1	2.00	0.6	13.9	0.9	0.5	24.5	7.6

There are a number of things worth noting from these figures. Seventy per cent of the parish population is under the age of 45, although children only make up twenty two per cent of this number. This reflects the fact that the parish does have a significant number of young professionals who are relatively mobile in housing terms.

White people make up two-thirds of the population, but a large number of them, from my discussions both with Fr. Francis, whose family fits this category, are 'non-British white' from many different countries of the European Union and beyond. The vicar tells me that there are significant numbers of people from Spain and Italy and as someone fluent in both

languages, he sees it as part of his mission to engage with them. He holds regular Italian Masses as well as less frequent ones in Spanish. There are also Italian based community activities and also language classes for adults and children. Citizens from Eastern European communities are well represented and, as an example, one Sunday I was introduced to a Russian PhD student and his Macedonian partner. People from these differing ethnicities are a regular feature of the congregation; although most of them are not Anglicans, they feel comfortable within the 'churchmanship' of this church. [287] For those of a Roman Catholic or Orthodox background, there is some kind of liturgical and structural familiarity which would not be the case in many other church plants which have adopted a more charismatic style of worship and churchmanship and so generally have a more informal approach to worship.[288]

As regards religion, Christians make up less than half of the population of the parish, which is a similar proportion to that of London as a whole according to the 2011 census figures. There is the usual range of Christian churches; for example on the bus journey from the tube station to St Pancras, one passes a Roman Catholic church, a Baptist church, another Anglican church, a Methodist church, a Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah's Witnesses and a signpost to a Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church as well as a synagogue down a side street. The Muslim community generally is to be found in a different part of the parish, away from the church building. Its presence is most obviously noticeable in the High Street, as there are some Asian shops, selling vegetables, groceries, meat and clothing. There are also a few Eastern European food shops. The second highest number is of those who state that they have 'No Religion'. This is almost a 5% higher figure than for London as a whole but in line with the figure for the whole population.

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[287] Churchmanship is a shorthand word, used for convenience, which describes ethos, ecclesiology, style of worship and doctrinal approach.

[288] Although not integral to this research, it is interesting to note that in all three of the research churches, there were worshippers from a Roman Catholic background. Is this significant or yet another example of twenty-first century denominational fluidity?

5.2.3 The Church and The Parish.

The church was built in 1915 for worship in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. It is perhaps one of the last churches to have been built as part of the earlier Victorian expansion of church building and so predates the inter-war church building activities in the expanding suburbs. Outside it is red brick in construction carrying on the Victorian style of many London churches and as such very typical. The interior on the other hand is quite Italianate in design with two chapels in the south aisle and a Lady Chapel to the north side of the altar which is in an apse at the east end. There is a gallery at the west end where the organ is situated and where there is also seating for a choir. There are a number of statues of saints and of Jesus around the church, in front of which are stands for votive candles. The building is light inside and does not possess stained glass windows. It is showing signs of past neglect with paint flaking from the very high white painted, boarded ceiling. There is also a large number of cracks evident. The entrance to the church is via a narthex which has windows on the inside. At the east end of the south aisle is a vestry which has an entrance into the side of the sanctuary. There is the need for a significant amount of renovation, including the refurbishment or replacement of the entire roof and the heating system.

Attached to the south side of the church is a much more modern hall which is used for community activities, particularly a ballet school. As such it is equipped with a barre and mirrors all along the one side. This facility provides much needed income for the church; in 2018 this was well over 50%, as evidenced in the Annual Accounts submitted to the Charity Commission. The Sunday School meets in this hall during the Parish Eucharist.

St. Pancras is situated in a quiet residential area along quite a narrow road which is served by a 20 minute interval bus service which stops outside. Opposite the church is a park with football pitches and tennis courts with a hard surface path on its circumference.

The houses around the church are mainly terraced, probably dating from the post-world war one era, but they are of a good size and a number of them have been subdivided as houses of multiple occupation. The parish does not have either significant retail nor business premises and is therefore virtually all residential. From my observation, the housing dates from the 1920s but on the north western edge of the parish, nearer to the tube station, there is a new development of luxury apartments on a former industrial site. The location of the church on the extreme northern edge of its parish and the fact that it can only be seen when one is close to it, is perhaps a hindrance to its witness as it cannot rely on its visibility unlike churches with spires or high towers. Even when one comes towards it on the bus, it only can easily be seen when one is virtually opposite it. It is particularly helpful that the bus stop is called 'St Pancras Church'.

5.2.4. Worship at St. Pancras.

St. Pancras sits in the modern Anglo-Catholic tradition. It uses the Church of England Common Worship Order One for the Eucharist, with the occasional traditional interpolations from the Roman Rite. As an example of this at the end of the service, the priest says 'The Mass is ended: go in peace', rather than the Common Worship Dismissal 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'. It is comfortable with the ordination of women to all areas of ministry and a woman associate priest from St. Paul's on occasions preaches and celebrates the Eucharist. It is fully involved in the Deanery and Diocesan structures unlike some traditionalist Anglo-Catholic parishes which tend to distance themselves from these.

A typical service runs as follows: A bell is rung and the opening hymn is played by the organist. A server with a thurible leads the priest (celebrant) to the altar. He may be accompanied by another priest who is the preacher for the day. [289] If so, this priest will

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[289] I use the male pronoun here as it is what happens; except as stated above, the celebrant is male.

support the celebrant as deacon.[290] The celebrant censes the altar and then is censed himself by the server. After the opening prayers, the children come to the front and one of them receives a bible from the celebrant who offers a prayer. They then leave for their own activities in the adjoining hall with a number of adults. An Old Testament reading is followed by a Psalm with congregational responses and then a reading from the New Testament. These are always read by lay people. There is further hymn and the celebrant (or preacher) brings the Gospel Book from the High Altar into the congregation and reads the appointed Gospel. All the readings, preaching and intercessions take place at a legillium at the front of the church. Notices and any Banns of Marriage are given before the sermon. The sermon lasts on average around 10 minutes, but that is very much dependent on the preacher. After the recitation of the Nicene Creed, the intercessions are led by a lay person. One of the features of St. Pancras is the way in which the whole congregation moves round to share The Peace which now follows. Everyone aims to shake hands with every other person. This can take some minutes. During the next hymn, the altar is set with the communion vessels and bread and wine are added and then are censed by the priest and the congregation censed by the server. A collection is taken and presented for a blessing. The children now return from their activities. The Eucharistic Prayer takes place and then all receive communion or a blessing. Music is played or a devotional hymn is sung during communion. Many of the congregation go afterwards to one of the votive candle stands and light a candle. (This is a practice that was new to me but is apparently common in many Anglo-Catholic Churches). After the altar has been cleared and the post-communion prayer said, the children come forward and describe what they have been learning and show any pictures or craft that they have done to reinforce the theme. The service ends with a blessing and the clergy process out during a closing hymn. Afterwards tea and coffee are served at the rear of the church and about half

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[290] Traditionally, the deacon's role is to read the Gospel and prepare the altar for communion.

the congregation usually stays. In research terms this provided an opportunity for gathering information informally as well as sharing with other people my impressions of the worship. It also gave an opportunity for people to ask me about the progress of my research. This was personally a real encouragement.

In summary, St. Pancras as a church graft / plant is beginning to show that the original vision is being brought to fruit. Community and cultural pursuits are becoming a regular part of the church's programme as are more spiritual activities designed to deepen the faith of the participants such as the Christian mindfulness courses. The brave decision of the Diocese and the willing involvement of St. Paul's has enabled a vibrant Christian witness to be maintained in this part of Rushey Common. From my observation and wider church experience, I see St. Pancras as a church which is beginning to fulfil the vision behind the church graft. Fr. Francis has renewed the mission of the church by his outreach into and contacts with the community. The original aim of refreshing the congregation with 'new blood from St. Paul's' has been met as some of those who originally were involved have now returned to St. Paul's, feeling that they have fulfilled their commitment. The outward looking focus has been increased, very visibly by the use of large banners on the exterior of the long north wall of the church which faces the road and overlooks a well-used bus stop. Footfall has increased with a wide range of worshippers from the local area. Fr. Francis commented that the population of the parish is quite transient so new people are moving in on a regular basis and a number of these had said that they came to the church as it was local.

5.3. Holy Cross, Greystone.

Sunday 25th March 2018 was Palm Sunday. The tradition at Holy Cross was that this was marked with a procession from the local park, along a couple of streets to the church for

the start of Mass. Just after quarter to five, I joined the vicar and curate, carrying a number of palm branches, as well as small palm crosses which were to be blessed and handed out to the congregation. As we neared the park, a 'people carrier' screeched to a halt alongside and two large tattooed men got out. One of them asked Fr. Stephen, the vicar : 'Can we have one of them, Guv?' Fr. Stephen responded that they had not yet been blessed. The men replied that they would wait for that to be done. After the Blessing of the Palms, the men were given one each and they then sped off. The procession of about twenty people started to walk to the church, singing, not as I expected one of the traditional Palm Sunday hymns, such as 'All Glory, Laud and Honour' but the children's song, 'We have a King who rides a donkey' followed by 'Give me oil in my lamp'.

5.3.1. The Church, the Parish and the Background to the Plant.

The parish of St. Clement's was founded in 1884 and was originally part of a much larger historic – and originally rural – parish. The growth of this part of London in the latter half of the nineteenth century led to a significant amount of church building. St. Clement's was built in 1887 with funding from the 'East London Churches' Fund as well as a significant contribution from a leading public school.[291] A mission hall, which now houses Holy Cross, was built in 1891 as part of the outreach to the south of the parish. There is a clergy house attached. Whether this outreach was ever effective is a moot point. Mudie-Smith, in his report on the 1902 – 1903 census of churches, records the attendance at a service one evening taking place in this hall of 55, comprising 10 men, 30 women and 15 children, in terms of adults not

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[291] The involvement of public schools as well as the universities of Oxford and Cambridge was quite common at that time both in terms of church building as well as in encouraging mission through the establishment of settlements. Ex-public schoolboys and others from the moneyed classes would spend some time living in more deprived parishes. This is described very well in McIlhiney, David B. *A Gentleman in Every Slum.* (Alison Park PA: Pickwick Publications, 1988). As late as the mid-1960s, as an undergraduate, I spent a number of weeks working in what was then called 'The Cambridge University Mission in Bermondsey.' It has since been renamed.

significantly larger than the numbers I found in my research visits. As a comparison, St. Clement's recorded 885 attendances, the second highest number in the district.[292]

The parish has changed significantly over the years and particularly as a result of immigration from the late 1940s. The mission hall had ceased to be used by the church since before 1939 and it would seem that the church had forgotten about it as it was used by a number of secular organisations who neither paid rent nor made any effort to maintain it. St. Clement's also had fallen on difficult times and serious consideration was given to its closure in the 1980s. A change of clergy led to a reassessment of the work and an emphasis on growth, not 'managed decline'.

Early in the twenty-first century decisions were made which resulted in the parish reclaiming the mission hall together with the settlement of unpaid rent. These funds provided sufficient money for refurbishment. Half of the mission hall building is now rented to an artists' collective which provides funding for the running of the other half of the building for church use and it became Holy Cross Church. In 2010, regular worship began at 5pm both as an alternative Mass to the 10am at St. Clement's, but also to ensure Christian witness from that building in the southern part of the parish. The attached house is used for a curate when one is in post; otherwise it is let and provides further income.

The interior of the area used for worship is quite narrow. At one end there is a carpeted dais on which stands the altar. Behind the altar on a shelf, is the tabernacle for Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, with a candlestick on either side. To the north side of the altar is a cupboard, the top of which serves as a credence table. On the south side is a chair

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[292] Mudie-Smith, Richard (ed.). *The Religious Life of London.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904). p. 404

in which the celebrant sits when he is not behind the altar.[293] There is a lectern at the front of the church which is used for readings, intercessions and preaching. There is no musical instrument – all hymns and sung parts of the service are played through a sophisticated sound system linked to an iPod on which all the relevant music has been recorded.

There are chairs, not pews, and the shape of the building means that if all the chairs were filled, some people would not be able to see the altar. There is seating in normal circumstances for about 40 worshippers, which is at the upper range of the usual Sunday attendance. There is a small font by the door. There are statues both of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary either side of the altar. Behind the worship room is a corridor with a small kitchen and WCs, although after church coffee is served from a table in the church rather than from the kitchen .

5.3.2. Statistical Material.

Holy Cross is not a parish church; it is a separate centre of worship at the extreme southern end of the parish. The parish church, St. Clement's is on the extreme northern edge of the parish and the parish boundary runs along the middle of the road in front of the church. The statistical data describes the parish as a whole, not just that part of it served by Holy Cross.

Holy Cross – Population Profile

Deprivation	Population	Area (Sq. Miles)	Density	% 0-4	% 5-17	% 18-29	% 30-44	% 45-64	% 65+
547	10330	0.5	21027	8.4	18.2	25.3	22.9	17.7	7.5

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[293] 'He' is deliberately used as the parish of St. Clements being a traditionalist parish, has passed resolutions so as not to have female clergy. This also applies to Holy Cross as being part of the same parish. It is also under the pastoral oversight of the Bishop of Fulham who oversees all the traditionalist parishes in the London Diocese.

Holy Cross – Ethnicity

% White	% Asian	% Black	% Mixed	% Other
42.5	12.6	32.1	6.6	6.3

Holy Cross – Religion Profile

% Christian	% Buddhist	% Hindu	% Jewish	%Muslim	% Sikh	% Other	% None	% Not Stated
52.5	2.7	2.8	0.6	20.1	0.3	0.2	14.5	7.5

There are some important things to note from these statistics. In terms of age, the population of the parish is relatively balanced either side of thirty years old. Ethnically, white people make up well under 50% of the population with a very large number of BAME people, mainly of Caribbean origin. The congregation, both of St Clement's and Holy Cross reflects this, although the part of the parish in which Holy Cross is situated is much more white working class in its ethnic make-up. As regards religion Christians are just in the majority. Those who claim no religion are fewer than in the population of England as a whole. In my visits both to Holy Cross and on occasions to St. Clement's there were no obvious other places of worship which I passed. The website 'A Church Near You' only identifies in the surrounding area an Islamic Centre and a meeting place of 'The Family of Yahweh.' – an African church, founded and based in Nigeria.[294]   However, as can be seen from the statistics, the parish is geographically small and mainly made up of housing. Like many areas of London, people attend places of worship which are conducive to their preferred style of worship, often at a distance from where they live.

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[294] A Church Near You, accessed 24th July 2020, www.achurchnearyou.com.

5.3.3. Worship at Holy Cross.

This was an area which I found initially most confusing. Although Mass starts at 5pm, it is preceded by Evening Prayer at 4.30pm. However, it is not the form of Evening Prayer to which I am accustomed both as a worshipper and as an officiant since the Roman Breviary order is used, rather than Evening Prayer from either The Book of Common Prayer or Common Worship.. This caused me confusion as the Roman Calendar refers to Sundays as the *Nth* Sunday of the Year, rather than using seasonal names, such as the *Nth Sunday after Trinity* as the Anglican church usually does. For my early visits I found it hard to identify which Sunday of the year it was. The short service starts with a hymn from the original edition of the English Hymnal followed by psalms, recited responsorially and other short scripture readings. There is then a short time of intercession before the office finishes. There is then between ten and fifteen minutes before Mass. However during Lent, the Rosary is prayed and on Trinity Sunday there was the Office of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. I was not at all familiar with the Rosary, although Benediction is something I am used to.

The Mass follows the latest version of the Roman Rite in its entirety. The order is roughly similar to Common Worship, but there are variations. The significant difference is that the forms of common liturgical texts, the Gloria in Excelsis, the Nicene Creed and the Agnus Dei, have now departed from what used to be an ecumenical version of these texts generally used in the Church of England and previously in the Roman Catholic church.[295] Normally there were two priests in attendance, the Celebrant wearing traditional gothic style vestments, and a preacher wearing cassock, cotta and stole. Both priests would be wearing birettas on entrance. Besides Fr. Stephen, there would normally be Fr. Walter a retired priest who has rooms in the Vicarage (this arrangement predated the marriage of Fr. Stephen which

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[295] These texts were drawn up by the English Language Liturgical Consultation, an ecumenical group.

took place just before my research visits) or the curate, Fr. Thomas, about whom more later. Much of the physical arrangements for the service are in the hands of a lay Pastoral Assistant. The Diocese of London has a scheme where prospective ordinands can spend a year working in a parish whilst exploring their vocations. During my time of research, there were three different Pastoral Assistants. The first one I met was of Polish origin. He went home on holiday and failed to return, announcing this via a brief text message to Fr. Stephen. There had been no previous indication that this would happen and he was in the process of moving towards training for ordination. Fr. Stephen found this very upsetting. The second moved on to ordination training.

The service begins with the ringing of a bell and the singing of a hymn, during which the celebrant censes the altar. The hymn book used is Celebration Hymnal, a Roman Catholic compilation which includes a wide range of hymns, worship songs and choruses. After a brief welcome and introduction, there is a corporate act of penitence (the Confession) followed by absolution. The Gloria in Excelsis is sung followed by the Collect of the Day; this differs from that prescribed either in Common Worship or The Book of Common Prayer. Two scripture readings follow, with a psalm in between them. These are normally read by lay people. After these readings, there is a hymn followed by one of the priests reading the Gospel. There is always a sermon of about eight minutes which is available in printed form after the service for worshippers to take away.

The Nicean Creed is then recited followed by intercession. During the time that I was attending Holy Cross, it became usual practice for a lay person to lead these.[296] Fr. Stephen felt that it was an opportunity to engage lay people in leading parts of the worship. The offertory follows whilst the celebrant lays the altar and censes it. The Roman Rite Eucharistic

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[296] I was asked as the first lay person to lead intercessions to show to the congregation that these could be led by a lay person.

Prayer was something I had not experienced. Two things struck me as being very different from the form of worship I am accustomed to. Before the consecration of the bread and wine, there is section of short intercessions. Holy Cross followed the rite exactly by praying for 'Francis, our Pope', (not Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury) and 'Jonathan, our Bishop' (the Area bishop mentioned earlier who oversees traditionalist parishes in London). This was the pattern even before Rt. Rev'd Sarah Mullally was appointed as Bishop of London. The second feature I found unusual was the Sharing of the Peace immediately after the consecration of the bread and wine. To me this is normally a time for quiet reflection, prayer and meditation and I found it disconcerting that everyone was moving around and greeting each other. Silence followed as communion was administered. I noticed that, as in many Roman Catholic Churches, not everyone went to the altar for communion or for a blessing. The service then ends with a blessing and a recessional hymn. Coffee, tea and cake are served afterwards at the rear of the church and about half the congregation usually stays for this, although it tends to be the older people who remain for this activity.

As I stated earlier, I found the complete use of the Roman Rite unusual, but it had been the practice at St Clement's for many years in spite of strictures by various Bishops of London against its use, most recently by Bishop Richard Chartres in November 2011 when the new Roman rite was being introduced.[297] Perhaps to counter this, and to avoid confusion, Holy Cross on its pew sheets and noticeboard describes itself as 'The Anglican Church of The Holy Cross.'

I referred earlier to there being a curate in post. I believe that this description is important as it shows how precarious is the relationship of some traditionalist Anglo-Catholic clergy with their ministries in the Church of England as will be explained later. Fr. Thomas

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[297] Reported in The Church Times, www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2011/25-november/news/uk/chartres-using-roman-rite-is-serious-canonical-matter, Accessed 25th July 2020.

had been at Holy Cross since June 2017 when he was ordained deacon and we can see how he

related to his position within the present Church of England and hence the possible attitude of

Anglo-Catholics towards church planting, He was ordained priest, by the Bishop of Fulham

on 24th June 2018 in St. Clement's. I attended the service which was a Common Worship

ordination service although within a traditional framework, i.e. an eastward facing celebration

of the Eucharist. This service showed that the ethnic diversity of the area was mirrored very

much in the congregations of the two churches. (At Holy Cross, I estimate that about 75% of

the congregation were from an Afro-Caribbean background.) The ethnic diversity was very

evident also in the food provided in the buffet afterwards, with Jamaican Goat Curry the

centrepiece. Fr. Thomas continued his training as curate and regularly preached and

celebrated the Eucharist at Holy Cross. His wife had a baby son in late November 2018. It

therefore came as a great surprise to see him in the congregation (just wearing a cassock) on

24th February 2019. Before the service started, Fr. Stephen. announced that Fr. Thomas was

resigning his Anglican orders to join the Roman Catholic Church as a member of the

Ordinariate.[298] A letter, jointly signed by the Bishop of Fulham and Fr. Stephen, was handed

out at the end of the Mass as a formal statement about this and also to inform those who were

not at church that Sunday. When I interviewed Fr. Stephen. after I had finished my research

visits, he expressed profound sadness and disappointment with Fr. Thomas's decision, which

had come as a complete surprise, especially considering his family circumstances.[299] Fr.

Thomas's move does indicate the continuing unease of some traditionalist Anglo-Catholics

with their position within the Church of England. There do not seem to be any official figures

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[298]The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was established in 2011 by Pope Benedict XVI to allow Anglicans to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church whilst retaining much of their heritage and traditions. It now has the full support and blessing of Pope Francis. www.ordinariate.org.uk Accessed 25th July 2020
[299] Fr. Thomas and his family were received into the Ordinariate on 31st March 2019 and he is preparing for re-ordination as a Roman Catholic priest. Noted by The Barnabas Society, accessed 25th July 2020, www.stbarnabassociety.org.uk

available for priests who have joined the Roman Catholic Church either directly or through the Ordinariate. The current number of priests who belong to the Ordinariate stands at 103, according to the clergy list on its website.[300] Most of these joined in the initial stages. Professor Linda Woodhead in research carried out in 2014 established that 389 Catholic priests are former Anglican priests, including 87 priests in the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.[301]

The reopening of Holy Cross for worship, in September 2010, was a step of faith by the then vicar and Fr. Stephen, at that time his curate. To bring a building back into use for worship after 70 years of virtual neglect, is remarkable and very unusual in the Church of England. If it does happen, it is often the result of it being sold to another Christian denomination or even another faith. The church's 'Mission Statement' says about Holy Cross:

> A smaller congregation that gathers for Mass at 5pm, seeking to remind the backstreets where we find ourselves that God loves them lots.[302]

The comment about the 'back streets' is so important in the demography of Holy Cross. Every Sunday an A-board is put outside announcing that the Holy Cross is open for worship so that there is local community visibility. On special occasions, such as when the bishop visits, the street outside is taken over by a Bouncy Castle to entertain the children whilst the adults have a glass of wine. Funding has been made available to improve the frontage from the local Tesco Community Fund and at my last Sunday visit, plans were being drawn up to see how best that could be achieved.

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[300] https://www.ordinariate.org.uk/organisation/clergy.php. Accessed 8th March 2021
[301] https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/1028/new-figures-show-almost-400-catholic-priests-were-anglicans. Accessed 8th March 2021
[302] From parish website. Accessed 25th July 2020

Another way in which there is engagement with the community by means of a weekly lunch club on Tuesdays, mainly for older people; there is no charge, just a request for donations. This is preceded by Mass. Additionally there are Boys' Brigade groups for older children during the week. So there is now church activity in the building on days, other than in addition to the Sunday worship. Thus Holy Cross is now again doing what its builders had in mind, being a sign of Christian presence in the southern part of the parish.

5.3.4. Conclusion.

I had chosen Holy Cross as one of the churches to research as it stood firmly within the traditionalist part of Anglo-Catholicism. I wanted to see if mission was still as important as it was in nineteenth century when many Anglo-Catholic churches were built in London.[303] I will discuss my conclusions in a subsequent chapter. For the moment, I need to place on record the important contribution that Fr. Stephen has made to the success of the church. That he has been a constant feature in his parish for twelve years has given Holy Cross (and St. Clement's) both a stability and a recognition in the neighbourhood as an important Christian presence. This was evidenced when I interviewed him over lunch in a local Italian Restaurant. All through lunch people were coming up to him and greeting him – as well as asking how the new baby who had recently been born, was progressing: a clear testament to incarnational ministry.

5.4. St. Paul's Community Church, Melchester.

I had driven up the M1 to this Midland city for the 3pm service on 11th November 2018. When I reached the school where the service takes place, the car park was full and cars were also parked on the double

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[303] The liberal versus traditionalist positions in Anglo-Catholicism are a relatively modern phenomenon originally brought about by the creation of The Church of South India in 1947. Many Anglo-Catholics held doubts about the validity of its priestly orders according to their understanding of the doctrine of Apostolic Succession.

yellow lines outside. I had to park my car at a considerable distance away. I wondered what was

happening. Then I saw Fr. Sam, the pioneer priest. I jokingly asked him if a revival was happening. Sadly

not, was his reply, just a primary schools' football competition using the large sports area behind the

school; but at least those who were attending could see that there was a church worshipping there. It is

always difficult for a congregation worshipping in a secular building to make its presence obvious. The

school entrance is in a side road which has only a few houses and is off the main road; all that can be seen

of the school from the main road is a high and thick hawthorn hedge. Hence Fr. Sam's reliance on

leafletting as a way of making the church's presence known.

5.4.1. The Church and the Background to the Plant.

This area of Melchester was until the mid-nineteenth century, a typical Midlands

village outside the county town. It was served by St. Paul's, a twelfth century church. As the

population grew with increasing industrialisation, especially the making of textiles, the city

spread outwards and incorporated the village and the surrounding areas. Christ Church was

opened in 1906, intentionally built in an art nouveau style to serve a growing working class

area of terraced housing and factories that characterised the surrounding streets. The area in

which St. Paul's Community Church is situated was previously in the separate parish of St.

Paul's. The mediaeval Grade 2 parish church was the centre of worship for this village.

However, over the years, the congregation decreased in size which necessitated a decision to

close the church; so it has not been used for worship since 2010. Since then it has slowly

been falling into disrepair and has been subjected to sporadic vandalism and break-ins. The

building is on Historic England's 'at risk' register because of its deteriorating state and

people who live near the church, next to the River Mel say they would like to see it brought

back to some kind of sympathetic use. The Diocese of Melchester is currently looking to sell

the disused St. Paul's church. A previous attempt to convert the building into an Arts Centre

failed through lack of funding. The parish was also dissolved and divided between neighbouring parishes. However, the church school continued to keep the name of St. Paul's but within the enlarged parish of Christ Church, but the relationship with Christ Church was relatively tenuous and it was a 'church school' in name only.[304] As the school was running well, it became one of the lowest priorities.[305]

This changed with the appointment of a new headteacher who was concerned that the church was not engaging in any realistic terms with one of its schools.[306] By working with both the Diocesan Board of Education as well as the Archdeacon and Bishop of Melchester, a solution was found. Fr. Sam was coming to the end of his licence as a university chaplain; he had a wide range of experience in different roles and was happy to accept the challenge of being a Pioneer Priest in this area. Although from a different churchmanship to that of Christ Church, he was attached to the parish both in terms of ministerial support and also to work with the school to ensure that it had a clear Christian presence and ethos. The Diocese provided him with a house about three quarters of a mile from the school, although physically in a different parish. Christ Church agreed to pay a fixed sum for expenses as the diocese was covering his stipend. Fr. Sam is married and his wife Mary supports him totally in his ministry. He has two teenage sons and a younger daughter who are all actively engaged in the church; in particular, they take charge of the laptop which is used to project worship songs and other supporting visual material.

Fr. Sam started by using the Wednesday school assembly as a time of worship and began to include parents, carers and significant other adults. It became the regular service of worship for the community. However, it was soon realised that this was not a realistic long-

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[304] Information about St Paul's Community Church and its relationships both with the school, the Diocese of Melchester and the parish of Christ Church has been obtained through a number of conversations with Fr. Sam
[305] The parish of Christ Church is one of the largest in the Melchester Diocese in terms of population.
[306] From personal experience, this is not an unusual scenario.

term strategy because of pressure on school space and time. Although Fr. Sam continues to lead the Wednesday assemblies, they are now just a part of normal school activity. It was therefore decided that the focus of community worship should be a service in the school hall at 3pm on the second Sunday of the month in term time; this service began in September 2017. From September 2018 onwards this became a twice monthly service, although still only in term time because of the availability of the school hall. The school is situated on the other side of a main trunk road from the more recent housing development, with very few houses nearby. Although on weekdays, a school crossing patrol is in operation to ensure the safety of children and parents, this does not operate on Sundays. The road as a result becomes a significant barrier and so may well affect the accessibility of the worship centre for those who live in these houses. Additionally, the road in which the school entrance is situated has a 'bus only' bridge about a hundred yards away. If one wished to drive from the other side of the bridge, the detour is at least a mile in length. On the far side of the bridge is the disused parish church.

Fr. Sam raised with me several times his view that church planting was easier in a newly built housing development than in an established community. That may be true if the priest is one of the first people to live in that development where he/she has a significant advantage but in general this has not been found to be the case. Roger Lloyd describes the problems of housing estates in New Towns but they are equally applicable to the estate that St. Paul's School and Church serves. He writes: 'although there were exceptions the Church plainly found the … … housing estate and the vast block of flats a field of ministry of peculiar and unexpected difficulty.'[307] The area that St. Paul's serves has the disadvantage of being relatively established but it has the features of New Town Housing developments.

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[307] Lloyd, Roger. *The Church of England 1900 – 1965.* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966).

Hence the apparent lack of immediate impact on the community. Although Fr. Sam was notionally attached to Christ Church and took services there, I saw no element of reciprocity, especially in terms of physical support for his work in visiting and community involvement. This became very clear when the Bishop's Mission Order was granted on 28th June 2018, formally launching the church; the vicar of Christ Church played no part in the service. [308]

About six months later, Fr. Sam announced that Christ Church was ending its financial support of St. Paul's as it wanted to employ a children and families worker and divert the funding to support this post. He said that the Archdeacon was investigating other areas of support and funding. At the last service I attended in June 2019, Fr. Sam told me that St. Paul's was entering into a partnership from September 2019 with a large city centre Evangelical Anglican church. This church would provide £4,000 annually in funding for four years as well as commissioning six people, including a musician to support St. Paul's. He insisted that it was to be a partnership, not a takeover, which would enable the church to reach out more into the community with different forms of activities to supplement the Sunday worship; a foodbank was one such aim. He also wanted the informal style of worship to continue.

The church website describes the church in these words: [309]

> We are Church but not a parish. The reason for this is complicated! We are located in the Parish of Christ Church, Melchester the largest parish and one of the most diverse parishes in the diocese. We are a Bishop's Mission Order which means that we have been set up by the Bishop as Church which can do things differently and has a special

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[308] A Bishop's Mission Order (BMO) licenses a priest for work in a particular situation, either within an existing parish (but outside the control of the parish priest) or across a number of parishes. It is designed to relax some of the complex regulations around parishes and their boundaries.
[309] Accessed 27th July 2020

focus on Mission. We do things differently because we see that many people don't really 'get' traditional churches. Instead by focusing on people rather than organisations and buildings we try to be a church that anyone and everyone could be comfortable visiting. That's why we want to be a church for everyone. In particular we are a church that is especially welcoming to children and families. A lot of our members have children who attend our school but you don't need to have children at the school to worship with us. We are a Church which is home to a number of people with disabilities and always happy to welcome more.

This vision is one that Fr. Sam is very keen to maintain and enhance.

As noted earlier, the church meets in the school hall. It is a barren and utilitarian space but work is in hand to make it more attractive for worship. There is already an altar (designed by the schoolchildren) and donated by a benefactor and Fr. Sam wants a number of frontals to reflect the liturgical seasons. At least one of these has been designed and completed as in the photograph below.

Fr. Sam believes that symbols and colour are more important than words and therefore hopes that people in this locality will respond to this. Such artefacts can only enhance worship; this clearly resonates with the ideas of the nineteenth century Anglo-Catholics. Another example is when at Pentecost, he draped large areas of the space with red cloth, symbolising the descent of the Holy Spirit. There is even a tentative proposal to put some stained glass in the clerestory windows, to bring even more colour into the building. The school is very supportive of these ideas.

5.4.2. Statistical Data.

St. Paul's is located in the parish of Christ Church, one of the largest in Melchester, both in area and in terms of population to the north of the city. The data is for the parish as a whole as it is not possible to define clearly the area served by St. Paul's and so extract the relevant data.

St. Paul's Community Church – Population and Age Profile

Deprivation	Population	Area (Sq. Miles)	Density	% 0-4	% 5-17	% 18-29	% 30-44	% 45-64	% 65+
1200	48263	2.9	15361	7.2	17.00	20.3	20.8	23.5	11.2

St. Paul's Community Church – Ethnicity

% White	% Asian	% Black	% Mixed	% Other
23.00	64.7	7.2	2.6	2.6

St. Paul's Community Church – Religion Profile

% Christian	% Buddhist	% Hindu	% Jewish	%Muslim	% Sikh	% Other	% None	% Not Stated
18.00	0.3	44.00	0	18.00	5.00	0.8	9.8	4.1

It can easily be seen from the data that Christianity is very much a minority religion in the parish. It is also to be noted that the number of respondents who claim to have no religion is very low as is the number of those who did not respond to that particular census question. Both of these figures are lower than the English average as recorded in the 2011 Census. On the surface, therefore it would seem that the parish has a high level of religious observance. Because of the location of St. Paul's and the pattern of the main roads, other places of worship were not easily identifiable in the area.

5.4.3. Worship at St. Paul's.

The chairs are laid out in a semi-circle in the school facing the altar on which usually there is one lighted candle. When I was attending the services were all non-eucharistic, so the altar just provided a focal point. To the right of the altar is a large inter-active projection screen on which the words of the songs are displayed. There is a loose format for the service but it is not slavishly followed. Fr. Sam does not wear robes to lead worship, just his normal day clothes and his clerical collar. He is known in the school by the way he dresses, usually in yellow trousers and a yellow shirt and jumper. The children refer to him as Mr. Yellow. This is a deliberate choice on his part as he wants at the same time to be ordinary, or eccentric, but also be marked out for his calling.

When Fr. Sam thinks most people have arrived, anything up to ten minutes after the advertised time, he starts by going round the group and asking if they have any good news or something to share. This is quite easy as there were never more than 20 in attendance, adults

and children, including Fr. Sam's family, and often far fewer.[310] He also takes orders for tea and coffee, which will be served later during the service. Then, a song is sung. Fr. Sam uses children's worship songs from various American websites. They all involve actions and for the most part, everyone joins in. There is a very limited repertoire but that does not seem to concern people. One song *My God is a great big God* seemed to be sung virtually every time I attended as was *Jesus Christ, My Lighthouse.* These songs involved actions, embarrassing for me but joined in with enthusiasm by the other members of the congregation. Fr. Sam then introduces the theme for the service, sometimes with a short bible reading or story. This comes out of one of the lectionary readings for the day, usually the Gospel reading. There is often a short time of discussion but this is dependent on numbers. He then introduces some form of craft activity relevant to the theme. Mary his wife, does all the organisation and preparation for this with the help of their children. (Given the usual reticence of many teenagers to be visibly Christians, it was good to see their two teenage sons being actively and enjoyably involved). This is also the time for tea, coffee and cake. This has been a feature of St. Paul's from the very start and stresses the informality of the church and fits in to some degree with 'Café Church' which is seen as a variety of 'Fresh Expression'. Some of the adults join in the craft activity, particularly helping the smaller children. This time gives Fr. Sam an opportunity to engage with adults on a personal basis and so begin to build relationships. This part of the service takes about half an hour. Fr. Sam then asks the children to say something about the craft activity and he relates it back to his theme. One or two more songs are sung and the service ends with a short prayer and a reminder of when the next service will be.

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[310] During the time I attended, it was noticeable that only two other adults, other than Fr. Sam's family, were present at every service; one worked at the school as a teaching assistant, the other, an older mother, came with her autistic son. She said that she felt welcomed and comfortable as no-one judged or criticised the unpredictable behaviour of her son.

This informal style of worship is very alien to me and I found it quite difficult to engage with it as worship and I had to take notes at the time so that I could have a good recollection of what was taking place. However, I can appreciate how it could appeal to people whose contact with church is through church primary school assemblies which often offer the same style of informal music and interaction. The use of a familiar building also takes away some of the discomfort that new worshippers often find in attempting to enter a traditional church building. This style of worship is also helpful in engaging with people who do not speak English as a first language as there is opportunity to ask questions if things are not easily grasped, rather than enduring a totally incomprehensible liturgy. I noticed this on a number of occasions both with an Asian family and with a Polish woman who spoke very little English and was accompanied by two mixed race children.

My choice of St. Paul's as a research site was influenced by two particular factors; firstly, I wanted a site outside of London, particularly as London is seen as different in religious terms from most other parts of the United Kingdom.[311] Secondly I wanted to research a church plant that was completely new and not building on something of the past. This church plant did arise within an Anglo-Catholic parish, but I do not believe that there was originally any thought out intentionality on the part of the parish. It came into being as a result of an initiative from the church school in the parish which was then taken up by the diocesan authorities as an opportunity to enhance the mission of the church in that part of Melchester, especially as the original place of worship had been closed in 2010. However the parish benefited by having an additional priest to share the workload, especially on Sunday

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[311] See Goodhew, David & Anthony-Paul Cooper, eds. *The Desecularisation of the City.* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.) for an analysis of this phenomenon.

mornings. But the fact that after less than two years the parish withdrew the financial support seems in my view to provide some evidence of this lack of commitment and intentionality.

5.4.4. Post Research Follow-Up.

Given the change of sponsorship that was to take place after I had finished my research visits, I decided that a follow-up conversation with Fr. Sam would be useful to ensure that my research reflected the most recent reality. I therefore had a conversation with him, via Zoom, in early August 2020. This conversation took place during the Covid-19 pandemic and schools had been closed for more than four months. I reminded Fr. Sam of his earlier words that the relationship with the new sponsoring church would be a partnership, rather than a take-over. His reply was that it had become in reality more of a takeover, although there had been some positive aspects as well. However, heavily influenced by the enforced closure of the school, which has meant the suspension of worship, he has asked the Archdeacon to 'pause the partnership and review it'.

As noted above, the style of worship was very informal, a deliberate decision when St. Paul's opened; a key aspect of this was that children and adults stayed together for the whole service. This is made clear on the website. With the influx of the team of helpers from the sponsoring church, its vicar felt that the worship was on too superficial a level. He wanted a more structured service, beginning with a time of singing (seemingly synonymous with worship); the children would then leave for Sunday School activities in one of the classrooms, whilst the adults listened to a sermon of at least ten minutes in length. This was to be followed by some form of discussion and prayer. The previous attenders at the church objected to this and Fr. Sam supported their views. The complaint from the new sponsoring church was that things were moving too slowly in building a congregation. Fr. Sam's view was that there was a need to build up relationships within the community first. There are here,

in my view, two distinct evangelistic models at play which are in opposition to each other. An example of this came at Christmas. Fr. Sam with the support of resources from the new sponsor, arranged a number of activities. Every house in the area was personally visited with an invitation. There was a good attendance. Fr. Sam was pleased that he had met a number of new people and been able to show them that the church was there and accessible for them. Those from the sponsoring church wanted to collect contact details so that their visiting team could arrange follow-up home visits, which was not the way in which Fr. Sam saw his relationships with those who attended the church. It was tensions such as these that led Fr. Sam to ask the Archdeacon to review the arrangements. Then the 'lockdown' intervened.[312] Currently St. Paul's is in a state of suspension with an uncertain future, particularly as there are continuing restrictions on the use of schools.

There are also a number of external factors that will have a significant influence of the future of St. Paul's. Fr. Sam was appointed as a pioneer priest by the previous bishop who saw full-time ordained pioneers as the way forward. Fr. Sam is the only one of those still in post. The new bishop has a very different model: that pioneer work should be undertaken by lay people with the support of a facilitator – a parish priest who is given one day a week to support these pioneers. Fr. Sam's position is therefore now seen as anomalous in the diocese.

The Diocese of Melchester, like many dioceses in the Church of England, even more so as a result of the pandemic, is under increasing financial strain, exacerbated by Covid-19 and the extended closure of churches. It has already decided to leave posts unfilled when clergy leave. In addition, the Bishop's Mission Order will expire in less than two years, which has to lead to a review. This has implications for the future of St. Paul's as to whether

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[312] One area of agreement between the two clergy was that an Alpha course would not work at St. Paul's as 'Alpha is too posh.'

it will be allowed to continue in its present form with a full-time pioneer stipendiary priest. There are a number of possible scenarios, one of which is that the sponsoring church takes it over completely and adds it to the other plants it supports elsewhere in the city. Fr. Sam could then be offered one of a number of vacant parishes. Nothing has been agreed as yet but there are signs that St. Paul's will not be able to continue in its current form post-Covid-19. [313] There are significant problems about the use of the school if the enhanced practices in respect of intensive cleaning have to be maintained – yet another uncertainty of which account needs to be taken.

5.5. General Conclusion.

In this chapter I have attempted to give a picture of the three churches both of their geographical and demographic situations as well as an account of their main Sunday service which is still the most prominent public face of the church and its major form of inter-action with the parish at large. If the Sunday service is not seen as uplifting, spiritually helpful or lacking in a sense of welcome, worshippers soon lose interest and fall away. [314] This applies not only to Anglo-Catholic churches but to all styles of worship. However, the reason that I have described the services in such detail is that the pioneers of the Oxford Movement wanted worship to be conducted reverently in a way that was honouring to God. As such, even before the advent of ritualism, one of the key aspects of their worship was a strict adherence to the rubrics and words of the Prayer Book. This was very much in contrast to the way in which worship was being conducted in many churches of that time. In many cases services had become casual and chaotic as Thomas Hardy humorously describes. [315] The

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[313] It was reported on the church's Facebook page on 9th May 2021 that Fr. Sam was standing down. In a personal email, Fr. Sam referred to the tensions involved in the new partnership as well as wider moves regarding clergy deployment in the diocese. These had influenced his decision.

[314] I use the word ' service' to include not only the worship element but the whole ethos surrounding it.

[315] Thomas Hardy provided comical descriptions of the church band. See West Gallery Music Association (http://www.wgma.org.uk/Resources/Literary/Authors/Hardy/Absent.html) . Accessed 8th September 2020.

descriptions of worship show how far these churches fulfilled what the Oxford Movement pioneers would have wanted.

In the following chapters, I will look at the way these churches operate and the lessons that I can draw from their different experiences in order to find the important features to support Anglo-Catholic church planting.

However throughout his life he appreciated the formality of High Church worship. See Jedrzejewski, Jan. *Thomas Hardy and The Church* (London: Palgrave Macmillan. 1996) Chapter 3.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH ACTIVITY.

6.1 Introduction.

The starting point of any research analysis is the research question that underpins the activity. My aim is to investigate current church planting within the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England and compare it with the way in which Anglo-Catholics established new churches in the nineteenth century. This will allow me to establish both similarities and differences as well as to investigate what could be learned from those experiences that might be relevant today. This double focus was chosen to evidence a broad range of Anglo-Catholic experience both from participant observation as well as from historical sources.

A researcher must always have in the front of his/her mind the question: 'What exactly am I looking for and seeking to evidence through this research?' This applies to the participant observation, interviews and questionnaire responses as well as to the dialogue with literary sources. Specifically for this research, it means trying to ascertain the distinctiveness of church planting in an Anglo-Catholic context. Does it differ in essence and practice from the more common, and the usual Evangelical models, referred to in chapter two and described by Michael Moynagh and Philip Harrold?[316]

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[316] Moynagh, Michael, & Philip Harrold. *Church for Every Context: An Introduction to Theology and Practice.* (London: SCM Press, 2012) .pp. 206-220

6.2. The Six Themes.

The themes that I have identified through my participant observation and from the literature around church planting are broad in scope as is to be expected when analysing three distinct churches. It is also not possible to rank them, as what is the most important theme for one church is not necessarily the same for the others. That being said, the themes of *worship* and *community* which are generally regarded as important marks of a church, stand out. These are the six themes:

- **Worship.** Under this heading I also include the concepts of *spirituality* and *beauty*. As will be seen later each church had a different approach and emphasis but all of them laid great importance on its regular act of worship. This is not surprising as worship, and especially the regular celebration of the Eucharist, has been and still is probably, one of the key expressions of Anglo-Catholicism.

- **Community.** This also encompasses *welcome* and *mission*. Again, each church saw this in a different way and therefore interpreted community differently. The different natures of the parishes also affected this. Involvement with the community of the parish is again an important part of Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology as has been seen in the earlier literature review, with its stress on the incarnational ministry of the priest in the parish. There is often a tension between ministry to the worshipping community, almost akin to chaplaincy, and ministry to the wider community and some churchgoers resent the latter, especially when they believe that they are paying, via the Diocesan Parish Share Scheme for *their* vicar. The classic Church of England position is that 'the cure of souls' by the parish priest and shared with the bishop,

relates to all who live in the geographical parish. This is affirmed by the bishop every time a priest is licensed or instituted into a new benefice.[317]

- **Vision**. This is linked to leadership as the leader carries forward the vision, but that vision may have initially come from elsewhere e.g. the Diocese, another church, a predecessor. Vision is the outworking of intentionality by identifying what needs to be put into place to fulfil the intention that 'the church needs to do something about this'. The vision is developed and the leader carries it forward with support. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish'.[318]

- **Leadership.** This theme was identified both by each of the priests but also by their congregations. In my informal encounters over coffee, many commented on the way in which Father X was leading the way forward for them. This is not to say that others were not involved but they depended on his clear leadership and drive. It is important to note that this is not management, a concept which I thought I might find mentioned but it did not emerge.

- **Growth**. Each of the churches had a desire to grow within the physical limitations of their premises. Growth also meant for all of them an increasing contact with their wider communities – not just regular churchgoers.

- **Sustainability.** This was an issue raised by the clergy, rather than members of the congregations. The question generally concerns what happens if the priest leaves. Members of congregations, in my experience as a Deanery Lay Chair and hence involved with the process of filling clergy vacancies for over more than thirty years, do not address this issue until their priest's departure is announced. Is the church which Fr. X led, now able to continue without him? If so, what will his replacement

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[317] These words are used:' *Bishop: N.* receive the Cure of Souls which is both yours and mine; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Incumbent:* Amen. Diocese of St. Albans Service of Institution. /www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/diocesan-orders-of-service-and-information/ Accessed 20th November 2020.
[318] Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

be like? What changes will the new vicar make? This is an important factor and is addressed at length by Moynagh & Harrold.[319] It also presupposes that the diocesan administration needs to be able to support parishes in a speedy process of recruitment and also potentially in the management of change – a resource which in most cases is sadly lacking. As a result sustainability is often not seen as a priority and there is the myth, and in some dioceses the reality, that vacancies are extended for financial reasons.[320] Clergy vacancies have their challenges for every congregation, but in a church plant, which often does not have a significant supporting infrastructure or mature lay leaders, a gap of any length of time in the leadership of the plant can be fatal.

6.3. Reporting the research findings.

In this section I intend to look at each of the themes in relation to each church and use quotations from interviews and questionnaires to show how these themes are worked out in each of them. All direct quotes from these sources are in italics.

6.3.1. Worship, Spirituality and Beauty.

This theme is an important element in Anglo-Catholicism as has been noted previously in chapter four and taken up by R.F Littledale in 1868 in his description of London gin palaces. [321]

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[319] Moynagh & Harrold pp. 411ff.
[320] With the Church Plant in my own parish, the previous priest left at the end of January and his replacement was in post by Easter – an unheard of short length of time for a vacancy.
[321] The original of this quotation from Littledale is to be found in Reed, John Shelton. *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism.* (Nashville TN: Nashville University Press, 1996). p. 150.

6.3.1.1. St. Pancras, Rushey Common.

This broader concept was seen by Fr. Francis as a key part of the ministry of his church. Although he sees liturgy as important he says: '*Liturgy is not enough if it's not rooted in contemplation.*' As described in an earlier chapter, the liturgy at St. Pancras, although Anglo-Catholic, does not have the full range of liturgical ceremonial that takes place in its sponsoring church, St. Paul's. Respondent 3 to the questionnaire, who came from a Methodist background appreciated *'[The] form of service, music, friendly atmosphere'*. This was echoed by respondent 8 who appreciated the '*prayerful worship'*. Fr. Francis's emphasis on contemplation is something that underpins everything that he does and is important in his celebration of the liturgy, rather than the externals. He commented that in his view *'the Anglo-Catholic world has a preoccupation with vestments'*. I interpret this as an over-emphasis on the externals of worship, sometimes at the expense of the spiritual dimension. The early Anglo-Catholics had the same concerns and many were uncomfortable with these externals. Pickering comments 'Ritual is of no value and a vain thing if it is not based upon sound doctrine.'[322] This is the view of Fr. Francis as he believes that spirituality and the contemplative life are part of *'the true, authentic and real Catholic tradition'* and that *'the contemplative tradition is such a huge part of our lives'*. Hence he wants his church to be a centre for mindfulness and spirituality as one of the foundations of its mission. He says: *'rooting this Centre in the Catholic tradition, really, and I think that all the great mystics as well as the desert fathers and mothers can give us a lot about this and we can actually revitalise the Anglo-Catholic tradition from a very new perspective'*. He sees that *'if there isn't that contemplative attention in our lives, the major risk is that we can water down the mission; yes and water down and empty the Anglo-Catholic tradition. We all become social*

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[322] Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism*, p. 21

workers.' Yet he realises that there must be a balance: *'yes we have to keep a balanced attention to, well, social justice and [the]spiritual journey'*. This is summed up by respondent 1 who loved *'the peace'* and respondent 2 who referred to *'the lovely church atmosphere'*.

6.3.1.2. Holy Cross, Greystone.

The background to the founding of Holy Cross defines very well the style of worship. As an in-parish plant using a parish owned resource, it was much more likely to reflect the traditional Anglo-Catholic style of worship of the parish church. This was very clear from my research visits when I saw both the use of the Roman Breviary for Evening Prayer as well as the Roman Rite of the Mass. I asked Fr. Stephen whether the Roman Missal had always been used as far as he knew. He referred to a priest who had died in post in 1986 and who used the Alternative Service Book (ASB) with Roman additions.[323] Referring to old stencils of Holy Week services that he had found in the vicarage attic, he said, *'They were quite literally ASB with bits of Roman Missal stuck into it'*. Certainly when his predecessor, who was instrumental in reopening Holy Cross had come to St. Clement's in 1994, the Roman Missal was the established use. He commented that at funerals, which generally took the form of a Requiem Mass, *'that's where the Roman Catholics are surprised'*. He also spoke about the time that the new English translation of the Roman Missal was introduced at Advent 2011. There were significant changes of wording; for example the response to 'The Lord be with you' was changed from 'and also with you' to the more archaic 'and with thy spirit'. There were also changes to other texts including the 'Gloria in Excelsis' and the Nicean Creed. He said: *'I had to be quite open about why the rite was changing, why we use the Roman Rite'*. He was also clear that *'when we opened Holy Cross, I didn't want it to be a watered down version of St. Clement's'*. Fr. Stephen is conscious of the limitations imposed by the size of

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[323] Usually referred to as the ASB and introduced into the Church of England in 1980 after a number of experimental liturgies, known as Series 1, Series 2 and Series 3.

Holy Cross as *'having more than sixty people in that building is quite difficult'.* There was a tension, especially for those families bringing children for baptisms between using a functional building like Holy Cross where they normally worshipped, and a larger, more traditional and elaborate building like St. Clement's. However Fr. Stephen was insistent that *'we wanted there to be permanent elements to the church so that it wasn't bringing the altar out on wheels'.* This was very clear from my participant observation. The altar was set on a raised platform at one end of the building. A tabernacle for the Reserved Sacrament was situated on a window ledge above the altar. On either side there were statues, one of Jesus and the other of the Virgin Mary. There was also a votive candle stand. The chairs were moveable but the artefacts connected with worship were fixed. This very much reflected a traditional style of Anglo-Catholic worship which was further emphasised both by the wearing of birettas by the clergy as well as by the style of the vestments, especially the fiddle-back chasuble, so typical of the late nineteenth century ritualist Anglo-Catholics. The only thing that prevented the mass from being fully traditional was that the Eucharist was celebrated from behind the altar, facing the people 'westward facing' rather than 'eastward facing' (*ad orientem)* with the priest's back to the people. I felt that this was a concession to the narrowness of the platform on which the altar stood, a pragmatic arrangement rather than a liturgical statement. Respondent 14 summed up the worship and atmosphere of Holy Cross when responding to the question 'What do you like about the church? She answered: *'sermons, spiritual feeling, closeness to God.'*

6.3.1.3. St. Paul's Community Church, Melchester.

Given that this church meets in a school hall with a very informal style of worship, I was surprised at many of the comments made by Fr. Sam. He first commented that the very informal style of worship *'does create a lot of additional work'* when compared to leading a service using a written liturgical resource such as Common Worship. But the most important

of his comments referred to 'beauty'. He referred to the first occasion when the vicar of the new sponsoring church, All Saints, a large charismatic Evangelical church, visited. He showed him the altar and the frontal that the children of the school had designed with its colours and pictures.[324] He continues: *'I said about the colours and the message and I thought, you know, my primary reason was to flag up something. Yes, and I said to him, you know that I think some models of mission are too verbal, too wordy, yes too written wordy…*…*I talked about colour and beauty.*[325]*Yeah and feeling particularly brave I talked about the first generation of Anglo-Catholics… …I've been hugely influenced by them and to my mind they were much more mission minded than I think the second generation was, so I could have been in the first generation.'* He went on to say that he was in a working-class parish and that he wanted to bring something of heaven in, *' not a man standing at the front, you know, whispering matins, but actually a communion service with light and colour.'* His wish was that when they started a food bank or a debt advice service, those coming to these would feel they were coming into a building with something different – not just a typical boring school hall. This theme he repeated several times during the course of our conversation and referred to *'a theology of look heavenly, very different from what you are currently living.'*[326] There needs to be *'some incultural and missional thinking that is slightly different.'* I found this concept of beauty and the expression of worship through visual stimuli to be very refreshing. How it will work out alongside the currently informal style of worship and in what is a basic school multi-use hall is the challenge for Fr. Sam, especially as he works with a new supporting church which finds such concepts quite alien.

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[324] Fr. Sam related that at All Saints, in preparation for an Alpha course, their 'Holy Table' was used as an ironing board as a tablecloth used for the Alpha meal was creased. When it is not used *'it's just shoved in the corner'*.

[325] See note 17 above

[326] Living on a bleak 1960's council estate in north Melchester.

Throughout this section the contrasts in the interpretation of this theme by these three churches have been very apparent. Worship is conditioned by the physical space available as well as by the underlying personality and the theological and liturgical views of each priest. What can be seen is that the Anglo-Catholic concepts of the externals that underpin the act of worship can be interpreted today in a variety of ways so cannot be constrained by a 'one size fits all' approach and are heavily influenced by differing factors over which a priest and congregation often have little control

6.3.2. Community, Welcome and Mission.

Each of the churches emphasised this aspect as being a very important part of their *raison d'être* and this was reflected both in the intentionality of the priest as well as in the responses to the questionnaires. Welcome and acceptance are essential components of mission and the building of community, both the community of the church as well the secular community, are out-workings of the gospel.[327]

6.3.2.1. St. Pancras, Rushey Common.

Fr. Francis sees his mission as focussed on a number of different communities. He wants his church to grow *'by responding to the needs of the local community but also to the wider needs of the city.'* He recognized that his was a welcoming congregation as well as a diverse one in terms of (mainly white) ethnicity. *'This diversity, I think it's distinctive in the Anglo-Catholic tradition and in my view should be especially in this city*[328]*... ... I think that's where we're going and we need to keep it. We need to make it grow and be more and more inclusive... ... it makes our mission very distinctive.'* He then referred to French and Italian

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[327] Ephesians 2:19 (NRSV) 'members of the household of God'
Jeremiah 29:7 (NRSV) 'seek the welfare of the city… .. and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare'
[328] London is generally reckoned to be the most racially diverse city in the United Kingdom.

people with whom he was in contact.[329] He said that they had previously given up church-going, but were now coming back, because *'sometimes it's just they're looking for something else'.* Importantly he recognises that the people, the church community, makes the church, not the priest alone. He sees the importance the need *'to concentrate on connecting with people's lives, yes real lives, the pain, the joy, the suffering.'* He related an incident where a French family started to attend church because one of their sons was a friend of his son. This boy said that if Michael goes to church it must be fun, so the family started to attend and the children enjoyed the Sunday School activities. Fr. Francis sees the Sunday School as an important means of mission. This is an interesting link with what Richard Temple West achieved in St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington. (See chapter four). Through the attendance of the children, he wants to build a solid group of parents. My observations confirmed that and especially the confident and articulate way in which the children told the adults what they had been doing and what they had learned. This family environment and welcome is an important factor but it is not at the expense of inclusivity. It is also in the context of what I would describe as 'lived evangelism' rather than overt preaching. He recounts a parent saying to him *'you didn't try to convert me, I felt you weren't talking about salvation and you're going to hell.'*

This approach is clearly evidenced in the questionnaire responses. One of the questions asked: 'What do like about the church?' Respondent 2, a middle-aged woman replied: *'Lovely church atmosphere, small congregation, has been very supportive personally.'* This was mirrored by respondent 6, a middle-aged man *'The sense of community, hospitality and the energy of Fr. Francis'* and a younger woman, respondent 11 who had previously attended a very rural church in the north of England said *'Friendly and*

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[329] As I was editing this chapter, I received an email from Fr. Francis asking for a donation to help set up an Italian Community hub at his church for West London.

informal and many opportunities to get involved in the community.' Other respondents liked the fact that the church *'was child-friendly.'*

The importance of this theme to St. Pancras cannot be over-stressed. It is built into the original vision of using the building in the service of the community and I certainly experienced that welcome, that warmth, on all of my visits.

6.3.2.2. Holy Cross, Greystone.

Given that Holy Cross is a plant in a different part of the parish from the parish church as well as being, in church planting terms, well-established, it is not surprising that this theme is evident in its activities, from the use of part of the building by community groups to the weekly Tuesday lunch. Fr. Stephen believes strongly in being visible as the parish priest and this carries over into the worshipping life of the church. He put it like this: *'I think if you create a culture whereby, for example, that you say hello to Father when you pass on the highway, it's a bit easier when Granny dies to mention that.'* This sense of welcoming acceptance was evident in the church. He personally welcomed people as they came in, up to three minutes before the time of the service. He engaged with them and was able to focus on any concerns that they had, e.g. a sick relative.

He related to me what he regarded as an amazing incident about a boy who used to attend the Boys' Brigade meetings. *'I remember one of them, he must be about twenty-five now. He's off work with depression and hasn't worked for months. He was in our Boys' Brigade and never really came to mass, but then suddenly rocked up at a midweek Mass at St Clement's… … He said I remember you saying that there was a mass every day and so I thought there must be one today. … … I was flabbergasted that something I had said maybe eight years ago when he was in the Boys' Brigade had stuck with him, such that he came to Mass on that Wednesday morning.'* This again shows the value of welcome and community

involvement and being 'with' people, as well as the positive impact of a long-term ministry.. This theme comes across in the responses to the questionnaire. Respondent 8, a priest who had retired to the area referred to *'Friendly and welcoming congregation and good ministry of word and sacrament.'* An older woman, respondent 2 mentioned *'the love shown to us'* and respondent 14, in the same age group spoke of *'Sermons, community family element, spiritual feeling, closeness to God.'* Fr. Stephen summed it up in these words, *'it's about being genuine, I think, yes, come and join me. It's a powerful message which places like HTB have got very well'.*

I felt very strongly that welcome and mission, especially in terms of the Anglo-Catholic view of incarnational ministry, were strongly emphasised at Holy Cross. I experienced this each time I attended when I joined in the coffee after mass as well as being included on the rota for reading and leading intercessions.

6.3.2.3. St. Paul's Community Church, Melchester.

The fact that the word 'community' is in the church's title shows that it places its emphasis on the community of the church school and the surrounding area that it serves. From my many informal conversations with Fr. Sam, I had already learned of his engagement with the local community and his efforts to welcome them into the church, especially after the move, noted earlier, from Wednesday to Sunday worship. He also had delivered leaflets to invite people to special services. But it was very much a sole effort, but as at Holy Cross, it was the priest being visible around the neighbourhood with his own distinctive dress.

The change of sponsorship has certainly released more resources to support community involvement. As Fr. Sam said *'in terms of outreach, with a larger team, there's a lot more outreach. So for example one of the things I've often thought is that we should do some community work. Thanks to All Saints where basically it's taken about three phone calls,*

166

we've got a food bank. This is the sort of thing that again focuses us out.' He goes on to

mention the difficulties of being a lone worker and the safety issues involved.[330] He

continued by suggesting that having more resources both for visiting and practical activities

in the community like litter clearing would be great and people from St. Paul's could join in

with those from All Saints who had committed to support. So with the help of All Saints,

both a food bank and a money advice service was set up. But from informal conversations

again, which were the result of the relationship I had built with Fr. Sam and his family, he

told me that there were tensions in the differing approaches to outreach. The example he gave

was of the Christmas Carol Services. Those who were supporting from All Saints wanted to

take contact details of everyone who came so that the 'follow up team' could do its work,

which he saw as in the nature of 'hard sell' evangelism. For his own part, Fr. Sam wanted to

add the names to his contact list so that he could keep in touch with them and invite them to

special services. The contrasts between strategies of mission became quite apparent. I

observed the way in which Fr. Sam came alongside those who attended the service and gently

spoke to them about what issues or problems they had and what the church could offer in

support.[331] Fr. Sam's sense of mission and community, especially in this very working class

area, is summed up in this comment about the first generation Anglo-Catholics,*' as one chap*

said I'd much rather go to the East End where the gospel is more unknown than in Bombay.'

He had always wanted to run a holiday club for the local children.[332] All Saints had in

previous years organised one nationally as part of a charismatic Evangelical network. The

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[330] Note here that Jesus sent out The Seventy in pairs; they needed mutual support but also mutual protection. Luke 10:1 ff.

[331] It is worth commenting that many people in all of our churches need practical support of various kinds. As an example, I recently helped the wife of a couple (the husband had dementia) negotiate the paperwork of selling their bungalow and buying a flat. Is this a neglected area of mission?

[332] A Christian based activity for children that usually takes place over a period of several days during school holidays.

question arose whether there would be one for All Saints and a separate one, involving people from St. Paul's in their building. The question was unresolved at the end of my research.[333]

As mentioned earlier, because of very low attendance by the time I wanted to introduce the questionnaire, the response rate was exceptionally poor. However, in spite of this it is worth quoting the responses that I received. Respondent 1 said *'It is very friendly people and we enjoy it.'* It is interesting to note that this woman is Indian and married to a Polish man. Her grasp of English is quite elementary but she values what St. Paul's provides for her and her children, especially in the area of biblical education. Respondent 2 said, *'My son has special needs and he's understood and welcomed, not judged.* I had met this woman, very obviously a much older mother, every time I attended. Her son was very hyper-active and unpredictable in his behaviour and I can imagine how difficult it would have been for a more formal and structured church to cope with his behaviour.

There are significant present and future tensions in the relationship between St. Paul's and All Saints. A researcher cannot solve them, nor attempt to do so, however attractive this course of action may be, but in the midst of these challenges, there is clear evidence of mission, welcome and community.

6.3.3. Vision.

I have already quoted the scriptural statement 'where there is no vision, the people perish.' For any church plant to succeed there needs to be a vision, a plan, a strategy of what the intended outcome should be. In the case of St. Pancras, this was clearly set out in the plan to link it with St. Paul's which has been described in chapter five. For Holy Cross, it was a matter of taking a positive decision to use an existing, but virtually forgotten resource as a

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[333] There is a temptation in research to want to continue. There must be a *terminus post quem* otherwise the research findings can never be finalised – much as the researcher might want to continue involvement. I leave it for future researchers to follow this through.

way of extending the outreach of the parish church into a different area of the parish. In the case of St. Paul's Community Church, the strategy arose via discussions between the diocese, the school and the parish church, but there were no clearly defined aims and objectives.[334] Hence the problems which arose later. A plant cannot be sustained *in vacuo.* The parables of the building of the tower or the king waging war, warn Christians against a lack of planning for mission (Luke 14:28-33). Any church plant must have some kind of vision, some intentionality, towards what it wants to become in the context in which it is set.

6.3.3.1. St. Pancras, Rushey Common.

For Fr. Francis, the vision for St. Pancras which was developed in conjunction with the vicar of St. Paul's had as its main focus to ensure that the church became a lively, accessible place of worship which offered much to the community. One strand of this was *'we wanted St. Pancras to be a centre for mindfulness and spirituality, but we didn't really know what we meant. Now we have a centre for spirituality where people can learn meditation. … … So during the vision, I was trying to shape the vision as we had an intuition of what was the future.'*

An important part of the vision for a church plant is that there must be wide ownership and acceptance. If the leader does not share the vision with others, it is most likely to fail. Fr. Francis *' took the vision to the people. We brought them into the vision and said this is what we are going to do – and nobody objected.'* This was in contrast to a priest he mentioned who decided that he wanted to have a new Parish Hall, but he did not have a vision, only a project. He took this project to his PCC which rejected the idea. [335] Fr. Francis described his way of working and sharing the vision like this: *'I talk to people all the time, not just the*

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[334] In any missional activity among which I count church planting, it is vital to have a clear understanding of what is to be achieved, with markers against which to evaluate progress.
[335] The Parochial Church Council – the elected decision making body in a Church of England parish.

churchwardens. … … I engage with them and say this is what I've got in mind. What do you think? And that is important because sometimes you just don't know. They tell you, look, this doesn't work; so you don't waste your time and you're engaging with them.'

The clarity of Fr. Francis's vision and his keen engagement across both his own congregation as well as that at St. Paul's has enabled his vision to bear fruit. The Centre for Mindfulness and Spirituality is in action, running a variety of courses including a children and family course which includes yoga. There also has been a course which links mindfulness with creative writing. Fr. Francis has also set up a separate website to introduce the Centre. The home page states:

> We are a group of Christian and Non-Christian persons who are passionate about Mindfulness and Spirituality. As part of our vision at St. Pancras we wish to answer to the needs of our Local community by promoting St. Pancras Church as a Centre for Mindfulness and Spirituality. Deeply rooted in the Christian Tradition of meditation and contemplation, the St. Pancras Centre encourages the participants to the different courses to learn the contemplative practice as a skill and as a discipline that helps open doorways to live in the present moment.[336]

This explains how the vision has materialised and is a key part of the mission of St. Pancras to its parish and further afield. The concept of Mindfulness is criticised in some Christian circles as 'new age' or a practice of Buddhism and on a par with yoga, which draws on Hindu spirituality. Fr. Francis insists that it fits in with the authentic meditative tradition which has been a practice of the church from the early Desert Fathers and through Ignatian Spirituality to the present day.

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[336] I have not provided a reference as this would breach the convention of anonymity.

6.3.3.2. Holy Cross, Greystone.

The original vision which set up Holy Cross came from Fr. Stephen's predecessor as vicar of St. Clement's, although Fr. Stephen was the curate who took responsibility for the reopening of Holy Cross as a place of worship. However there is still the need for an on-going vision. Fr. Stephen sees it in the terms of ensuring that Holy Cross has its own independent congregation. He describes the churchgoers in the parish as being in three groups, those who attend St. Clement's for the Sunday morning mass, those who attend either St. Clement's or Holy Cross as convenient and the group that only worships at Holy Cross. This is a growing group. His vision is that this group continues to grow. He also wants Holy Cross *'to establish itself as a place where things like that [baptisms] or occasional offices happen.'* This fits in with his aim *'to try to continue to make Holy Cross feel as much as a proper church as possible so that it doesn't end up the poor relation.'* Allied to this is the need for financial stability both for Holy Cross and the parish as a whole. Currently a dance group hires part of the building and brings in five hundred pounds per month in letting fees. To address this *'we preach about stewardship and giving but it's not do this or we close. ... ...You know I'm pleased with that.'* The parish as a whole was not as financially sound as he would hope. As an illustration, he said that the London Diocese expects every parish with one priest to pay £85,000 per annum to the Common Fund, St Clement's Parish manages to pay £69,000, so it is in effect being subsidised by other churches. In spite of that, it still makes the largest contribution of the thirteen churches in its Deanery. So the stability of Holy Cross is an important issue and the key to Fr. Stephen's vision for the future. The founding vision has been maintained and refreshed. Unlike the other two churches in this study, because it has been established longer, Holy Cross is now at the stage of consolidation. Fr. Stephen's continuing vision will ensure that this happens.

6.3.3.3. St. Paul's Community Church, Melchester.

The vision that established St. Paul's was summed up by Fr. Sam in these words: *'I think we'll want to be a beacon of hope on an estate that sometimes is very hopeless, yes, and I think we can do that by being actually something nice'.* I have described under the heading of 'worship' how Fr. Sam set about this.

Since the change of the sponsoring church to All Saints, their vision for St. Paul's has come to predominate and that needs putting into context as to how it will affect St. Paul's. I summarise Fr. Sam's description of it. All Saints is a large charismatic Evangelical church in the centre of Melchester, with a history of church planting and a mainly eclectic middle class congregation, but with significant work with children and students. (Melchester has two large universities). Its three previous plants were in the south of Melchester, which is more prosperous than the north of the city where St. Paul's is situated. The model which was approved by the Diocesan Bishop was that the vicar of All Saints was appointed as priest-in-charge of the plant in an existing church building and a curate would be responsible for the day to day activity. Once the plant was established, the vicar withdrew and the curate was then appointed as priest-in-charge. The vision of All Saints was to make some impact in the north of the city as *'there's not a lot going on in Evangelical circles in the north.'* It was also the first time that All Saints would be involved with a plant that already had an priest in place and one who did not fully share its churchmanship and ecclesiology.

However, Fr. Sam sees a difference in the vision for St. Paul's. *'We are trying to do things differently as All Saints has agreed to temporary teams. So the idea is not that the team will come in and be the new church, but the team is coming in to support the church and put a floor under it. And each member of the team is only committing to a year and All Saints is committing to four years.'* Fr. Sam reminded me that the Bishop's Mission Order is due to be reviewed in four years' time. His *'blue sky scenario'* is for him to take it through the renewal and turn St. Paul's into a church with a legal Church of England basis. The current stage he sees as a transition from its early and quite tenuous start through to being a *'real church'.* The change of sponsorship which has led almost to the imposition of a different vision has been

difficult for Fr. Sam. It remains to be seen how much he can influence this vision to maintain St. Paul's place as a *'beacon of hope'* and not become a clone of All Saints.

6.3.4. Leadership.

In his book *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* David Goodhew writes, 'It is worth noting at this point that the earliest churches had established leadership from the beginning'.[337] So clear leadership of a church plant should follow this pattern. The role of the founding leader of a church plant can be likened to the way the apostles planted churches after Pentecost. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth'.[338] So leadership and the way in which the leader carries forward and enthuses others about the vision, is as vital for growth and viability of the plant as it is for more established churches.

6.3.4.1. St. Pancras, Rushey Common.

It can clearly be seen from the description of this church in the previous chapter that Fr. Francis was a key driver behind the way in which St. Pancras developed. He had the vision and was allowed by the vicar of St. Paul's to follow it through. Respondent 6 to the questionnaire mentioned *'the energy of Fr. Francis.'* and respondent 9 said *'Fr. Francis is doing a terrific job.'* Yet he himself recognised that the initial leadership of Fr. Charles, the vicar of All Saints was necessary to get the project off the ground. Once it had been agreed, Fr. Francis took over that leadership role and carried it through. Interestingly I found one criticism of what had been done in respect of St. Pancras. Respondent 10, an older woman who had been attending St. Pancras for over thirty years complained *'They have neglected our past strengths.'* Unfortunately this was not qualified further and this statement is very much at odds with the view of the area bishop and other diocesan officers about the state of the parish in the reports that were prepared around the future of the benefice as referred to in an earlier chapter. This outlying comment is also at odds with Fr. Francis's view. *'when I came here, well people were here already. Yes, I mean I changed things but that doesn't*

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[337] Goodhew, David, ed. *Towards a Theology of Church Growth.* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015.). p. 7
[338] I Corinthians 3:6

mean that I don't respect the past.' There is always this tension when a church plant (or to use the preferred London diocesan word 'graft') moves into an existing congregation, especially if that congregation is seen by the diocesan officials to be weak or failing, adjectives often used in such situations. The fact that within a couple of years Fr. Francis has achieved so much with the support of so many, speaks volumes about the calibre of his leadership. He recognises also that as leader there are frustrations especially when things do not move as quickly as he would wish. *'I keep telling myself, this is like a plant, yes it is literally a plant. I can water it, put it in the right position for the plant to receive the right amount of sun, avoiding the plant to die, but it's not up to me. ... ... So you planted this six months ago. Do I expect it to be a tree now? The church is a bit like this.'* As a model of collaborative and focussed leadership, the way in which Fr. Francis has led St. Pancras can be seen as a good example for others in similar situations to follow.

6.3.4.2. Holy Cross, Greystone.

Because Fr. Stephen has been involved with Holy Cross since its inception, a specific leadership style around the establishment of a church plant is difficult to discern. In many ways he fits the stereotypical model of a traditional Anglo-Catholic priest but his style is not autocratic and I have no evidence that he believes that 'Father knows best' which is so often the criticism of Anglo-Catholic clergy. He is approachable and pastoral and his congregation respect this facet of his ministry. Respondent 6 who previously attended a Roman Catholic church commented *'I feel comfortable here; the priests are lovely.'* That comfort reflects his calm and pastoral approach to a very racially diverse congregation. This is echoed by respondent 11, a middle-aged man who formerly attended a black Evangelical church. He valued *' The peace and service programme and detail of the service.'* These comments from people with very different previous church experiences are testimony to the way in which Fr. Stephen leads his church.

6.3.4.3. St Paul's Community Church, Melchester.

Given that this is such a new church plant, with a very small congregation, it is hard to identify a leadership style, as Fr. Sam, assisted by his family, does virtually everything, even at times making the tea and coffee whilst his wife runs the craft activity. In his position, he has to make all the decisions and take responsibility for them. He does discuss ideas with the congregation to gain their opinions when a change might be envisaged. So the planned move to a weekly service, at the time of writing on hold because of Covid-19 restrictions, was discussed at a service. This is how he explained the decision. *'but we're moving to weekly. That's the plan by the end of this academic year, we want to go weekly. I think I see the sort of fortnightly or monthly doesn't give people enough structure of ownership. … … What we found is that actually we have people come, like all churches, some weeks and not others. In fact we kind of think that if we went to weekly that wouldn't be an issue.'* There is no doubt that he is somewhat of a larger than life figure. Such a persona works well both in the school and the wider neighbourhood as it takes him away from looking like what many people think a vicar should look like. He feels it makes him more approachable and in the informality of the style of worship, this appears to be so. The role of a Pioneer leader can often be a lonely one, especially when change is forced externally. The fact that Fr. Sam is coping with this major change in sponsorship and style of the supporting church, does show a determined leader.

6.3.5. Growth.

It is probably a truism to say that every church wants to grow. Church plants generally are no exception to this and for some, there is an imperative to grow and then reproduce themselves in another place. An example of such a church is St. Paul's, Shadwell which between 2010 and 2014 sent out four different groups to plant new congregations in existing

churches.[339] Most others have more modest ambitions with a desire to grow to enable them to reach a level of independence from their founding congregation. This is the case with the three churches in this study.

6.3.5.1. St. Pancras, Rushey Common.

Fr. Francis saw as evidence of growth the change in the nature of the congregation since he became responsible for St. Pancras. *'The massive change I've seen from the beginning – we went from a very elderly congregation to a young congregation.'* This had particularly struck me and this comment was in answer to my observation to him that St. Pancras was not a typical Church of England congregation. He also commented that he was frustrated with what he perceived to be the lack of resources to support growth. Two important comments stressed that. *'Probably expected more support from the area, the episcopal area. It's always me going to them, saying and provoking them. That's what I am doing. … … So there are just a few available resources for us when we're doing what I am doing. So when I look at the Evangelical side, with all due respect, but I see that they throw all the money, a huge amount of resources at them.'* Later he made a similar comment. *'But I see the resources are going somewhere else. When we ask for resources, they are not there for us and also because most of the bishops are not Anglo-Catholics … … even if they keep repeating that they want to see good Anglo-Catholic mission, it's all on our shoulders.'* These comments raise serious issues which need addressing if Anglo-Catholic church plants are to flourish, especially in areas where there are large Evangelical churches competing for limited resources. In my experience also, the process for bidding for resources is often quite complex and time-consuming. Fr. Francis's message is an important one for Deanery and Diocesan Committees which oversee the allocation of funding for mission initiatives. The other growth

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[339] Thorlby, Tim. *Love, Sweat and Tears.* (London: Centre for Theology & Community, 2016). p.20

point which I have already referred to in this chapter is the Centre for Mindfulness and Spirituality. This, Fr. Francis sees as a significant initiative and something unique within a Church of England parish. As a result he has been invited on a number of occasions to address groups of clergy and other church leaders to explain what he is doing in this area. He believes that mindfulness fits well into the Anglo-Catholic tradition of spirituality and the contemplative life. To enable a church plant to grow, maintaining the horticultural metaphor, it needs watering and feeding. It also needs support, not only from its sending church, but from the wider Church of England community around it and its diocesan senior staff.

6.3.5.2. Holy Cross, Greystone.

Fr. Stephen, during the time he has been involved, has seen the church grow, but understands that as far as worship is concerned the size of the building is a limitation if more than sixty people were to attend. This I observed on the Patronal Festival on 19th May 2019 when 61 people were in attendance, doubtless including some from St. Clement's as the Bishop of Fulham was celebrating and preaching. The building was uncomfortably crowded. However, given his desire to increase the number of those who see Holy Cross as their church, he sees this as a point of growth. However, he is sceptical of what he sees as happening generally around the church growth agenda, especially in London. He commented *'There is this mindset that HTB has cracked the problem of church growth and if everyone else did the same thing, we'd all be fine.'* He then described an experience he recently had at a Trustees' meeting.[340] *'I was at a trustees' meeting at St. Mary's and they were starting to talk about church growth. They said this is what it looks like. What I tried to explain is that it isn't one size fits all. There's no magic trick that if someone bottled and sold it, we'd all be buying it. It is ultimately about stirring up something of God.'* He was challenged by one of

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[340] Fr. Stephen is a trustee of a new church, St. Mary's, adjacent to his parish.

the other trustees who said that they must be doing something right as they were opening up a new church. Fr. Stephen responded *'the statistics of the last hundred years show that the church generally is in decline and that's true of all the denominations and that a lot of these new things are just moving Christians around to worship somewhere else.'* He commented *'and that went down like plate of cold porridge.'* This could be said to apply in some measure to Holy Cross as one respondent to the questionnaire said that she had previously attended a Black Evangelical church and another had worshipped in a Roman Catholic church.

Fr. Stephen's views on church growth are not unexpected from someone of his tradition. He believes that his church will grow organically by its engagement with its parishioners and by the faithful celebration of the sacraments and the preaching of the word. His rejection of a 'one size fits all' model is important as so many churches latch on, probably in desperation, to something that they have seen work well elsewhere, without a proper understanding of the milieu in which it has worked.

6.3.5.3. St. Paul's Community Church, Melchester.

Fr. Sam had a particular concept of church growth as he saw that the Wednesday School Assembly could become a worshipping congregation that met on Sundays, initially monthly, then fortnightly.[341] He also had a very strong sense of pastoral ministry to his area by building up relationships. He aimed to be visible and ensured that details of church activities were regularly delivered to houses around. This vision doubtless would have been slow to come to fruition, but he believed it was the right one for the area. With the change of sponsorship to All Saints, this concept is being challenged by what he sees could be a more aggressive method of evangelism. I have already in this chapter described the tensions between these different approaches. During the time of my visits, I was aware that low

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[341] The change to a Sunday service was intended to free the worship from the constraints of a School Assembly.

numbers were becoming a problem and the fact that this plant did not produce any growth for its original sponsor led that church to divert its funding elsewhere, so putting St. Paul's at risk. Fr Sam commented *'As a sustainable model, I'm not sure that Parish Share growth via evangelism is necessarily the appropriate model.'* [342] On the positive side he sees the resources that All Saints is providing in terms of the food bank and the money advice service is a way of introducing people to the church by providing something which shows that the church actually cares about their daily struggles. I finished my research visits just as the change was being put in place. What growth will occur is not yet evidenced and also whether a change of focus will produce the same results in this much more deprived area of Melchester compared with the south of the city where All Saints has hitherto planted churches.

6.3.6. Sustainability.

Given the significant amount of resources, both human and financial which are devoted to church planting, this is a key area, both for the current activities, but more particularly for the future when the founding planter leaves. I specifically raised this issue with each of the clergy. As far as congregational questionnaire responses were concerned, this did not arise even in a free text answer. This was not surprising as there is a general assumption in churches of all types that the priest, minister, pastor will never leave and so things will continue as they are now. This often proves to be a challenge when it comes to recruiting a successor

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[342] The Parish Share is the contribution that each parish makes to its diocesan finances to cover the cost of ministry and its support.

6.3.6.1 St. Pancras, Rushey Common.

Fr. Francis is convinced that a church plant needs to be *'organic and not fake.'* There is no point in starting well with large numbers of people who come for the novelty and then to find after six months that they have not engaged. For Fr. Francis sustainability looks like this. *'That's why it think it is very important to centre and to root ourselves in spirituality.'* As far as the future is concerned, he said *'I frankly don't fear for the future but I see that the resources are going somewhere else.'* This is in line with his comments reported in the previous section. I then asked him whether he had a plan for the next five years. His reply was *'yes, stages in order to consolidate our congregation, yes to make it grow and grow organically. Also to concentrate on the Italian community and the St. Pancras Centre for Mindfulness. To consolidate the diversity and also consolidate the space for meditation and contemplation. This spirituality would actually be the root and the heart. I think we are looking five years because I want this to become not dependent on me. It is important that the plant has to become an autonomous entity. I'll still be here because I love it, if I'm not, it will still work, that's very important.'*

Fr. Francis has clear way forward for the sustainability of St. Pancras and a clear plan that has a focus for the continued mission of this church.

6.3.6.2. Holy Cross, Greystone.

Fr. Stephen has been in the parish as curate and vicar for the whole of the eleven years of his ordained ministry. He is very realistic about the future. Financially he does not see that Holy Cross would ever be able to pay for a priest, however much it grew, nor could St. Clement's afford to contribute to an extra priest. The supply of curates is limited, even more so for 'traditionalist' parishes, so there is no guarantee that there always will be a curate in post living in the house attached to Holy Cross; having a curate deprives the parish as a

whole of an income of around £15,000 per annum which they would receive as rent from letting the house. We discussed what would happen if he were to leave. The parish in living memory had not experienced a vacancy without a priest being available. There had always been a curate to step up to cover. He felt that the weekly mass would be able to continue as the timing at 5pm meant that there were other priests available. He envisaged some kind of monthly rota to cover this. There were very few retired priests in the area as it was not an area to which people retired. Fr. Stephen felt that an imaginative solution would be for a house to be purchased in the area so that an active retired priest could work on a 'House for Duty' basis.[343] He had already made one of the regular worshippers an unofficial churchwarden at Holy Cross and if he knew that he was leaving, he would identify others to take on leadership roles. Given that Holy Cross is growing to maturity, I believe that it is safe to say that it is now a sustainable congregation, although its finances are still incorporated with those of St. Clement's. In an ideal world, the clear separation of the finances would help those who attend Holy Cross to take more responsibility for their future.

6.3.6.3. St Paul's Community Church, Melchester.

This is a much more complex situation, given the change of sponsorship from a small Anglo-Catholic church to that of a large charismatic Evangelical church with a number of years of experience of a particular style of church planting. By the actions of the Archdeacon of Melchester in arranging this transition, it seems likely that the bishop and senior staff want this plant to be sustainable. Fr. Sam wants to continue up to and through the renewal of the Bishop's Mission Order, after which he feels it will be the right time to hand over to someone else. He was surprised that the Bishop at his licensing said *'we need to think about succession.'* On reflection he thought *'I think it's right in the sense that you need to have a*

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[343] House for Duty provides free housing for a retired or self-supporting priest who offers to serve in a parish for an agreed part of the week without payment, other than expenses. It is more usual in rural areas.

long-term plan which you should allow to change as God wishes.' When I spoke to him he felt he would be there for another four years or so. Important as Fr. Sam is to St. Paul's, there is the tension between his vision and the way in which All Saints sees the future. Will they be prepared to go along with Fr. Sam's different model, given that they have made a four year commitment in terms of finance and volunteers, or will they want to replicate what they see as the success of their other plants? The outcome of this will provide significant messages for those from the Anglo-Catholic tradition who want to be church planters.

6.4. Conclusion.

There is an obvious tension in trying to make generalisable conclusions from the study of three very different churches but the evidence of the six overlapping themes in these churches does enable some lessons to be drawn which can be applicable in different situations for Anglo-Catholic church planters. Specifically from the foregoing analysis of the internal themes, there are in addition three external factors of which account needs to be taken. They also have an important influence on whether the plant will be 'successful' and also on what the leader of the plant does to work out the vision.

The first is *intentionality*. By this I mean that church planting has to be undertaken positively and as part of a parish, or wider church, strategy. There is a danger that parishes and clergy can be carried away on the latest wave of enthusiasm or by the newest up-beat report and think that a church plant or some other such initiative is the panacea for all their missional failings and will prove that the mission of that particular church is moving forward.[344] This is the road to failure. It reflects what Jesus was referring to in the parable of

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[344] From personal experience of conducting Archdeacon's Inspections of parishes over a period of more than 20 years, I have seen this when parishes submit the annual ' Statistics for Mission' which in my diocese are used as evidence of growth (or otherwise). Considerable effort is often made to prove that something they are doing can be labelled as 'a fresh expression of church' or 'doing mission'. There is often covert pressure for a parish to show that it is involved in the latest type of mission initiative.

the Sower about the seed which 'sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away' (Matthew 13:5-6). Intentionality gives that depth, that rootedness as proper preparations have been made, an analysis of the factors for and against undertaking a plant has been carefully undertaken and there is a wide range of acceptance and active support from all the different stakeholders.

The second factor that is essential is *the wholehearted support of 'the sending church'.* As an example, I have noted the way in which Fr. Francis engaged with the congregation of St. Paul's to show them the vision that he had for St. Pancras. It was a regular, slow but consistent process and followed the proposal of the Area Bishop to link St. Pancras with St. Paul's. I have already detailed this in chapter five.

In contrast, although St. Paul's Community Church had support, in the form of expenses for Fr. Sam, I observed very little other support. Other than when the Bishop's Mission Order was delivered and Fr. Sam licensed under it, there was only one occasion when I met someone from the 'sending church' at a service at St. Paul's. When they decided to end the payment of Fr. Sam's expenses, Fr. Sam commented:

> *The parish didn't want to break the link, but they didn't want to resource it. … … If you've got a parish that is needy, needy is perhaps the wrong word, but a parish that is in need trying to plant a church… …This is a parish that liked the idea of having of having somebody there.'*

Without clear and unqualified support for a guaranteed period of time, there is significant risk that the plant will not survive. The London plants (from a different churchmanship) described by Tim Thorlby in '*Love, Sweat and Tears* came with a time-limited 'dowry' of both

financial and human resource from the sending church. [345] This is what All Saints is now providing for the next four years to support St. Paul's.

In the case of Holy Cross, given that it was using a building owned by the parish and with the parish priest and others, a curate and a retired priest from St. Clement's, as its ministerial support, this was not a significant issue and certainly in the earlier stages, and still to some extent now, there was an overlap of congregations.

The third factor is the support *from the wider church and the diocese*. I have noted above that for St. Pancras, the planned link with St. Paul's was at the instigation of the area bishop and was enthusiastically received. However, Fr. Francis expressed his disappointment at the difficulty he has in obtaining resources. He felt that he was always in competition with the large Evangelical churches in the episcopal area and that there was not a real recognition of his need for support. It is perhaps significant that for the whole time that I was attending St. Pancras, there was no mention of a visit from the bishop.[346] There does need to be a clear and equitable process for allocating resources, which in Fr. Francis's view, was not in place.

In contrast, the Bishop of Fulham came to Holy Cross on a number of occasions and Fr. Stephen was very appreciative of his pastoral support.[347] The network of traditionalist parishes is a close-knit one and provides mutual support but Fr. Stephen is also actively involved in the life of his non-traditionalist deanery and as trustee of a new church on the borders of his parish. [348]

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[345] Thorlby, Tim. *Love, Sweat and Tears.* (London: Centre for Theology & Community, 2016.).

[346]The area bishop was the acting diocesan bishop for some of the time of my research so that may have limited his availability.

[347] Out of the 413 parishes in the Diocese of London, the Bishop of Fulham only has oversight of 46, so he is able to be much more available than the other area bishops.

[348] They are linked through membership of 'The Society under the patronage of St. Wilfrid and St. Hilda'.

St. Paul's Community Church had the support of the Diocese of Melchester from the beginning as it recognised the need of that area, which had been without an obvious Church of England presence since the closure of the mediaeval church. What seemed to be lacking, in my view, was some underpinning support for Fr. Sam, other than his attachment to the sponsoring parish and the normal relationship with the area dean and archdeacon. Pioneer ministry can be very lonely and at times depressing. In my experience of involvement in a couple of new churches, one dating back to the late nineteen seventies, there does need to be either a formal or informal support group, a safe place for the priest to sound out ideas and air frustrations. It is possible that the lack of such support indirectly led to the withdrawal of funding by the sponsoring parish.

In this chapter I have identified the key elements from my research that are important in the support of a church plant, its leader and its congregation from its inception and into its period of consolidation. I have evidenced them with verbatim quotations both from interviews and questionnaire responses, thereby ensuring that the lived experiences of those involved are heard, rather than relying on church planting theory. None of these elements are specific to Anglo-Catholics although the emphasis on worship as well as the incarnational style of ministry and mission may not be so strong in other parts of the Church of England. There is therefore no compelling reason, other than in terms of resources why Anglo-Catholic parishes should not be planting churches.

In the next chapter, I will look these themes in relation to the work of the Victorian Anglo-Catholics whether these can be seen in their activities as well as any others which could be relevant today.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COMPARISONS WITH THE VICTORIAN ACTIVITY AND CURRENT ANGLO-CATHOLIC CHURCH PLANTS.

7.1. Introduction.

This chapter aims to link the Victorian Anglo-Catholic establishment of new churches by two particular individuals, Richard Temple West and Richard Foster with a description of three present-day church plants that have come out of the Anglo-Catholic tradition and show that there some similarities in approach although the contexts are very different. From my participant observation and the relevant literature with the help of thematic analysis, I have identified six themes which will be the basis of my comparison..

When we are considering the development of the Oxfor Movement we need to put it into its historical context. 1848 was a tumultuous year across Europe with revolutions or attempted revolutions occurring in a France, Italy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire as well as other countries or provinces. In England, there was concern about these events. The Church of England, as the 'Established Church' was seen, especially by the middle classes, as a stabilising element of social control. (I have referred, in an earlier chapter,[349] to the verse from Mrs C.F. Alexander's hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' which describes what she believed to be the God-ordained social order of Victorian society). Any change in the church could be perceived as upsetting this balance. The inclusion of non-Anglicans in parliament and in other institutions added to this concern; so many felt that the church was

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[349] See p. 83

under threat. Although those who originated (if such a word is adequate to describe the issue of Ninety Tracts) the 'Oxford Movement' thought that they were protesting against constitutional reforms which they saw as endangering the church and therefore protecting its status against an interfering government, others, like Bishop Bagot, saw the Tracts as a danger to the church.[350]Anything which might upset the *status quo* whether in doctrine or liturgical practice was to be resisted.

7.2. Demography.

When considering these two differing periods it is important to see what changes made the Victorians engage in such a widespread programme of church building, especially in urban areas. One of the major differences between the two periods is population change. As an example, which is replicated in many other urban or suburban areas across England, Julian Litten relates how the population of Walthamstow, the main area of Richard Foster's labours, grew from a population of 3,006 to that of 96,720 between 1801 and 1901.[351] He attributes much of this to the period after 1870 when the railway line from Liverpool Street to Chingford was opened which encouraged housing development and commuting. The single twelfth century parish church was no longer able to meet the needs of this expanding suburb, so other churches were built as recounted previously. The same pattern was happening elsewhere in London. John Wolffe of The Open University describes the building of four churches in Finchley between the 1840s and 1890s.[352]

The area of Paddington where Richard Temple West built St. Mary Magdalene was already an area of poor housing and Charles Booth described the deprivation and immorality

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[350] p. 86
[351] Litten, Julian W.S. *St. Barnabas and St. James the Greater.* (Walthamstow: The PCC of St. Barnabas and St. James the Greater, 2003). p.4
[352] Wolffe, John. 'The Chicken or The Egg? Building Anglican Churches and Building Congregations in a Victorian London Suburb'. *Material Religion, 9:1,36-59, (2013).*

of the area, fifty years on.[353] But the more wealthy residents who attended All Saints, Margaret Street in the eighteen-fifties and found the three mile journey quite challenging wanted a church nearer to where they lived. [354] The location was probably secondary and depended very much on the availability of a site in an area where, because of recent house building, empty sites were hard to find.

The initiative for church plants today comes from a similar demographic concern. In some places, as in my own parish, it is driven as a response to the need for a Christian presence in a new housing area. In others, a new church is planted in an existing area where the visible Christian presence has become weak or has disappeared. The data from the research supports this contention.

The witness of St. Pancras, Rushey Common, was seen by the diocesan authorities to be very weak and had been making little impact in its parish for a number of years. When it fell vacant, opportunity was taken to find a way of reviving it; if that failed, it would be closed. A church plant/graft was proposed by the diocesan authorities and initiated with the support of St. Paul's. Active Christian witness became obvious at the church, with the help of large banners on the external wall opposite the park and the bus stop, the open doors as well as Fr. Francis's large email contact list.

In the case of Holy Cross, Greystone, the parish church was situated at the extreme northern boundary of the parish and was invisible to most of the parish. The Mission Hall, in the south of the parish, had been out of use as far as the church was concerned, for nearly seventy years. The area of the parish in which it was situated was somewhat more ethnically diverse than the northern part of the parish. The missional imperative was to establish a

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[353] Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London*: *3rd Series Religious Influences Volume 3*. (London: The MacMillan Company 1902). p. 146

[354] Carter, T.T., *Richard Temple West – A Record of Life and Work.* (London: J Masters & Co., 1895). p. 33

centre of Christian witness and worship in that part of the parish. That was done by starting a Sunday afternoon mass and advertising it both with leaflets, but also by the use of a large 'A board' placed strategically outside in the middle of the pavement. This encouraged some local people to attend, especially older people whose mobility was limited, as public transport to the parish church was very inconvenient and involved a walk of several hundred metres at the end of the bus journey. This represents an example of a virtually disused church-owned building being brought back into use in an unchurched area so as to provide a physical Christian presence in an area previously devoid of one.

For St. Paul's Community Church in Melchester, there is a somewhat similar situation in respect of the lack of a visible and viable Christian presence. The medieval Grade II building has not been used for worship since 2010 when a decision was taken to close it based on the dwindling numbers of regular worshippers. Since then it has slowly been falling into disrepair and has been subjected to sporadic vandalism and break-ins. What did exist was a church school named after the closed parish church but until the arrival of Fr. Sam and the establishment of St. Paul's Community Church, the Christian presence was purely nominal. With the opening of St. Paul's Community Church there was once more a place of worship in what previously was a relatively unchurched area.

These three contemporary examples demonstrate the way in which one of the drivers for Victorian church building has been translated into present day situations to ensure a wider and more visible Christian presence in these areas. Demographic and geographical considerations very often underpin current church planting as individual churches and wider church organisations endeavour to meet the needs of a changing population.

7.3. Philanthropy and Funding.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the setting up of new churches in Victorian times is the way in which they are funded. Sarah Flew has documented in great detail the philanthropic activities that funded much of church life in London in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the Edwardian era up to the beginning of the First World War.[355] But with the passing of time, the large church building funds, to which philanthropists and corporations contributed, have in the main, ceased to exist. Any funding available is now usually allocated by the Church Commissioners to dioceses for the support of projects in parishes. It is not usually large scale capital funding. I have related in an earlier chapter the very extensive philanthropic giving by Richard Foster to enable new churches. Similarly, I have noted the way in which Richard Temple West was able to accumulate funding towards his various projects. His biographer, T. T. Carter, commented:

> It was afterwards said of West, by the Archbishop's secretary, that he was the best beggar in London, that he could collect for charitable purposes £5,000 a year through his offertories. We can understand what would have been his efforts for a church of his own.[356]

On the following page, Carter records how when it was decided to build an aisle to enlarge the church, 'two ladies sold their house and furniture, which just met the required sum'.[357] Documents stored at the London Metropolitan Archive show that West provided a very detailed half-yearly statement of the finances of St. Mary Magdalene for his congregation,

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[355] Flew, Sarah. *Philanthropy and the Funding of the Church of England, 1856-1914.* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015). It was at the end of this period that St. Pancras was built.
[356] Carter, T.T., *Richard Temple West – A Record of Life and Work.* (London: J Masters & Co., 1895). p. 34
[349] Carter, p.35

accompanied by an exhortation to maintain or increase giving in order to support and extend the ministry of the church.[358]

None of the three plants in my research had any real initial financial backing. St. Pancras, was supported on a day to day basis by St. Paul's, but with the intention that it should become financially independent. Holy Cross still does not have its finances separate from those of St. Clements's. St Paul's Community Church did receive an annual grant of £4,000 from its sponsoring church for running expenses but that was withdrawn after only two years and the money diverted to employing a children and families worker, based at the parish church. This led to the change of sponsoring church which agreed to maintain that amount for four years. The Diocese of Melchester supplied the vicar's stipend and housing as part of its support of Pioneer Ministry.

However in the wider world of church planting, there is a significant difference. St. Paul's, Shadwell in east London was one of the first plants in that area supported by Holy Trinity, Brompton. Tim Thorlby relates:

> [There was] a grant of £50,000 from HTB, to be drawn down as required, plus a further goodwill offering of c£35,000 (including Gift Aid) collected from the wider HTB Network at Focus, their annual summer gathering. [359]

So there was a 'founding dowry' or 'seed corn' in excess of £80,000 with the expectation that St. Paul's would become self-supporting. This was soon to be the case as St. Paul's later went on to plant a congregation in St. Peter's, Bethnal Green and gave a start-up 'goodwill gift of £10,000'.[360] Similarly when St. Paul's initiated a church plant in All Hallows, Bow, St Paul's

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[358] Evidenced from personal access to uncatalogued material on 4th June 2021.
[359] Thorlby, Tim. *Love, Sweat and Tears.*(London: Centre for Theology & Community, 2016. p. 21
[360] Thorlby p. 45

provided over £160,000 to All Hallows over five years'.[361] Such large amounts of support are beyond the wildest dreams of present day Anglo-Catholic churches who wish to instigate a church plant as there are no comparable large and wealthy churches willing to support such a range of church plants. Instead they are left to the vagaries and uncertainties of bidding for diocesan project funding, provided by the Church Commissioners.

7.4. Intentionality.

In my view this was as important to the Victorian church builders as it is today for those who wish to engage in church planting. From my reading of the biographies of Richard Temple West and Richard Foster, described in a previous chapter, it can be seen that these men were very much focussed on and driven by their projects. West devoted himself to the establishment and ongoing support of St. Mary Magdalene, even after a disastrous fire before the building was completed. Within a couple of hours of the fire being extinguished, he had posted placards on the still hot church walls announcing ten services on the following day in the chapel of St. Ambrose, the 'tin tabernacle' that preceded the building of St. Mary Magdalene, to thank God that the damage had been limited. The first service of Holy Communion was scheduled for 4am.[362] The fire is described in very great detail by William Scott, one of West's curates.[363]

Foster had a similar enthusiasm. In his diary he observed that his interest in church growth, preceded 1848. He had tried, without success to persuade the people of West Hackney parish, which he had been attending for ten years, to extend the church to provide

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[361] Thorlby p. 60
[362] Carter. pp 36-37
[363] Scott, William. *Fifty Years at St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington.* (London: H.G. Saunders & Son, 1918)

more free seats for the poor.[364] He failed in this attempt.[365] But in 1848 he joined with others in forming a committee to promote the building of the church of St. Matthias and an adjacent school for an area of Stoke Newington and Hornsey which had five thousand inhabitants and no local church. He was the honorary secretary to the committee. The school opened on All Saints' Day 1849 and was used for worship until the church was consecrated on June 13th 1853. His biographer writes:

> He [Foster] always looked on it as the beginning of his endeavours towards improving the spiritual and physical conditions of thousands in the poorest parts of London.[366]

These examples show clearly the drive and the energy which these two men possessed and enabled them to carry out the work to which they believed that they had been called by God.

In the previous chapter, six themes were described which I had identified from my research. I want now to consider these themes in relation to the work that West and Foster undertook to see whether these themes are mirrored in part or in whole in their work, taking into consideration the different historical contexts.

7.5. Worship.

For West, as a priest, the conduct of worship in his church was obviously a very high priority and as an Anglo-Catholic, he would wish it to be of a high standard in every respect. It is fortunate that his biographer was able to have access to a contemporary account of a

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[364] Most churches in the first half of the nineteenth century had box pews which were rented out. The poor had some benches on which they could sit; otherwise they would have to stand. So 'the weakest went to the wall' as the saying goes.
[365] Foster, W.F. *Richard Foster.* London: Eyre and Spottiswood Ltd. 1914 (private circulation). p. 45
[366] Foster, pp. 52-3

weekday evensong in St. Mary Magdalene at the beginning of Advent 1872. The chronicler starts his account as follows:

> A great deal has been said of late years respecting the various merits of High and Low Church worship. I therefore determined to judge for myself, and chose for my *locale* S. Mary Magdalene's, of which the Rev. R. T. West is the Vicar.[367]

The writer describes the atmosphere before the service started and comments approvingly that the sexes were seated separately. He then goes through the service noting significant points. He was very impressed by the congregational singing both of the psalms and the hymns. He said that the extempore sermon, preached by West 'was, as far as I understand the word, Evangelical'.[368] He finishes his report with these words:

> The whole service seemed throughout to be marked by deep reverence, and the congregation seemed impressed with the thought of Whose Presence was among them. There was a slight inclination of the head at the *Gloria Patri*, and at the name of JESUS, otherwise I saw nothing extraordinary. My advice to those who have never been to a High Church service is to go and see, if they can discern any want of reverence, or anything likely to take their thoughts from the holy purpose for which they are met together.[369]

Another writer had visited St. Mary Magdalene on Easter Day 1872. He was impressed both by the numbers attending and the style of worship. This is the conclusion of his article:

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[367] Carter. p. 39
[368] Carter p. 40
[369] Carter. p. 41

[O]n returning home, one could not but feel after such a service as that, at S. Mary Magdalene's, that there is life in the old Church yet. It is no question about niceties of doctrine or the fashion of a vestment. It is a question of life and death.[370]

A third writer was impressed by the reverence of the congregation which he attributed to the influence of West over his parishioners. He also commented on the number of young men who were present.

West was keen to defend, but not aggressively, what he believed to be the essentials of Anglo-Catholic worship and a writer of a letter to the *West London Express* on April 27th 1878 noted these as 'the daily Eucharist, lights, vestments, and the Eastward position'.[371] Worship, conducted as in the apostolic injunction 'decently and in order' was the centre around which West built his ministry. [372]

As far as Richard Foster is concerned there is less evidence of his attitude to the style of worship. Litten describes him as a keen supporter of the Oxford Movement although Foster referred to himself as a 'Prayer Book Churchman'.[373] He was a regular worshipper and every day after breakfast would attend Morning Prayer at West Hackney Parish Church before walking to his office in the City. Yet, despite his devotion to this service, he was very aware of the limitations of the standard Prayer Book services. His son wrote: 'The clergy, out of touch with their parishioners, were holding services in such a way which made no appeal to men's (*sic)* hearts.'[374] Foster was impressed by the different style of worship at Leeds

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[370] Carter. p. 42
[371] Carter. p. 45
[372] 1 Corinthians 14:40
[373] Litten, Julian W.S. *St. Barnabas and St. James the Greater.* (Walthamstow: The PCC of St. Barnabas and St. James the Greater, 2003). p. 5
[374] Foster, W.F. *Richard Foster.* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood Ltd., 1914). p. 60

Parish Church, conducted by Walter Hook, one of the prominent men in the Oxford Movement.

> Instead of the lifeless service he was accustomed to in London of the old three-decker type, carried on between parson and clerk in a bare church, with little singing, and that mostly bad, little congregational worship, with long dull sermons, preached by a clergyman in a long black gown to a small somnolent congregation, he found for the first time a surpliced choir, a service bright and congregational, preaching good and bracing, the church beautifully decorated, and, in consequence, a large and enthusiastic congregation.[375]

This experience led Foster to the belief that different types of services were necessary for different congregations – a revolutionary idea at the time which would indeed fit in with the ideas proposed in *Mission Shaped Church* over a century and a half later. In his correspondence, there are numerous letters which emphasise the same point: 'we want short, fervid services with arousing, energetic sermons which would come home to the thoughts and feelings of the poor.'[376]

It can be seen therefore that just as 'worship' is a key theme for the present day church plants and the main public and obvious focus of their activities, it was equally important to the Victorians. The offering of reverent, accessible and well-executed worship was and still is seen as an important way of attracting worshippers into the churches as well as underpinning the other activities of a church. Many advertisements for church services stress their style of worship, using such words as 'lively, 'relevant', 'reverent' or 'inclusive' to name but a few. Job adverts for clergy often include similar phrases. The physical activity

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[375] Foster. p. 60
[376] Foster. p. 63

of worship is vital but is not a 'one size fits all' that meets the needs of everyone; one person's worship songs with guitars, drums and lighting effects is for those who want what they see as traditional worship, anathema and vice-versa.

In their own spheres of influence, both West and Foster worked to ensure that this was happening. For West, it was evidenced in the size of his congregations such as 1122 communicants on Easter Day 1872. Foster used his wealth to support 'those who, so long as they were orthodox, filled their churches , although their services were more ritualistic than he himself cared for.'[377]

7.6. Community.

The concept of a 'church community' or a 'church family', which is seen to be so important today in the majority of churches, was probably unknown to the Victorian Anglo-Catholics who looked rather at the role of the church in relation to its parish. An extensive search of literature fails to find any reference to this concept, as it would be understood today. Neither do either of my major sources, the biographies of Richard Temple West and Richard Foster, mention anything which could be aligned with this. So in this respect, we cannot learn anything from their experience. Their concept of community was outward facing and seen as the way in which the church, both locally and nationally, engaged with the wider society, particularly in the absence of organised state welfare and educational provision, such as Social Services, state maintained schools or the National Health Service.

West certainly saw his ministry in this light. Not content with having established St. Mary Magdalene as a place of worship he set up a great range of agencies to support the less fortunate members of society. For his own church he set up a choir school, but alongside this,

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[377] Foster. p. 64

he founded private schools for different classes. He established a home for religious sisters who worked in his parish, a Penitentiary Home, a Working Men's Club, a Nurses' Institute which trained and supported nurses. He founded a daughter church, St. Martha's 'intended for a simpler worship to suit those for whom choral singing was a difficulty.'[378] Outside of the parish were a female prisoners' hostel for those ending their sentences and a Sanatorium for Inebriates in Spelthorne, about sixteen miles away from Paddington. All of these were personally supported by West. Carter reports the Bishop of Nassau, a contemporary, friend, and supporter of West, saying that it was 'about the most notable organisation for home missionary purposes that had been seen in an English town parish in modern times.'[379] Such was the impact of West on his parish and the wider community. This is confirmed in his obituary in the Church Times, which lists a number of these impacts.[380]

Foster's contribution to the community and the mission of the church can be seen in his philanthropic activities in supporting the building of new churches. But his concern went beyond the spiritual to the physical needs of people. He involved himself in School Boards as ' the supremacy of the Church was threatened by the Dissenters'.[381] He was Treasurer of the London Hospital and a Governor of St. Bartholomew's. He built houses in Walthamstow and took an interest in their gardens to the extent that he employed a gardener to look after them. He founded a Society in 1857 to improve cottages in the older part of Hastings as well as setting up in 1861 the London Labourers' Dwellings Society to support improvements in housing in the poorer parts of London.[382] Ahead of his time, he also supported co-partnership in the South Metropolitan Gas Company in which he was a major shareholder. In addition to

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[378] Foster. p. 44
[379] Carter. p. 44
[380] Church Times. February 17th, 1893. p. 168. Accessed 17th March 2021.
[381] Foster p. 134
[382] Foster. pp. 135-137

all of these he supported what would now be described as environmental activities as he was keen to subscribe to the preservation of green open spaces in North London.

Both of these men embraced the idea of community as being an integral part both of the mission of the church as well as the lives of Christians as individuals. Like the three research churches, they were determined that the Gospel should be lived out and witnessed to in the wider communities, the parishes, in which they were involved. A strong response to the needs of the community, beyond the walls of the church, is a factor which can contribute to the success of a church plant.

7.7. Vision.

The concept of vision in a formal sense is a relatively modern idea and is an important part of the business world, in which companies draw up their vision for the future to show how they see themselves developing. This is also designed to draw attention to the company and make it stand out against its competitors. Many churches today have adopted this practice and have devised short statements which summarise their vision. The Church of England website has a section devoted to helping churches articulate their visions.[383] West and Foster certainly would not have had 'a vision statement' but the way in which they worked, showed that each of them had a clear vision for their activities. Each of them knew the type of church they were establishing. Foster was keen to replicate the style of worship at All Saints', Margaret Street. Foster's building of St. Barnabas, Walthamstow was designed for Anglo-Catholic worship. (It maintains these features today with the altar set for the *ad orientem* celebration of the Eucharist and a tabernacle for the Reserved Sacrament on the shelf behind with six very tall candlesticks.) But these were individual and personal visions rather than

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[383] www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/making-changes-your-building-and-churchyard/develop-your-vision. Accessed 10th December 2020

dictated or imposed by a diocesan strategy (and perhaps being policed by the Archdeacon or a Committee, through an audit of each parish's Mission Action Plans). There would not have been any sense of it being replicated in the same way in other areas or parishes.

When the idea of establishing a mission in Paddington was raised, West was asked to carry it out. He enthusiastically responded and made that vision his own. With the help of one of the Paddington residents, a Mr. D. Wood, who eventually became a key figure at St. Mary Magdalene's, he spent every Saturday afternoon exploring various parts of Paddington to find a site for this new church. When he found the site, he immediately began the work of building the church. In fact, he started with a temporary church, which was known as the chapel of St. Ambrose. The way in which this church was organised was reported in one of the journals of the day.

> The arrangement of the Sunday Services is somewhat novel, and it will be curious to see whether the plan answers. They are as follows: Holy Communion, 8 a.m.; Morning Prayer and Sermon, 10; Holy Communion, 10.30; Litany, 3; First Evensong 3.30; Second Evensong and Sermon, 7.[384]

£2,200 had already been subscribed towards the purchase of the site and West sought to raise a further £2,600 to underpin the building of a permanent church and its associated school. The vision of others that he had made his own was becoming so successful that the plan to have a clergy house built adjacent to the church, which was a common feature of Victorian churches, was abandoned in favour of increasing the size of the church by building an aisle. Throughout his ministry West maintained the vision that was behind the foundation of St. Mary Magdalene.

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[384] Carter. pp. 33-4

Foster had seen the need for new or extended churches well before 1848 as he had tried to persuade West Hackney Parish Church to expand. Unfortunately he failed in this. But in 1848 he met a number of men who wanted to build a District Church for Stoke Newington and Hornsey.[385] This proved to be the beginning of a long association and the founding in 1854 of what might be described as a fraternity – the Stoke Newington and Hackney Church Association. It had a clear vision which describes exactly Foster's own views. Rule II states:

> That the object of the Association be the Glory of God in the extension of His Church by all lawful means, the promotion of the increase and efficient performance of all the Offices of the Church, the diffusion of Christian knowledge, the exercise of Works of Charity, and the Mutual Improvement of the Members of the Association.[386]

The rules go on to explain how these objects are to be fulfilled and it can be seen from them that they were an important influence on Foster's life. For his vision was not only about physically building new churches and extending older ones; there was a serious spiritual side with a focus on mission as the Association expected its members 'to embrace the opportunities it affords of helping the sick and needy, instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the wanderers and outcasts, and sending the blessed Gospel to the Heathen.'[387]

So for both of these men, there was a clear vision for what they wanted to achieve. Like their twenty-first century counterparts, they had a desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed in areas of need and consistently worked towards this end.

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[385] Foster. pp. 51-2
[386] Foster. p. 56
[387] Foster. p57

7.8. Leadership.

From the previous sections, it can be seen that both West and Foster were outstanding leaders. They knew what they wanted to achieve and were able to encourage others to follow them in doing so. Once West had accepted the vision of the Paddington Mission, he devoted all his energies to it. From what is recorded by Carter in West's biography, this was crucial in ensuring that the church succeeded. From the service records in the London Metropolitan Archive, it can be seen that West led a team of a number (usually around six) of other clergy, who shared with him in the conduct of worship. From the biography it is clear that throughout his ministry, West led his church in a very obvious and gifted way. A journal at the time remarked: ' It is evident that neither Mr. West, nor his parishioners are disposed to let the grass grow under their feet.'[388] Similarly another journal commented, 'It says much for Mr. West's influence over people and administrative capacity that he had formed what I hear is considered a model congregation.'[389]

Foster also showed significant leadership. The Stoke Newington and Hackney Church Association has already been mentioned, but he took a leading role in ensuring that new parishes were established both across North London as well as supporting the Bishop of Rochester's scheme for new churches in South London, the Ten Churches Scheme, to the extent that not only was he a leading member of the committee, but also he contributed financially to setting up two mission districts both in terms of paying for two clergy but also in contributing to the purchase of the sites for these churches.[390] He also was instrumental in promoting the quite revolutionary idea at that time of 'associated parishes – rich and poor'. The aim was that a rich parish would link with a poor parish which would support it both in

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[388] Carter. p. 39.
[389] Carter. p. 44
[390] Foster. pp. 126-7

terms of finance and workers.[391] The link between Chislehurst, where he lived after moving from Clapton, and St. Katherine's, Rotherhithe was one to which he gave significant support and energy.

These two men showed in their differing ways significant leadership in the areas of church work with which they were involved. The success of St. Mary Magdalene and the various projects which occupied Foster are evidence of this.

This type of leadership was very different from that which is frequently referred to today in Church Growth and Church Planting literature.[392]As seen above as a concept leadership was unchallenged in the Victorian Church. It was the role of the parson in each parish with no contention, except perhaps from a patron who might want to exert pressure for the parson to conform to his expectations, political or social. The current concept of 'lay leaders' or 'shared leadership' within an individual congregation, or a lay-led church would be outside the Victorian experience and probably comprehension. The engaged laity, often middle class and relatively wealthy, supported the clergy in their view of what the church should be doing as well as providing funding. Lay people were involved in ministry, such as 'parish visitors' or ' scripture readers' but these were supportive, not leadership, roles. Foster accepted this view although he was unwilling to support 'lazy clergy'; he donated to causes which he felt he could support and was heavily involved as a layman in much of church activity as has been noted in earlier chapters.

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[391] This has only come to be an accepted way of support over the last thirty years or so through the work of the Church Urban Fund.

[392] Mission and Public Affairs Council. *Mission-shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context.* London: Church House Publishing, 2004. *Passim.*

Recently I have been following an interesting debate in the 'Thinking Anglicans' website about how the leadership role of bishops should be exercised.[393] Is it pastoral, managerial or both? It would be interesting to see how West and Foster saw the role of their bishops.

7.9 Growth.

The concern with church growth which so preoccupies the Church of England today would have been alien both to West and Foster. What would have been more familiar would have been ensuring that churches met the needs of those who lived in the parish. Churches were built to meet the needs of a given and usually growing area. The seats available and the size of the worship space were planned according to the population of the area to be served. So new churches were built in areas of new housing to meet the needs of a growing population, especially in large cities. The main motive was evangelism, to reach the unchurched, but there was also the fear of competition from other denominations as well as the underlying desire to maintain some form of social control.[394] In Leeds, Walter Hook (who has already been mentioned in connection with both West and Foster) undertook considerable work to ensure that there were sufficient churches and clergy to meet the needs of that fast-growing city, especially as Methodism had become the largest denomination following John Wesley's visit.[395]

As I have commented, this modern concept of 'Church Growth', so evident in much of the literature as well as in Diocesan strategies would not have been understood in the Victorian age. Churches were built and few, if any, from my research, were closed. In my diocese, when I was a member of the 'Closed Churches Uses Committee' we had two sites, one was a crumbling roofless 16th century building, miles away from any habitation in a copse on top of

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[393] www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk.
[394] See p.186
[395] https://covenant.livingchurch.org/2021/12/15/the-greatest-anglo-catholic-church-planter/. Accessed 08/02/22.

a hill , and the other a derelict tower. These were still theoretically open for worship because the legal processes for closure had never been implemented. Because they had not legally been closed, at the very least they needed to be insured, thus being a drain on resources available for the present day church.

As has been noted earlier, West saw this not only through worship, although the 1,122 communicants on Easter Day 1872 testify to the fact that the worship that was offered met their spiritual needs of those who attended. [396] He also ensured that the physical needs of his parishioners were met by the range of social and community projects described earlier. However, Charles Booth at the end of the nineteenth century wryly commented:

> The elaborate services at St. Mary Magdalene's draw good congregations but not to any extent from parishioners; nor do any large number attend the special mission services. The clergy are devoted to their work, and the people, they say, are full of gratitude, respect and love; 'there is no unwillingness to come to church' – *only they do not come*.[397] (My italics).

Foster was concerned not only by the lack of churches in some areas but also that,

> in London the want of churches and clergy was not so serious a feature of the situation as the fact that the existing churches, overcrowded as they should have been, were far from full.[398]

This comment shows Foster's concern that the church of his time was losing its appeal, especially among the 'lower classes' because of its unwillingness to adapt and meet the needs

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[396] Carter. p. 41
[397] Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London*: *3rd Series Religious Influences Volume 3*. (London: The MacMillan Company 1902). p. 120
[398] Foster. p. 60

of the wider population. He was looking for more attractive worship. As his biographer wrote:/

> …the times required other methods. [this] taught him that there was no fixed rule as to what type of service was right, and that in different times and with different congregations a different degree of ritual might be desirable.[399]

Even though our modern concept of church growth was unknown to West and Foster, the underlying desire to have a flourishing and well-attended church was a key issue for them. They saw it as sign that the church was fulfilling its mission of bringing the Christian faith to the whole of society.

7.10. Sustainability.

If 'growth' were a somewhat alien concept to West and Foster, that of 'sustainability' would seem to be even more so. Each new church needs to establish a structure that can ensure that it can continue, even after the founding planter relinquishes responsibility for its support.. This is important today as every church, new and old, has to look towards its future in terms of ministry and financial resources. The Victorian Church did not have such bodies as Diocesan Boards of Finance or Boards of Ministry to oversee this. The previous section on Philanthropy goes some way to explaining how churches were financed as well as mentioning the existence of various episcopally supported building funds and committees in different dioceses, which generally no longer exist. It is therefore difficult to link the Victorian church with this modern concept because of the vast difference in culture within

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[399] Foster. p. 61

church and society as well as the changes in the structure and financing of the Church of England over the intervening years. In all my historical reading, I have found nothing to suggest that the Victorians regarded their new churches as being anything other than being permanent and enduring, like the many thousands of mediaeval churches that had been ministering to parishes, large and small, throughout England for centuries; the new churches were seen as additions to fill in the gaps that the changes in population had brought about, hence the large church building programme in Walthamstow. This was repeated across England. In my own parish, a mission church was built in 1865 to meet a growing housing area and demolished in 1969 because it was unsafe and sparsely attended.[400] In many other places, Victorian churches have been demolished or have become centres of worship for other denominations or faith communities or changed for secular uses. An example of this is the former St. Luke's church in Bedford.[401]

7.11. Conclusion.

This chapter brings into contrast the labours of the Victorians and what is happening today. It shows that most of the factors that should promote current Anglo-Catholic church planting were present in the ways that Richard Temple West and Richard Foster were working for church building and expansion in the mid- nineteenth century. Obviously there are caveats as the social and ecclesiastical situations are not in any way comparable. For example, attending church today is not the mark of social respectability as it was among certain classes in the Victorian era. For those who want to attend church, particularly in large cities and towns, there is much more variety on offer as well as it being much easier to attend

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[400]https://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityHistories/LeightonBuzzard/SaintAndrewsChurchLeightonBuzzard.aspx. Accessed 11th December 2020.
[401] /www.dezeen.com/2015/11/22/quarry-theatre-st-lukes-performing-arts-centre-former-church-glass-walled-extension-bedford-england/ Accessed 11th December 2020.

a preferred church even at a considerable distance from your home. Contrast this ease of travel with one of the reasons for West building St. Mary Magdalene's – to avoid those who attended All Saints, Margaret Street and lived in West London, having to travel slowly and with difficulty across London. Yet there is a strong common thread that runs through the way in which churches have been planted or built to meet the specific needs of different areas. Without a vision for growth and a committed and supported leadership, new Victorian churches and present day church plants would not have been established. So, as has been demonstrated above, the Victorian pioneers and our modern leaders of church plants have much in common in the ways that they have worked to establish a Christian presence for the spread of the Gospel.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

8.1 Resumé.

This thesis has covered a wide field of study in an Anglo-Catholic context describing the ministry of a mid-Victorian cleric and that of an Anglo-Catholic merchant who was a very generous philanthropist, to three very ordinary, new but quite distinctive congregations in twenty first century England. At the outset I was not sure whether the linking of two different ideas was achievable, but I now believe that I have produced something of value for the Anglo-Catholic part of the Church of England. I have aimed to show that church planting fits both within the historical tradition of Anglo-Catholicism as well as contemporary diocesan mission initiatives about which some Anglo-Catholics are suspicious as these seem to be dominated by the Evangelical wing of the church. At this point I need to stress that I am not denigrating the work of such churches, rather I want to strike a balance and show that there are other parts of the Church of England that plant churches and should be continuing to do so in increasing numbers. Some of the contemporary tensions within the Church of England around growth, the role of the parish in mission and the perceived managerialism criticised by Martyn Percy and discussed in chapter two, may seem to be antithetical to Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology, but I have attempted in this study to show that they can be surmounted or possibly even ignored as being irrelevant. If the local church is dynamically driving a church plant, it therefore follows that its vision should be at the forefront.

In the historical survey, I have placed Richard Temple West and Richard Foster in the wider Victorian context of the Oxford Movement and its later development; without an understanding of this context it would be difficult to appreciate the work that both of them

did to extend the mission of the church as well as to understand the foundation on which current Anglo-Catholic worship and practice are built. West planted a new church in a very deprived area of West London which aimed to replicate some of the style of the worship of All Saints, Margaret Street. The descriptions that I have given show that it was not without success, although there must always be a caveat around the make-up of the congregation and that applies equally today. The church of St. Mary Magdalene still stands today and provides regular worship. The Victorian slums no longer exist but they have been replaced by a big estate of social housing, a large proportion of which is occupied by asylum seekers and others in need of support and some still reckon the estate to be 'dangerous', so there are still some similarities in the area in which the church works. So in terms of deprivation and challenge, it is therefore almost a twenty first century replication of its Victorian predecessor. The building has suffered decay over the years but is currently in the process of being restored both as a beautiful place for Anglo-Catholic worship, as its architect G. E. Street intended, but also as a cultural and arts venue. Just as West made the church a centre for support in the areas of social need, so today, as most of these needs have been generally subsumed into state provision, through the National Health Service, the Department of Work and Pensions or local authority Social Services Departments, its mission is to support the cultural and artistic activity in West London as well as maintaining a significant Christian presence in the area. Physically, it still dominates the landscape on the southern side of the Grand Union Canal, west of Paddington Station.

The memory of Richard Foster continues to live on as some of the churches he contributed to, are still in use today; St. Barnabas, Walthamstow, the church he paid for totally in 1902, is a key example. It is an active, outward looking church, very much as Foster would have expected. It describes itself as 'We are an inclusive church, which accepts the

ministry of women priests and women bishops, with specialist ministries welcoming migrants and LGBT people.'[402]

The large house, Homewood, that Foster lived in when he moved to Chislehurst no longer exists as it and its surrounding extensive lands have been redeveloped but the two lodges at the entrance to the former drive are still occupied. I discovered that The Chislehurst Society, the local heritage and amenity society, had published an article about Foster in its Winter 2014 newsletter, based on that house and the surviving lodges. I made contact with the editor and at her request, as a result of this research, I contributed a fuller and more detailed account of Foster's life and activities for their Spring edition in 2020. So even in this way Foster's personal legacy lives on and continues his witness to the Christian faith.

Throughout this research I had to maintain an awareness that my main purpose in attending these churches was as a researcher with a specific brief. It would have been so easy and indeed personally rewarding to become more deeply involved in helping with their development. For a participant observer, there is always the danger of 'going native'.[403] This then defeats the objectivity of the exercise as the researcher then becomes a protagonist and so produces a biased result. Involvement in participant observation means that there is always a careful balance that has to be maintained between participation and observation. This balance must be kept to the fore in every engagement. It is generally believed that this was what corrupted the research of Bruno Malinowski in Melanesia.[404]

The thematic analysis of the findings in the previous chapter has identified what I consider to be transferable themes, although not in any literalist and inflexible fashion,

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[402] On the church website. www.saintbarnabaswalthamstow.com/about/ . Accessed 13th December 2020
[403] 'the problem of '*going native*', which refers to the fact that a researcher will cease to be a researcher and will become a full-time group participant.'
https://wps.pearsoned.co.uk/ema_uk_he_plummer_sociology_5/205/52631/13473713.cw/content/index.html. Accessed 13th December 2020.
[404] Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) is often regarded as the 'founding father' of social anthropology and hence of participant observation.

between what impelled West and Foster to support the building of new churches and the contemporary church planting context. What now is needed is a more general application and interpretation of these themes for the wider Anglo-Catholic constituency.

8.2. Where next?

Since before 1994, Anglo-Catholics have been divided over the ordination of women to the priesthood and subsequently the consecration of women as bishops. This has caused significant damage to the Anglo-Catholic witness as so much energy was being devoted to these internal matters. A number of groups were set up to support opposing views. On the traditionalist side was ' Forward in Faith' and 'The Society under the Patronage of St. Wilfred and St. Hilda'.[405] These hold together the parishes which have petitioned for 'Alternative Episcopal Oversight' in the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England.[406]

'Anglican Catholic Future' is the more liberal organisation. It sees the divisions within Anglo-Catholicism as something to be bridged. It states its belief that the time has come for the implicit Catholic identity of the Church of England to be made explicit. 'We look back to the Oxford Movement and the tradition on which it was built, and forward to the revitalisation of our church and nation as we recall our secularising culture to its spiritual inheritance.'[407]

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[405] The Society is not a membership organization. It is supported and financed by Forward in Faith and administered by its Director. Those who support the aims of The Society are asked to support its work by joining Forward in Faith. It aims to promote and maintain catholic teaching and practice within the Church of England, to provide episcopal oversight to which churches, institutions and individuals will freely submit themselves, to guarantee a ministry in the historic apostolic succession in which they can have confidence. This oversight is provided by three Provincial Episcopal Visitors as well as the Bishop of Fulham in London. The PEVs have the role of assistant bishops in most English dioceses

[406] There is a parallel arrangement for Conservative Evangelicals, who reject the ordination of women on the grounds that men and women have 'complementary ministries' so women should not be holding leadership and teaching positions in the church. This is overseen by the Suffragan Bishop of Maidstone who has an England wide role.

[407] https://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk/5998-2/ Accessed 13th December 2020 (The actual website was not accessible.)

What is significant in my view is that 'Forward in Faith' and 'Anglican Catholic Future' worked together to organise a conference on Anglo-Catholic mission in September 2018. In her introduction to a book based on the papers and conversations at this conference, Susan Lucas states:

> The conference sought to articulate positively what is distinctive about a Catholic understanding of mission, in a language in which all 'tribes' of Catholics in the Church of England would feel at home, yet in an inclusive and generous way, seeking to converse with others.[408]

The book then expands on a number of themes and sees them as uniting the different emphases within Anglo-Catholicism in a shared vision for mission and growth. It is this spirit of common mission and understanding that I want to underpin these recommendations.

It has already been commented that Anglo-Catholic church planting is quite haphazard and does not have the cohesion of the Evangelical plants, spawned from Holy Trinity, Brompton and other similar churches. Most Anglo-Catholic church planters are isolated and in many cases feel quite vulnerable. Fr. Francis's comments noted earlier about the lack of financial support, the response that Fr. Stephen received when he questioned church growth and Fr. Sam's experience of support from his sponsoring parish provide evidence of this. As a further example of this isolation, following the publication of an article which I co-authored with David Goodhew on a U.S. website, I was contacted by a priest who had been appointed to reinvigorate a weak Anglo-Catholic church. [409] She was newly ordained as a Pioneer Minister but had little understanding of the way forward – and she felt isolated. It is for such priests as these that my first recommendation is that there should be *an organised network for*

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[408] Lucas, Susan, ed. *God's Church in the World: The Gift of Catholic Mission.* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2020).   p. x.
[409] https://livingchurch.org/covenant/2020/03/05/anglo-catholic-church-planting-recovering-the-tradition/

Anglo-Catholic church planters where they can support each other and share their ideas about what has worked. The role of a pioneer is a hard one and if the only networks of support do not align with their ecclesiology, that makes the task even more difficult and potentially lonely. I acknowledge that there are a number of networks in existence, such as that sponsored by the Church Missionary Society but their emphases are not always in line with the way that Anglo-Catholics would see their engagement with mission and worship. [410] As evidence of the need for such a network I note that each of the three priests felt isolated in some way as leaders of a church plants outside what is considered the mainstream of church planting.

My second recommendation is that to oversee and support such a network, *some organisation needs to be established which would focus on support for church planting or other growth initiatives.* This could well be something which Forward in Faith and Anglican Futures could jointly coordinate with episcopal sponsorship from the traditionalist and liberal wings of Anglo-Catholicism, as well as financial support through the funding that the Church Commissioners have provided for the development of mission initiatives. There needs to be some proactive leadership in this area It is not within the remit of this thesis to suggest names but there are several outstanding possible candidates as potential sponsors and leaders.

Thirdly, it is necessary *to identify as many as possible church plants from Anglo-Catholic churches in order to involve and support them.* From experience, as I was planning this research, it was a very difficult task and there was little centralised knowledge. Very much of my initial work relied on internet searches, finding contacts and then contacts of contacts. The way forward would need to have the active collaboration of Diocesan Directors of Mission or those with similar responsibilities, or via the Mission Department at Church

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[410] https://pioneer.churchmissionsociety.org/pioneer-community/

House. This should not be a difficult task but one that needs coordination and commitment. The inclusion of Anglo-Catholic clergy in Diocesan or National Departments of Mission would undoubtedly aid this.

Fourthly, to launch such a network and support group, *a conference should be arranged to ensure maximum impact.* This is the best way to ensure a wide coverage and engagement across England. It must be positively supported both by the range of Anglo-Catholic organisations as well as by dioceses. Again, it would be a positive move to have a number of episcopal sponsors.

My final recommendation is to recognise the importance of *the sharing of good practice.* This links in some ways with the network outlined as the first recommendation but needs to be more than this. It must be evidenced and supported by actual case studies and other descriptions of the lived experience of real churches and their plants. So often in what are claimed to be new initiatives, both in the secular world but also in the world of the church, there is little notice taken of what others have done previously in similar situations or whether such initiatives had actually been successful. To use an overworked and hackneyed phrase, 'the wheel keeps being reinvented'.

I offer these five recommendations as a way forward to ensure that Anglo-Catholic church plants receive the same level of external support as those in other parts of the Church of England. The establishment of such support must not be left to particular interest or churchmanship groups, it should be a national church priority. As I remarked in my introduction, *From Anecdote to Evidence* in 2014 said this about Anglo-Catholic church planting: 'This model is still being developed and there is on-going reflection about what planting means in an Anglo-Catholic context.'[411] This statement provides an external

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[411] *From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013.* (London: The Church Commissioners for England, 2014). p. 20

justification for this research and its conclusions. It is to be noted that nothing formally has been done in this area in the seven years since this report. As is the case with so many other reports, many of its recommendations have been ignored and in this case to the detriment of Anglo-Catholics.

In this chapter, I have sought to summarise the results that I have identified from the whole of my project and make some practical recommendations. I believe that these recommendations are feasible and relatively easy to implement as long as there is a willingness to do so. This would significantly encourage Anglo-Catholic church planting in the Church of England by learning both from the historical activities of men like West and Foster as well as from the contemporary experiences of other church planters. Above all, church planting has to be seen, not as mark of enthusiasm, or to be a sign of 'live' church; it should be one of the many ways in which the knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God can be extended in England.

APPENDIX 1

Dear…

You will remember that I came to meet you earlier in the year in respect of my doctorate research at Durham University. I am now at the point of setting up the formal research process and I would like to be one of my research sites. I attach a short paper which outlines the process which I intend to follow, although as in all such projects, some things will inevitably change.

I have engaged with a number of both academics and senior clergy and they are all of the opinion that my research will fill a significant gap in knowledge as well as being of value to others who wish to start new congregations.

I would hope to start the research process at the beginning of 2018 and expect it to continue throughout the year. This would enable me to see the life of your congregation over a reasonable period. If you are agreeable, I would like to have an initial meeting with you, and any clergy or lay colleagues you may wish to involve, sometime in October or early November, to explain in more detail and to plan.

I look forward to your response. If you have any questions, please either email me or 'phone me

With my best wishes and prayers for your ministry

John Wallace

APPENDIX 2

Department of Theology & Religion

DOCTORATE OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

OUTLINE OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY

- The subject of the research is: **An investigation into current Church Planting activity within the Catholic wing of the Church of England and a comparison with nineteenth century Anglo-Catholic practice in respect of establishing new churches.'**

- I wish at the very beginning to meet with clergy, churchwardens and PCCs etc. to explain what my research is about and why I think that it is important in the context of future growth in the Catholic wing of the Church of England.

- Initially, I would like to access documents such as reports, service registers, Diocesan minutes and PCC minutes, magazine or news articles that underpin what you are doing.

- I will aim to attend the main service once a month during 2018 as well other less formal events so that the congregation understands what I am doing and I have an awareness of the nature of the congregation and its worship.

- I would like a semi-structured (and recorded) interview with the incumbent / plant leader – questions would be supplied in advance

- At an appropriate time, probably in the autumn of 2018 I would like those who attend your church to complete a short questionnaire. It would be given out at the beginning of the service with the enthusiastic commendation of the priest and be completed anonymously before people leave.

- All information will be anonymised in line with University requirements and I will obtain ethical approval from Durham University for this research.

- My supervisors are Rev'd Dr David Goodhew and Canon Professor Michael Snape

John Wallace

October 2017

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