

A STUDY OF CHURCHES BUILT FOR THE USE OF CONGREGATIONS
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BETWEEN 1945 AND 1970 AND OF
THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING THE NEEDS OF THEIR
CONGREGATIONS TODAY.

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Title of Thesis:

A Study of churches built for the use of congregations of the Church of England between 1945 and 1970 and of their effectiveness in serving the needs of their congregations today.

Summary: This thesis is a study of churches built for the Church of England, in the dioceses of Manchester, Birmingham and Coventry, in the years 1945 to 1970, with the intention, of examining, first, the circumstances of their planning and building, and, second, the degree to which those buildings serve the needs of their respective parishes today.

The church buildings described in the study have been visited, clergy or churchwardens interviewed, and archival material, relating both to individual churches, and to the diocese as a whole, consulted where it was available.

The study comprises three sections. The first is an introduction, which includes a discussion of significant factors affecting the design of post-war churches, including the Liturgical Movement, the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, in Birmingham, and the idealism of the post-war era, both in the nation, and in the Church. The second section comprises examinations of the churches of each of the three dioceses, and a short section on other, significant, buildings, in other dioceses. Each diocesan section includes a description of the diocese in the immediate post-war years, examining the general approach, policies and administrative arrangements established by the respective diocesan authorities to cope with the range of challenges facing it at the time, and then a description of each individual post-war church.

The study closes with the third section, the conclusion, which identifies the great changes which took place in the approach to church building within a very short time span, the demographic changes which have subsequently taken place in the majority of areas within which the new churches were built, the advantages and disadvantages displayed by the church buildings and the range of requirements made of their church by parishioners, and, finally, the most important factor, the freedom which the Church finally gave itself to experiment with new forms of worship, new forms of building, and new approaches to the whole work of a parish.

Contents.

Volume 1.		Page
Acknowledgements -		7
Introduction - Description of the Study.		9
Chapter 1.	The meaning of the word 'Church'.	14
Chapter 2.	The function of the church building.	20
Chapter 3.	Post-War idealism - Meeting the needs of the Post-War world.	24
Chapter 4.	The inheritance of the Church in the Post-War Era.	27
Chapter 5.	Prophets of the Post-War Era - The Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture in the University of Birmingham.	36
Chapter 6.	The Work and Worship of the Church and the Requirements of the Liturgical Movement.	41
Chapter 7.	Thoughts on new patterns of Ministry	56
Chapter 8.	Principles of Church Architecture in the Post-War era.	61
Manchester Diocese:		72
Introduction to the diocesan programme of church building after the war.		73
Church building in the 1930s - Housing context		75
Church building in the Post-War period:		
	Housing context	79
Dual-purpose buildings		76
Permanent churches - New Churches Appeal		84
End of New Churches Appeal		90
New thoughts		91
Study of individual Churches.		93
1)	1931. St Nicholas, Kingsway, Burnage.	94
2)	1935/7 St Christopher, Withington.	99
3)	1938/9 St Luke the Physician, Benchill.	105
4)	1955. All Saints, Barton Road, Stretford.	108
5)	1959. St Mark, White Moss, Blackley.	111
6)	1959/60. St Martin, Blackcarr Road, Wythenshawe.	114
7)	1959-61. St Francis of Assisi, Newall Green.	116
8)	1960-2. St Saviour, Denton Lane, Chadderton.	120
9)	1962-3. St Mark, Ogden Street, Chadderton.	125
10)	1962-64. St John's, Bury.	125
11)	1963/4. All Saints, Wood Street, Langley.	128
12)	1964/5. St Chad, Limeside, Oldham.	135
13)	1964/5. St Hilda, Old Trafford.	137
15)	1964-5. William Temple Memorial Church.	141
16)	1968. St. John's, Irlam Road, Flixton.	147
17)	1968. St Stephen, Astley, near Atherton.	150
18)	1970. Church of the Ascension, Hulme.	153
19)	1976. St Cuthbert's, Miles Platting.	157
Conclusion.		163

Volume 2.

Birmingham Diocese.

Page

Introduction	184
Character of the City Centre	184
Housing in Birmingham	186
Church planting in the inter-war years	188
The Diocese at beginning of the war	189
War Damage	190
OS Maps - City Centre 1912	192
Planning for the Post-war era - City Centre	194
The story of St. Jude's	196
1 inch OS Map, 1947.	202
Planning for new housing areas	204
Lord Portal and Church and Government liaison	205
Continuation of work in Birmingham Diocese	207
1945 Commission of Enquiry	208
Ten Year Forward Movement	212
Work of the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee	219
Success of the £30,000 Appeal	224
The Bishop's Appeal - 1953/58	227
The Second Mile - 1964	231
The 1963 Exhibition - Church Design Today	233
Thoughts on new patterns of Ministry	234
The Birmingham Institute	238
 Individual Churches	 239
St. Chad, Erdington. 1949	242
St. Clement, Castle Bromwich. 1969	244
St. Stephen the Martyr, Rednal. 1951	246
St. Barnabas, Kingshurst. 1957	249
All Saints, Shard End. 1959	252
St. Luke's, Kingstanding. 1937	254
St. Boniface, Quinton. 1958/9	256
St. John Baptist, Longbridge. 1956/8	259
St. Chad, Rubery, New Road, B45. 1960	261
St. Thomas, Garretts Green. 1967	265
St. John the Baptist, Harborne. 1960	268
St. Peter, Hall Green. 1964	271
St. Columba's, Sutton Coldfield. 1957/60	275
St. Paul, Bordesley Green. 1968	279
St. Richard, Lea Hall. 1965	283
St. Michael and All Angels, South Yardley. 1964/5	285
St. Michael and All Angels, Bartley Green. 1964	288
St. Mark, Kingstanding. 1966	291
St. David, Shenley Green. 1965	293
St. Anne, West Heath. 1966	299
St. Mary, Hobs Moat. 1966	301
St. Peter, Tile Cross. 1968	304
St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches. 1964	307
SS Philip and James, Hodge Hill. 1968	311
St. George, Birmingham (Newtown). 1970	316
St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood. 1972	318
 Birmingham Diocese today.	 321
Conclusion.	327

St Francis of Assisi, Newall Green.	439
St Saviour, Denton Lane, Chadderton.	441
St Mark, Ogden Street, Chadderton.	443
St John's, Bury.	443
All Saints, Wood Street, Langley.	445
St Chad, Limeside, Oldham.	450
St Hilda, Old Trafford.	451
William Temple Memorial Church.	451
St. John's, Irlam Road, Flixton.	452
St Stephen, Astley, near Atherton.	455
Church of the Ascension, Hulme.	460
Birmingham Diocese.	461
1945 Commission of Enquiry - Deanery reports	462
Priorities for Church Extension, 1948	469
Ten Year Forward Movement	473
Reorganisation of Perry Barr neighbourhood	479
Individual Churches	
St. Chad, Erdington.	4483
St. Clement, Castle Bromwich.	484
St. Stephen the Martyr, Rednal.	485
St. Barnabas, Kingshurst.	486
All Saints, Shard End.	486
St. Luke's, Kingstanding.	490
St. Boniface, Quinton.	491
St. John Baptist, Longbridge.	492
St. Chad, Rubery, New Road, B45.	496
St. Thomas, Garretts Green.	497
St. John the Baptist, Harborne.	497
St. Peter, Hall Green.	504
St. Columba's, Banner's Gate.	505
St. Paul, Bordesley Green.	509
St. Richard, Lea Hall.	514
St. Michael and All Angels, South Yardley.	515
St. Michael and All Angels, Bartley Green.	516
St. Mark, Kingstanding.	517
St. David, Shenley Green.	517
St. Anne, West Heath.	521
St. Mary, Hobs Moat.	521
St. Peter, Tile Cross.	522
St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches.	522
SS Philip and James, Hodge Hill.	536
St. George, Birmingham (Newtown).	551
St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood.	552
Coventry Diocese.	553
Individual churches:	
St. Luke, Rotherham Road, Holbrook, Coventry.	554
St. John the Divine, Willenhall, Coventry.)
St. Oswald, Tile Hill, Coventry.	(555-563
St. Chad, Hillmorton Road, Wood End, Coventry.)
St. Nicholas, Engleton Road, Radford, Coventry.	564

Christ Church, Cheylesmore, Coventry.	567-574
St. George's, Hillmorton, Rugby.	575
St. John and St. Mary, Camp Hill, Nuneaton.	584
St. Andrews, Smorrall Lane, Bedworth.	584
St. Philip's, Potter's Green.	586
Christ Church, Brownsover, Rugby.	586

Churches in other Dioceses.

Three churches in Guildford diocese:

Church of the Holy Spirit, Burpham, Nr Guildford.)	
Church of the Good Shepherd, Pyrford, Woking.	(587/8
St Alban's, Wood Street, Guildford.)

Three Bournemouth Churches:

St George's, Oakdale, Poole.	589
St Thomas's, Ensbury Park, Bournemouth.	589
St Barnabas's, Mount Pleasant Drive, Bournemouth.	590

St. John the Evangelist, Meads, Eastbourne.	591
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Christ Church, Kingston Road, Staines, Middlesex.	592
Churches in Linz and Vienna.	592/5

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The enthusiasm of so many, in what are often parishes in socially marginalized areas of the cities, filled me with admiration, and strengthened my own enthusiasm for the task. I was treated with courtesy and friendship, which I value greatly, and I was often led to visit churches which I would not otherwise have considered.

The staff of the Manchester Diocesan Office treated me with courtesy and hospitality, well beyond the call of duty, and gave me ready access to their archives - although archival retrieval is not their primary function! The architectural historian is dependent on the archivist who knows what resources there are, and can find them; the staff of Birmingham City Archives were unfailing cheerful and helpful as I ploughed through the mountain of diocesan files and Parish Boxes.

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Introduction

MODERN CHURCHES OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESES OF MANCHESTER,
BIRMINGHAM AND COVENTRY.

Introduction - Description of the Study.

Aim of, and impetus for, the Study.

This is a study of churches built in the Anglican Dioceses of Manchester, Birmingham and Coventry built in the two and a half decades following the end of the Second World War. In each diocese there is a group of buildings of a range of built forms, interpreting the church's needs in a variety of ways, and representing the response of a coherent sub-group within the C of E to the needs of a particular period. Each diocesan group is not, therefore, a group selected to illustrate a particular thesis, or point of view, but an existing group - the response of one particular diocese - which presents itself, and which illustrates the development of ideas about church building in a period of rapid growth and of experiment. It includes a wide variety of parishes and of patterns of worship. It provides sufficient range to enable one to ask, and perhaps to answer, the questions; 'How effective was the diocese's response to the post war needs of the church in terms of its buildings? Did the buildings work, and do they still work? Do they help the local parish in Worship, in spiritual growth, and in its proclamation of the Gospel to the world?'

The study examines, initially, the circumstances of their building, the influences - social, theological and diocesan - which led to their location, design and building, the architectural qualities of the buildings; and the 'wearability' of their structure and finishes. Finally, it examines the suitability of their design and planning for contemporary liturgical and pastoral purposes, to determine the extent to which the buildings have served the Church; i.e., the extent to which the church buildings have assisted the congregation to carry out their role as the Body of Christ in their locality.

As a post-graduate student, I remember making a visit to Bow to see the new church of St. Paul's, Bow Common. In 1961 I was privileged to join a tour, organized by Gilbert Cope, to see new churches in Germany and Northern France. During my three years in Manchester, in 1961/4, I remember new churches being built in that diocese. In my more recent work, advising the owners of newly listed Post-War buildings, and attempting to make some sort of assessment of their merits and qualities, it came home to me that now was the time to attempt some sort of assessment of the church buildings of the immediate Post-War era.

With the changing needs of parishes, proposals for alterations to churches of this period are now coming forward. Where a church is listed, this adds a further factor to be considered. Since churches are designed for so specific a purpose, their

effectiveness in meeting the needs of their client is a significant factor in any assessment of the quality and merits of the building. So often, in cases where the future of a nineteenth century church is under consideration, any consideration is polarised, between those who see the building as a cultural object, from a narrow architectural and stylistic aspect, and those who see it as plant for the parish. This study is concerned to take account of both the architectural context of the building, and its pastoral and theological context, in the conviction that both are necessary for a full assessment of the quality and merits of the building.

Sources and Influences.

The buildings of any period are the result of a complex range of influences; current taste, current technology, and the requirements of the client as he perceives them at the time. This is true of any building, of any time. In the case of Church buildings there is a baggage of personal, cultural and religious inheritance, and the unspoken assumptions on the part of the client - in their multiple guise, and of the architects. The range of these influences, and the sources from which clients, architects and builders could draw inspiration, were unusually complex in the immediate post-war era.

Post-war idealism.

Major cities in England had been subjected to a level of violent destruction, as a result of bomb damage, that was far greater in its physical extent, and even greater in its impact on the minds of the inhabitants of the country, than had been experienced for many centuries.

Not only the physical destruction of towns and cities, but also the need for re-housing - begun before, and interrupted by, the war, and now given additional support by the desire to provide 'homes for heroes to live in', gave a strong political impetus to implement much of the pre-war planning.

The architectural form in which this was expressed was the result, again, of a range of influences. Resources - material and financial - were scarce, and the need was urgent. Post-war churches began to acquire a style of their own in the immediate post-war years, which was the result of the adoption of new materials, and their employment to create forms and details which arose from contemporary practice in housing and school building, exemplified in the buildings of the Festival of Britain.

Considerable use was made of contemporary techniques employed to produce housing quickly and economically. In addition, there was a deliberate attempt to design churches in a modern guise, although leaving the general layout of the church, and the pattern of accommodation it provided largely in accord with the traditional view of what a church should be.

By the late 1950s there was a tug of war between, on one hand, the inherited view of the church, in the way it looked, the way it was organised at parish level, and the way new parishes were built up, and, on the other, those whom I call the "prophets"; the proponents of new patterns of worship and work in the liturgical movement, and of new approaches to the organisation of parishes; architects who were influenced by the new churches they had seen in France, Germany and Switzerland; and by the work of the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, in Birmingham University, which brought these strands together.

While I have attempted to be as objective as I may in my analysis in this study, I am all too conscious of the comment by the Most Revd. Richard Holloway in his 1995 Eric Symes Abbott Memorial Lecture. He refers to the fictional Professor Zapp, in David Lodge's novels 'Small World', and 'Changing Places', one of whose epigrams is:

"every decoding is an encoding".

Holloway comments:

'I take that to mean that there is no escape from subjectivism in human affairs and the attempt to achieve complete clinical objectivity on any topic is delusionary.'

The question I want to answer, as best I may, is this: Where did the Church make wise decisions about new church building in the immediate post-war years, and where did it fail? If, in the process, I can help in the understanding of the rôle of the buildings in the service of the Church, and in the making of wiser decisions today, I shall feel I have achieved a measure of success.

Scope of the Study.

The study falls into three elements. The first, comprising chapters 1 - 8, is a general introduction, defining terms, and examining the factors which influenced the planning, design and construction of 'church buildings at the period. This introduction is partly an over-view, based on recent studies by others, although the discussion of the Liturgical Movement, and of principles of church building in that era, are based on contemporary published material.

The second, the Collection of Data, will examine a number of churches, in respect of the following aspects. I shall identify the building - something not always readily apparent in official documents - by reference to its Dedication, location, architect, date of design, date of construction, date of Dedication, and the design of church. I shall examine the history of the parish, which usually involved the establishment of a new parish and the building of the church. I shall describe the building, and discuss the way the parish uses the building today and its regard for the building, particularly in regard to the extent to which the congregation see the building as aiding, or hindering, its life and work.

These aspects are designed to identify the individual church, setting it within the context of its date and within the oeuvre of contemporary architectural practice, and to examine its subsequent effectiveness.

The third element will draw together Conclusions from the individual case studies. It is hoped that these will identify, inter alia:

- a). 'Schools' of design of the churches.
- b) Aspects of the briefs which were of lasting benefit, and aspects which proved to be counter-productive, or a hindrance to the work of the church.
- c) Patterns of ill-advised design, detailing or construction of buildings.
- d); Types of design/detail/construction which proved long-lasting, sound, prudent.
- e) Aspects which help, or hinder, the life and work of the congregation.

The best known Post-War churches, among architects and historians of the period, are the innovative Liturgical Movement churches. When I explained to one architect that I was studying Post-War churches in the three dioceses, for a doctoral thesis, he expressed some surprise as to whether there was sufficient material there. In fact, there is a wide range of structures, from huts, to the rebuilding of a bombed 'traditional' church in Festival of Britain guise, to the continuation of the Arts and Crafts small parish church, to the functional, to the Liturgical Movement churches, and, although none are included in this study, the building of churches in the Neo-Byzantine manner. In considering the quality of a building, whatever its type or design, it is axiomatic that excellence in architecture is dependent as much on the expression of form and function, as it is on beauty of harmony and material and mass.

Methodology.

Every church discussed has been visited, and in almost every case I have discussed the present working of the parish, and the suitability of the present building for current needs with the incumbent, or the church warden. I have examined documentation relating to the building of the church, including contemporary references in the architectural press, history booklets produced by the parish, and diocesan records - in particular the minutes of the Diocesan Church Building Committee, where they exist.

The survival of documents is a matter of chance. For example, I have been unable to locate the Diocesan Building Committee Minutes for the Diocese of Coventry; in contrast, St. Philip and St. James, Hodge Hill, Birmingham, was the subject of considerable contemporary discussion, particularly in the publications of the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, in Birmingham University, and in the case of St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, Birmingham, by

Maguire and Murray, much of the correspondence from the architect to the incumbent survives.

For the present physical state of the buildings I have relied heavily on the Quinquennial Inspection Reports. I have quoted these extensively. This is a deliberate policy. The reports are a valuable record of the condition of the building, as the inspecting architect sees it. Very often he has been involved with the same building for many years, and his understanding of its problems - or merits, and in particular his more general, and sometimes acerbic, comments are extremely illuminating.

In the case of the Quinquennial Inspection Reports, contemporary published information and comment, committee minutes, and correspondence, I have quoted from the documents extensively, rather than presenting the information in précis form, in order to present the contemporary understanding of the task in hand, and to avoid interpolating an additional level of interpretation - or misinterpretation - and selection.

The thesis is a particularly bulky document; it is, in considerable measure, a source document in which, in order to set the core buildings - those of 1945-1970, in the three dioceses - within their context, I have included both archival material, not readily available, and buildings beyond the narrow confines of the study - both in time and place - which are often not well known, but which offer useful points of comparison.

Finally, I am, of course, aware that there are any number of answers to the question: 'how well does your church building serve you and the parish?', on the basis of 'Quot homines, tot sententiae'. I had considered preparing a questionnaire, to be distributed among the clergy and members of the congregation of each church. This method was adopted by K.H. Murta in his "Interim report on research into the use of church buildings where the design has been influenced by the Liturgical Movement", published in the 1970 Research Bulletin of the Birmingham Institute, but I decided that this could not be achieved by one person, for some sixty churches. It is interesting to note that comments in the 1970 study about shortcomings of, for example, seating and acoustics, still apply to the churches of that era today. I have therefore adopted the policy of seeking the views of the incumbent, and on occasion, of the churchwardens.

CHAPTER ONE.

The word 'church' has an essential ambiguity in its meaning; when it is applied to a building it brings with it a vast range of understanding of purpose, symbolism and association. Moreover, there is an element of Humpty Dumpty's linguistic logic in the meaning or symbolism which attaches to any specific building: 'It means what I want it to mean'.

The Meaning of the word 'Church'.

The word 'church' is used to mean both the 'community of believers', and the 'building' within which that community worships. For the sake of clarity, I shall use the phrase 'church building' to specify the building.

The dichotomy between the two basic meanings of the word 'church' is discussed at length by J.G. Davies, (The Secular Use of Church Buildings, 1968), who comments, (p3):

'The word "church" itself is never applied in the New Testament to a building as such but to a community. When its members assembled for corporate worship, they did not "go to church"; they were the Church meeting in the private house of one of the congregation.'

He emphasizes the contrast with the Jewish Temple, and cites Paul (II Cor 6.16);

"We are a temple (naos, sanctuary) of the living God".

Variety in the meaning and symbolism of the church building.

The understanding of 'church building' ranges from the purely functional - at what might be called its lowest level - as 'plant', to the most sophisticated symbolism as exemplified by Rudolph Schwarz, and it acquired overtones of community, gild, civic, national, regal or imperial meaning according to the time and place in which it was erected. This is not the place for a definitive study of this variety of meaning and symbolism, but I include examples to illustrate this range.

The simplest building type for a church is seen in the small Non-Conformist chapels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which were often formed by converting one or two houses in a terrace. In the Church of England the simplest level is marked by the corrugated iron Mission Church, or pre-fabricated dual-purpose building, which at the time was made to look like a church by the addition of a cross on the apex of the roof gable.

The design and construction of buildings specifically for Christian worship, and as structures of some architectural

pretension, and with a 'message' to convey, became established in the third century, and with the accession of Constantine. Davies notes of the programme of church building encouraged by the emperor(p14):

'To foster an ambitious programme of church building of an official type as a substitute for temples was to encourage the idea that the two classes of edifice were really of the same kind, the only differentia being that the one provide for the cultus of false gods and the other for the cultus of the true God.'

To a very large degree, the church building reflects the theological preoccupations of its builders. Von Simson (*The Gothic Cathedral*, 1956, *passim*) says of the gothic cathedral:

'The cathedral was the house of God, this term understood not as a pale commonplace but as fearful reality. The middle ages lived in the presence of the supernatural, which impressed itself upon every aspect of human life. The sanctuary was the threshold to heaven. In the admiration of its architectural perfection religious emotions overshadowed the observer's aesthetic reaction.'

To appreciate the significance of this concept more fully, it is necessary to forget the preconceptions of the twentieth century, and sink oneself into the theology, philosophy and politics of medieval France (*op. cit.* pp133-141). This same concept remained valid into the period of the post-reformation Roman Catholic Church. As Davies says (*op. cit.* pp96/7):

'The Roman Catholic understanding of the sacred space was unaffected by the intellectual turmoil of the sixteenth century. The ideas that a church is a holy shrine and that Solomon's Temple was its prototype, consistently held and taught throughout the Middle Ages, remained dominant. ... So in post-Tridentine thought the church was understood to be a holy place, a space set apart for no other purpose than worship and adoration.'

Political and Imperial pretensions could also be expressed, especially when the Ruler was next to God. The cathedral at Granada, in Spain, begun in 1528, combined a number of these aspects. It was designed as an image of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It was designed as a mausoleum for the royal family, as a monument to the victory of the Faith over the Moors, and its form was strongly influenced by the reform tenor of the times, and by the direction given to religious belief and practices in the city by Archbishop Talavera. Prominent among these were the restoration of eucharistic rites to a foremost place in the church and the more intimate participation of the congregation in the liturgy (*cf.* Earl E. Rosenthal, *'The Cathedral of Granada'*, Princeton, 1961).

The Karlskirche in Vienna was built as the fulfilment of a vow by Charles VI to build a church dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo, if Vienna were relieved from the great plague of 1713. The emperor chose the designs of Johann Fischer von Erlach. The identity of the names of the emperor and the saint is exploited in the iconography of the building. The two Trajanic columns, which are a unique and instantly recognisable feature of the building, make allusion to the two pillars - Jachin and Boaz - that stood in the porch of the Temple of Solomon; they are also emblematic representations of the Pillars of Hercules, recalling Charles's brief occupancy of, and claims to, the throne of Spain. The building itself recalls designs by Maderno and Bernini for St. Peter's, the Pantheon, Borromini's S. Agnese, and Mansart's Church of the Minims. As Alastair Laing says, in his contribution to 'Baroque and Rococo Architecture and Decoration', 1978, ed. Blunt;

'The Karlskirche is thus a summa not merely of erudite iconography, but also of some of the major monuments of European architecture, imperial not only in its symbolism but also in its breadth of reference.'

Importance of the church building.

A church building can be understood in terms of its architectural or historic significance, in the manner made familiar through the 'listing' process. It may be significant for its rarity as a type; as an example of a period or style; as an example of a structural method - e.g. as a tour de force like the Sainte Chapelle; because of its historical association with people, with a particular theological/ecclesiological debate or period (e.g. Staunton Harold); or because of its long historical association with a particular town or village - this applies with most pre-Victorian churches in any small market town or village.

It may have meaning or symbolism deliberately designed into the building; for example: the use of light in a Gothic structure and the link with contemporary theology; the incorporation of a Royal Mausoleum, or the celebration of victory or deliverance by the building. The iconography of the building may enhance the symbolism; e.g. the complex iconography of the Lady Chapel at Warwick, or of the Karlskirche

All these qualities can be assessed by reference to historical data, and assessed objectively, and only rarely relate to the present day concerns of the People of God.

Concept of the House of God.

A phrase used commonly today to describe, or perhaps define, the church building is 'The House of God'. It entails what I call a 'high' view of the significance of the church building;

that is not 'high' in the sense of churchmanship, but high in that it elevates the church building to a role in the life of the community, directly related to the religious role and mission of those who worship there. The RC Archbishop of Southwark, the Most Revd Michael G. Bowen, puts this succinctly when he wrote in the first issue of Church Building, in 1984 (p2);

'The House of God is not just a building: it is a place wherein our faith is proclaimed; and it embodies the community of faith in a visible Credo. Within it, praise is given to God in the liturgy of the Church, which, as the Second Vatican Council reminds us, is "the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed ... the fount from which all her power flows".'

'Since the worship of God engages all that we are, including our faculties and perceptions, the places in which we worship should be designed and arranged that, in their perception of beauty and order, they are a reflection of the Creator. The church building is at once a sign of the worshipping community in our cities and towns and villages, and a sign for that community; by its presence it is a constant affirmation of the inauguration of that Kingdom. It must be a place that encourages and inspires mankind to pray and to follow the call of Christ.'

'For these reasons, everything to do with the designing, building or re-ordering of churches must be carried out using, as far as possible, all that is best in the realms of architecture, design and the arts. ... I am confident that (Church Building) will play a valuable part in helping the churches of this land to be signs of a living, joyful faith in the Risen Lord.'

This statement is as interesting for what it does not say, as for what it does say. It relates the building directly to the service of the work and worship of the believing community, in proclaiming faith in the Risen Lord. It says nothing about the size of a church building, only about its quality. By relating the building to the service of the worshipping community it implies that, as the needs or particular role of a congregation changes to meet new circumstances, the church building too may change to serve in a changed situation.

This concept of the building as the 'House of God' is related essentially to the use of the building, not to any specific architectural quality it has. The quality of 'House of God' is not a quality which is built into the building, but relates to its use. This quality may be enhanced by works to the building; e.g. by the quality of design, or materials, or execution, or ornament (e.g. Hoar Cross church by Bodley, or the church by Pugin at Cheadle, in Staffordshire). The precise meaning of the phrase 'House of God' depends on the

particular theology which underpins the worship by the particular congregation; for example, if one accepts the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and the Reserved Sacrament, the idea of the House of God acquires a special meaning not found elsewhere.

Most recently, the Dean of the Arches laid down guidance for the Consistory Court in Re St. Mary's Banbury (1987) 1 All ER 247, later amplified in Re All Saints, Melbourn (1990) 1 WLR 833 (cited in the judgement of Sheila Cameron QC in Re St. Helen's Bishopsgate 1993). The Dean of the Arches emphasized that:

'a church is a house of God and a place for worship. It does not belong to conservationists, to the State, or to the congregation, but to God.'

It seems that the phrases 'House of God' and 'place for worship' are analogous, and their closest parallel is the phrase 'House of Prayer'. 'House of Prayer' would seem to mean, most obviously, a house - building - in which prayer is offered. It may also be construed as 'a building which is a prayer', i.e. a work of art or architecture offered to God as the work of man's heart, mind and hands, but I find it hard to conceive that this is what Jesus intended by the phrase.

The use of the phrase 'House of God' can readily be seen as a pious gloss on 'Place or Worship', and an extrapolation from 'Place for Worship' to 'House where the People of God worship God. What it surely cannot mean, in any sense, is that 'God lives here'. To go from there to the statement that it belongs to God, especially when said by a lawyer, seems to me a very unclear assertion.

By virtue of the nature of the activities which take place within a church building, and the significance of those activities in the social and cultural life of the community, the church building has a significance considerably greater than that of other buildings. It is to a degree the community's building, even if only a small proportion of the community actually use the building.

As a devotional gloss, designed to enhance the awareness of the congregation to the significance of their rôle as the People of God, for example, the phrase 'House of God' seems fair and appropriate. To extend that to a legalistic concept seems to me nonsensical.

The concept of 'the house of God' is a semantic minefield. A recent (September 1995) skit by Smith and Jones illustrates this all too well:

'We used to carry out Black Magic in this house in Tottenham.'
'Was it good for that?'

'It was possessed by the Devil.'
'What happened?'
'It was re-possessed by Barclays Bank'.

The tension between spiritual aims and limitations of physical resources.

However lofty the conception of the significance of the church building, the designing of a church, or cathedral, requires the resolution of a range of different, and sometimes conflicting, aims, and involves a tension between the lofty aims, and the physical limitations of the means available to express them in a building. Gibberd (Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, 1968, p17/8) offers a helpful summary of the range of tasks and solutions when he discusses the designing of a cathedral. He emphasizes that:

'The design of a building is a strict, laborious and long discipline; there are no short cuts to a successful solution and moments of inspiration are few.'

He describes the parallels with other architectural challenges, the need to analyse the function, as one would for any other major institutional complex, the determining factors of location, site, materials, construction, climate and labour, and the context of the proposed building, and concludes:

'The ultimate determinant lies within the personality of the designer, the architect. It is his task to produce a unified work of art which communicates his feelings about the nature of the building. He will solve the functional and constructional problems by analysis and synthesis and in doing so, will exercise his intellect; but reason is not enough, for only if the solution is fired with imagination, only if the architect uses his intuition, can the building become a work of art.'

Gibberd places emphasis on the temporal and physical - the worldly - constraints in the design and construction of buildings; no matter how 'spiritual' their purpose, there are common constraints for all buildings - function, place, materials, skill, and money. His reference to choice of materials, and 'type of labour available' seems perhaps unnecessary, until one thinks of the three churches by Spence in Coventry.

CHAPTER TWO.

The Function of the church building.

My initial premise is that the function of church buildings is to assist the local congregation in its role as the Body of Christ in the locality; the threefold role may be seen as, firstly, that of worship, including the solemn recalling of the act of Redemption and the sharing in that Redemption, in the Eucharist, and the proclamation of the Word; secondly that of growth in the spiritual life, in study and learning; and thirdly, the apostolic work of mission, in going forth to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation, in word and deed.

A good deal of time and effort is now being expended at parish level, in the search to understand the present role of the local congregation, in terms of the Parish Audit, and weekends spent away in prayer/discussion/study/fellowship. A contemporary understanding of that role as 'the Body of Christ in the locality' can be seen in Project 2000 - a programme devised by the incumbent of St. Peter's, Hersham, Surrey. It was described in the Guildford Diocesan Herald, May 1994, thus:

'Every church needs a vision of where it is going and what it is for so that it may discern what God's will is for the people of that parish. The vision which Nick Whitehead, Vicar of St. Peter's, Hersham, shared with the congregation ... was that they should aim to be a church which: 1) helps mature Christians, encouraging them to develop and use their gifts; 2) supports new Christians and; 3) welcomes newcomers in their search for God. ... We decided that in order to be an effective witness for God in Hersham, we, the church members of St. Peter's, needed to become more confident about what we believed so that we could share our faith effectively through our own increased understanding about it.'

'Nick confidently expects that, strengthened and supported by a deepening prayer life, we will continue to grow individually and numerically and be better equipped to serve God and the local community. Four main projects, which cover a wide area of church life, herald the beginning of Towards 2000.:

- 1) The need to enhance our worship - for this a need sound system is likely to be installed.
- 2) The need to ensure that we will be able to pay for our clergy and meet the expenses of a lively church - for this it is intended to raise a lump sum of £20,000, and increase the regular income through giving.
- 3) The need to improve our administration - an administrator has been appointed.
- 4) The need to complete the repairs to the church roof - see 2) above.'

'Initial results have been interesting. Money has started to come in, but, more importantly, a number of people have been prompted to think more deeply about their faith and their role in the life of the church, and to realise that they, too, have a responsibility for the ministry and much to contribute. Finally, the PCC is meeting for an awayday at Maryvale to discuss further the ramifications of Towards 2000, to consider the strengths of the parish and to decide on how best to move forward.'

To the extent that the buildings perform that function, they can be said to 'work'; to the extent that they hinder that role, they fail. Within that function, I include all aspects of the buildings, from their effectiveness for the celebration of the Eucharist to facilities for coffee, and from the architectural statement of the building in its context, to the provision of toilets, not forgetting the ability to keep the weather out! A prime component of this is the extent to which their planning, often for the requirements of the liturgical movement, is still appropriate for worship today.

In addition to the effectiveness in meeting the needs of their congregation today, one can look at their quality as buildings, and some sort of judgement can be made as to the 'wearing' qualities of the structures and finishes.

Unlike Non-conformist churches, the buildings of the Church of England also reflect the place of the Church in national life. A large proportion of the churches have been in existence, on their site and in their locality, for a very long time indeed, and to an extent mirror the development of the town or village within which they stand. The Church of England itself, since its establishment in the sixteenth century, has been both Reformed and closely tied to the State - it is the Church of the people, even if it is the one they do not attend, except for rites of passage, or major festivals.

In addition, therefore, to the requirement to serve the needs of the congregation, the building has a role as part of the history of its area, and as the place in which people expect to be able to take their children for baptism, get married, and have a funeral service.

The tension between spiritual aims and material tools.

There is, inevitably, a tension in that the aims of the Church are spiritual, and relate to the proclamation of the sovereignty of God, his love for His creation, and the Good News of Redemption - eternal truths about a life which is eternal; yet the Gospel is proclaimed to frail humanity, in a context which is 'of this world' and therefore temporal and finite. The agents of this work are human beings, with all the weaknesses and frailties of humanity; the structures within which the community meets are themselves all too clearly finite and temporal, and subject to 'moth and rust', if one interprets that to include woodworm, dry-rot, and the effects of the ingress of water; moreover, the social group - the parish - which is the working unit of the Church of

England system, is itself part of a society in which not only the individual members change, as generation succeeds generation, but even the entire social make-up can change, or disappear.

Although church buildings have a particular function, they share most of the characteristics of buildings in general. If the design of a building is tied too closely to the requirements of the users at one particular time, or to a specific industrial or commercial process, it will be inflexible, and will become redundant as circumstances change. Equally, wear and weather will cause decay and deterioration, and failure to maintain or weaknesses in design, specification or supervision will lay the building open to decay and deterioration at an even greater rate.

Planning for the work and worship of a parish; for the needs of the Eucharist, of the ministry of the Word, of the sacrament of Baptism, of weekday services, of private prayer, allowing for the fluctuations in the size of a congregation; for facilities for learning and teaching - meeting rooms; and for servicing and administering the functions - vestry, office, kitchen and toilet facilities, are always going to lead to compromises. Even when money is no object, the materials are of the best, and the design avoids serious weaknesses which might lead to decay, adequate maintenance will require money and attention, and changes in the parish will occur and require adaptation of the building. Compromise, prudent planning, and the need to avoid undue maintenance costs are common to all buildings, and have to be addressed by all owners, whatever the use of the building.

The fact that the users see themselves as performing a task to which they are called by God, to His glory, and for the good of His creation and their fellows, does not reduce the impact of these elements. The wonder is not that so many churches prove a burden to their congregations, but that so many churches seem to work so well.

The Image of the Church Building.

Simply by virtue of being there, a church building presents an image to the world around it; often an image with many faces. In the old market town, or village, it speaks of continuity - tempered by change the more one looks! All too often it speaks of power and pride; whether that of the City of London and the rebuilding of St. Paul's cathedral after the Fire, of Royal patronage and the image of monarchy at Westminster Abbey, of personal wealth and piety, as at All Saints, Petersham, Surrey, or at Hoar Cross, where a wealthy widow expended much of her wealth as a memorial to a husband; it can celebrate the return of Christendom to Al Andalus, like the cathedral at Granada; it can harken back to a lost age, as San Miguel de Escalada reflects a lost - pre Islamic - Visigothic church; like so many churches of the latter half of the nineteenth century in England, it can echo an idealized Middle Ages; or, like Christ Church, Cheylesmore, Coventry,

it can demonstrate a triumphalism which was already out of kilter with the times.

The Post War churches demonstrate a range of approaches, from the surprisingly inappropriate to the very successful.

A major problem for the Church of England today arises from the excessive number of large churches, built in the second half of the nineteenth century in the expectation of a continuing pattern of worship and growing attendance. The second of these never materialised, and the first is largely expired. This pattern of development lasted well into this century, and into the Post-War period. Churches such as St. Christopher, Withington, St. Luke, Benchill, St. Francis of Assisi, Newall Green, and All Saints, Langley, are churches of traditional size and layout, which have proved - or are proving - just too much for the parish. St. Martin's, Wythenshawe, St. Hilda, Old Trafford, St. Nicholas, Radford and Christ Church, Cheylesmore, have not yet defeated their congregations, but are of little help. In contrast, the re-ordering of St. Luke's, Kingstanding, and the cautious optimism of the new incumbent of All Saints, Shard End, show what can be achieved. Unfortunately, all too often, buildings of this type present an image to the community of a large building, barely used, dilapidated, vandalized, and with a thermometer outside making all too obvious the failure to meet the needed financial target.

The Church today needs to match the image to the rôle; this includes both providing the sort of spaces, for the variety of uses, which go on in a church today, and expressing this architecturally as 'friendly', 'part of the community', 'different but not confrontational', or whatever is appropriate in the particular circumstances of the area.

The smaller churches seem to have worked well, whether they were temporary buildings, modern sheds, or reinterpretations of the traditional village church, like St. Barnabas', Kingshurst. St. Mark's, Kingstanding, also in Birmingham, neatly illustrates how well the 'slowly, slowly' approach works, with a small, but very well designed Liturgical Movement building, added to an earlier prefabricated structure, once the congregation knew where it was going. Among the later churches, the Ascension, Hulme, Manchester, St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham, and the church at Brownsover, near Rugby, in Coventry diocese, provide flexible space, and a welcoming and distinctive image very successfully.

This question of image resolves itself differently for each parish. Parishes are different; different in churchmanship, in demographic make up, in social needs and challenges, in personnel, in leadership, and in the history with which they are encumbered. While each parish may learn from its neighbour, its solutions need to be individually tailored to its situation. Perhaps the motto: 'Horses for Courses' is particularly appropriate!

CHAPTER THREE.

Post-War Idealism - Meeting the needs of the Post-War world.

It is difficult now, half a century after the end of the Second World War, to recall the aims and emotions which drove those who had to cope with the problems of repair to and reconstruction of the fabric of major cities left by the War. The tasks were the result, firstly, of war damage after bombing raids, and secondly, of the creation of areas of new housing and industry, consequent upon the economic reconstruction, including the redevelopment of slum areas. Ernest Short, in his introduction to the volume of essays: 'Post-War Church Building', published in 1947, says of the task facing those responsible for new churches:-

'When churches are built to mend the destruction wrought by the years of war and meet the needs of changing social circumstances due to the economic reconstruction following the War, church builders will have to approach their tasks in this mood of dedication.'

Post-War idealism.

The period after the war was marked by a sense of idealism and adventure, and by the challenge to create a 'better' world. The rejection of the old world was seen most clearly, in political terms, in the election of the post-war Labour Government. Building virtually - but not entirely - ceased during the war. Numbers of churches were damaged by bombs, and the re-building of bombed areas, of slum areas, and the creation of new housing estates, all gave scope for the building of new churches on a wide scale. The challenge of re-building large areas of our cities, and particular the creation of new areas of housing, including schools, at a time of general austerity, and severe shortages of building materials, led to a great deal of experimentation in building techniques, simply to meet the demands,

This combination of idealism and experiment applied equally to churches, in both practical and theological terms, although, within the dioceses of the Church of England this sense of idealism and adventure was often tempered by a strong conservative and legalistic element. As far as the planting of new churches in the new housing areas was concerned, the general approach remained largely unaltered: divide an area into 'parish-sized' bites, which coincide with estates or parts of estates - in Birmingham this sometimes coincided with the City's own planning brief for its housing areas - provide a man, a temporary building, and encourage the building of a permanent church as soon as possible. The general thought seems to have been that things would go on much as they had before. The conservative tendency runs through much of "Post-War Church Building - A Practical Handbook" (edited by Ernest Short, 1947). There were moves to look at new ways of furthering the Church's Mission; most obvious was the

Liturgical Movement, which only began to have a widespread effect on the design of churches from the mid 1960s onwards; there was also new thought on the pattern of ministry, which was to lead, eventually, to the concept of Team Ministry.

Not only were church buildings often revolutionary in architectural terms, at least insofar that they broke - in reaction against gothic historicism - with the tradition of what was expected of a church building, but they were also revolutionary in that many were built, in the years following 1960, to accommodate the requirements of the Liturgical Movement. This arose within the church itself as part of a movement for renewal, expressed in the linked forms of the Liturgical Movement and the Parish and People movement. The former in particular drew on the worship and life of the Early Church - it was thus radical in the true sense - and was expressed in architectural terms by creating a functional space, using the latest methods and materials.

The centrality of the Sacrament - although the Liturgical Movement in England looked to the early church for inspiration - is a constant theme of Christian aim and practice. In England the Movement reacted against the practice and architectural expression of the Church of England in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and this latter episode - especially insofar as it sprang from the Cambridge Camden Society - was based on a narrow archaeological approach, itself a reaction to the understanding of the late medieval Church, which had been fostered by the Reformers.

The building of new churches, or rebuilding of older churches destroyed by bombing, falls broadly into two categories; the first, and larger group, may be described as 'church planting', the second was the reinstatement of older churches, usually within inner city areas.

The Dioceses of Manchester, Birmingham and Coventry in the Post-War era.

The three dioceses I propose to examine all shared a common problem after the end of the Second World War. All had suffered from a considerable amount of bomb damage, including the loss of churches, and all were in areas where major local authority house-building schemes were being undertaken, to the extent of the creation of entirely new residential areas. The bishops of all three dioceses saw it as essential that new churches should be built in these new residential areas.

The diocese of Coventry was the only one which had to contend with the problem of building a new cathedral. Sir Basil Spence was appointed architect, and some twelve years elapsed between the issuing of the brief and Competition Conditions, in 1950, to the completion in 1962. Spence was also asked to design three new parish churches for new housing areas on the perimeter of Coventry. These were built by George Wimpey and Sons, using techniques developed for the erection of mass housing, and were completed in 1956-8. They are among the earliest of the churches built in the post-war era, and were

erected at a time when building was controlled by licence in the immediate post-war years.

The diocese of Birmingham had similar problems, on a larger scale. It also had the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, within the University, which played a major role in influencing the building of churches, both in the diocese, and throughout the country.

The churches of the Manchester diocese of the immediate post-war era are, I think, significant in that the diocese pursued an adventurous course - architecturally - leading on from the Cachemaille Day and Lander churches of the 1930s. The diocese exercised an over-all control, but it permitted experimentation with different architectural solutions, of different degrees of caution or experimentation, both in planning and in the built form.

Although Manchester appears to have the greater number of new churches, in each diocese there is a group of buildings of a range of built forms, interpreting the church's needs in a variety of ways, and representing the response of a coherent sub-group within the C of E to the needs of a particular period. Each diocesan group is not, therefore, a group selected to illustrate a particular thesis, or point of view, but an existing group - the response of one particular diocese - which presents itself, and which illustrates the development of ideas about church building in a period of rapid growth and of experiment. It includes a wide variety of parishes and of patterns of worship. It provides sufficient range to enable one to ask, and perhaps to answer, the questions; 'How effective was the diocese's response to the post war needs of the church in terms of its buildings? Did the buildings work, and do they still work? Do they help the local parish in Worship, in spiritual growth, and in its proclamation of the Gospel to the world?'

The two decades after the war saw a ferment of ideas about the proclamation of the Gospel, the nature of worship, the respective roles of the clergy and the laity, and the architectural forms within which the changing pattern of these functions could be carried out.

While new ideas for the planning of Britain in the post-war era were being formulated in the latter years of the war, thought was also being given to the shape the Church might assume in the same era, and the buildings in which it might worship..

CHAPTER FOUR.

The Inheritance of the Church in the Post-War era

Introduction.

The study of the history of the Church as Institution, the Church as a Worshipping and Teaching Community, and the Church as user of Buildings, is a story of change and adaptation, sometimes slow and steady, sometimes rapid, or even violent. Christopher Haigh, in "The English Reformation Revised", OUP, 1987, begins his introduction with a salutary cautionary note (p1):

'The excitement of history lies in its uncertainty. Except for the vital matter of accuracy in detail, there are no solved problems or authoritative conclusions in historical study. So no history book, no matter how eminent the author or balanced the argument, can provide a definitive version of the past. It is not a defect of any particular work that it will be overtaken by later research, it is a characteristic of the historical discipline.'

Much of the character of the Church of England was forged by the hammer of reforming Protestantism, on the anvil of late medieval Catholicism, and out of the popular piety of the people who continued to attend their local church, while Reform and Politics raged around them. The evidences of these changes are found in the buildings of the Church of England. In those buildings which have survived from pre-Reformation times the evidences of late medieval piety, and the evidences of their removal, bear witness equally to the changing, and often troubled history of the Church in sixteenth century England.

However, the great majority of church buildings in England were either built new during the period of the latter half of the nineteenth century up to the First World War, or are older churches which were virtually rebuilt during that period. These are the buildings with which some four or more generations of churchgoers were familiar; their style, their furnishings, their layout, and their pattern of worship were firmly established in the general consciousness as to what a 'church' was like. This pattern had emerged from the vision and enthusiasm of the nineteenth century, and from a contemporary understanding of what a church building should be, drawn from a rediscovery of the Middle Ages, albeit based on a partial understanding, even a misunderstanding, of the character of the religion of that era.

Recent Study of the Church in England in the years immediately prior to the Reformation.

A great deal of study of the Reformation in England, and the establishment of the Church of England, has approached the subject from the aspect of the 'establishment'. As Haigh describes, Foxe, in his Acts and Monuments, examined the pre-history of the Reformation to present the contrast between the

'superstition and tyranny of the medieval Catholic Church and the honest piety of discontented proto-protestants'. He stressed the growing power of Protestantism, which was furthered by politicians and preachers as a state religion and a popular creed, and he had examined the ideas and experiences of those ordinary Christians who escaped from priestly control. He wrote Protestant propaganda, designed to carry forward the Reformation by discrediting Catholics and extolling the 'true humble martyrs and servants of God' (Haigh op. cit. p2).

In 1964, in his work 'The English Reformation', A.G. Dickens 'wrote sensitive and highly professional history, designed to communicate the fruits of thirty years of research. But their (Dickens and Foxe) standpoints and sources were more than a little similar: both traced the rise of reforming Protestantism at the expense of deficient Catholicism, and both used the trials of heretics as evidence for the spread of Protestant beliefs' (Haigh ibid.).

This traditional approach has been challenged and countered by much recent research, to which Haigh's work is a significant contribution. He says of his approach, and of that of other scholars:

'The perspective and the method of the Foxe-Dickens approach have been undermined by the impact of "revisionism". ... The existence of long-term discontents can be disputed, the significance of Protestantism as a progressive ideological movement can be doubted, the continuing popularity and prestige of the Catholic Church can be stressed, and the political Reformation can be explained as the outcome of factional competition for office and influence. In fact, the revising of the English Reformation is only in small part a consequence of the deliberate use of revisionist approaches. It is much more the result of the exploitation of neglected evidence and the execution of regional studies' (Haigh ibid.).

A major contribution to this revision of approach is the work of Eamon Duffy, published by Yale last year (1992) as 'The Stripping of the Altars - Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580'. His work is particularly helpful in providing an understanding of the patterns of worship and devotion in English Churches in the years immediately prior to the Reformation, and consequently of the use of those features - such as screens, paintings, roods, etc. - which survive in many churches, albeit as fragments or isolated elements, and of the role they played in the religious life of the congregation, the extent to which they assisted them in their role as the Body of Christ in their locality, and their place as forerunners of modern works of art in post-war and contemporary churches.

It is interesting to note, from the excellent bibliography, the debt the author owes, as does Haigh, to the antiquarians of the latter part of the last century, and the early part of this, particularly in the County societies, for transcribing

and publishing so many documents from the period; it is perhaps salutary to compare the role played by the earlier antiquarians of the Cambridge Camden Society, and their influence on the Church of England, with the contribution made to the understanding of the nature of the Church in England by contemporary scholars, based on the work of later academic antiquarians.

There are a number of propositions which Duffy puts forward which are helpful in setting the context for this present study. He says (p4):

'It is the contention of the first part of the book that late medieval Catholicism exerted an enormously strong, diverse and vigorous hold over the imagination and the loyalty of the people up to the very moment of Reformation. Traditional religion had about it no particular marks of exhaustion or decay, and indeed in a whole host of ways, from the multiplication of vernacular religious books to adaptations within the national and regional cult of the saints, was showing itself well able to meet new needs and new conditions.'

All this changed in the middle of the sixteenth century. Duffy describes the effect of the violent disruption of the Reformation thus (op. cit. p593):

'The imaginative world of the "Golden Legend" and the (Mirk's) "Festial" was gradually obliterated from wall and window and bracket, from primer and block-print and sermon, and was replaced by that of the Old Testament. Cranmer's sombrely magnificent prose, read week by week, entered and possessed their minds, and became the fabric of their prayer, the utterance of their most solemn and most vulnerable moments. And more astringent and strident words entered their minds and hearts too, the polemic of the Homilies, of Jewel's Apology, of Foxe's Acts and Monuments, and of a thousand "no-popery" sermons, a relentless torrent carrying away the landmarks of a thousand years. By the end of the 1570s, whatever the instincts and nostalgia of their seniors, a generation was growing up which had known nothing else, which believed the Pope to be Antichrist, the Mass a mummery, which did not look back to the Catholic past as their own, but another country, another world.'

The Contribution of Addleshaw and Etchells.

The effect of these changes on the fabric and furnishings of the English parish church was the subject of a seminal study by G.W.O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells. In their work 'The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship', published in 1948, they made a valuable contribution to the understanding of the evolution of the English Parish church, and in analysing the character of the Anglican Church and its emphasis on lay participation, made a timely contribution to

the discussion about liturgy arising out of the Liturgical Movement.

Their work has the sub-title; 'An Inquiry into the arrangements for Public Worship in the Church of England from the Reformation to the present day', and the scope of the work is introduced thus (p15):

'When the Church of England in 1559 finally decided to use a vernacular liturgy at its public services, the authorities in Church and State were faced with a serious practical problem. How were the existing churches to be made suitable for that corporate liturgical worship presupposed by the Book of Common Prayer? It is not enough for the laity to be merely present in church; the Prayer Book intends that they should enter into the liturgy, making its moods their own, and following intelligently the action of the rite. A congregation finds this difficult unless it can hear what the minister says and see what is done at the altar. But the interior arrangements of an English medieval church were such that the worshipper could see or hear little of the service; the worship, however resplendent and mysterious, lacked that corporateness which all sections in the Church of England believe to be an essential part of liturgy'.

The work of Duffy suggests that Addleshaw's view of pre-Reformation liturgy and piety, and of the forces behind the re-ordering of church buildings, should be read with caution; but their discussion of the way in which changes took place in particular churches, and of the way in which the churches were used in the immediate post-Reformation period, is extremely valuable, and is based on the study of a great deal of contemporary material, both in the form of published books, treatises and sermons, and of documents such as churchwardens' accounts, transcribed and published by local archaeological and historical societies.

The Establishment of a pattern of worship and of building in the later Nineteenth Century.

Forty years on from the founding of the Institute in Birmingham, many people still have a conception of a 'proper church' based on a pattern established in the second half of the nineteenth century. The ubiquity of the Gothic church of the nineteenth century, with its robed choir with organ and organist, still leaves in the mind the idea of a 'proper' church building, and an abiding pattern of worship.

The depth of commitment and devotion was not necessarily what it appeared. The book 'Manners for Men', by Mrs. Humphrey (Madge of Truth), first published in 1897, has the following comments about going to church (p145ff):

'I know a young man who makes it a practice to arrive late in church every Sunday. I often wish that he did not go to my church, for he makes me cordially despise him, thus

disturbing the calm and quiet of the proper frame of mind for Sundays. I conclude that he likes to be looked at, though why he should do so is not apparent. It is, in fact, not only rude but irreverent, to be late in church for the beginning of the service. If one should accidentally be late, it is good manners to wait till the congregation rises from the kneeling posture before making one's way to a seat. It is almost an awful thing to interrupt a prayer. But I have seen people do it with no more scruple than if they were passing in a crowded street.

... Lounging is a habit of the day, and there are men who get themselves into marvellously corkscrew attitudes, in church as elsewhere. Fidgety men are more so in church than anywhere else. They seem to find it impossible to keep still. Sometimes they even produce a cough wherewith to amuse themselves, though they are not troubled with it at any other time. The charm of a reposeful manner is denied to them. Reverence for the sacred place conduces to a quiet manner; but this is not always felt by those who attend public worship. The conventional idea seems to be that such assemblies are merely phases of social life; that it is respectable to be seen there; and that the service and the sermon are things to be worried through in deference to a prevalent idea that they form part of an institution that is generally regarded as excellent. The small minority are those who regard church services in their true light as lifting the thoughts above earthly things, and yet by no means unfitting them for earth.'

A closer examination of the Church prior to this period shows that change and adaptation is the norm, rather than permanency. The church and parish life of Georgian England was vastly different from that of the mid-to-late C19th, but changes were under way. Owen Chadwick (The Victorian Church, Part I, p514ff) remarks:

'In the early thirties (of the C19th) one devout layman, who went to church twice every Sunday, received the sacrament only twice during the first five years after his confirmation. The growth in the habit of weekly communion was one big change in Anglican worship during the forties and fifties. ... It was still difficult to make old-fashioned country congregations join the responses, more difficult when a new reforming parson wanted them to sing psalms. They left responses to the clerk and sat passive until the hymns. But congregational worship made its way. In the country a new service took root, the harvest festival. In the starving year of 1842 the abundant harvest saved lives, and public authority (as on occasion before) issued a form of thanksgiving. Country parishes celebrated harvests with beer and drunkenness. More and more parsons diverted their parishioners with a special service in church followed by dinner of beef and plum pudding and beer.'

'By 1860 many churches, whether restored or not, were cleaner than they used to be. Many chancels had been

built new, many old chancels had been incorporated into the worshipping area of the church; again with exceptions - as late as 1869 the chancel at Swingfield near Dover was criticised because there could be seen so many excellent specimens of ferns.'

'The pace varied from parish to parish and diocese to diocese. But the trend was always towards more frequent services, use of organs, choirs (though few yet in surplices) joining in responses, replacing pews with benches, decorating the chancel (often with altar rails and cross and candlesticks) and unlocking churches on weekdays. In 1830 it was a matter for comment if a clergyman could be distinguished from a layman in ordinary life. In 1860 it was a matter for comment if he could not be so distinguished. ... Sermons were more frequent but shorter. ... A rare evangelical parish began to provide celebrations of holy communion in the evening. An afternoon celebration was known in parts of Wales during the early forties. J.C. Miller, evangelical vicar of St. Martin's, Birmingham, is said to have been the first to institute a regular evening communion twice a month. The change was disliked by most clergy. Miller also divided the morning service, so that the old unity of matins-litany-communion became three different services. Thus shortened service and shortened sermon reduced morning service from two and a half hours to one and a half hours.'

'Before 1860 hymnody, once the property of dissenters and evangelicals, was accepted into almost every church. An indescribable variety of hymnbooks were in use .. When the queen came to the throne, organs were not common outside large churches in towns. The country band still reigned in the village gallery, or their special pew. Village congregations made no attempt to sing psalms, except the metrical psalms which were hymns. ... Musically the organ was undoubtedly an improvement if anyone could play it. ... Those who regretted the fiddlers never regretted them for musical reasons, but for the loss of a strong church interest in the village.'

'The schoolmasters of the National Society probably did more than the clergy to create choirs. Their colleges, especially St. Mark's Chelsea, offered a training, and the old unisons of the charity children were slowly turned into more sensitive and knowledgeable choirs. The age of choir practices began. ... During the fifties or sixties, if the vicar was a high churchman, the choir was put into the chancel and then or later clothed in surplices'.

Chadwick (op. cit. p212/3) discusses the origin of the movements which formed the nineteenth century church thus:

'Everyone wanted to reform the worldliness of the Church of England and held the axiom that a more otherworldly reverence ought to inspire the services and fill the churches. ... The Tractarians taught that the treasures of antiquity should be appropriated and that the contemporary

Church of Rome preserved some of these treasures more lovingly than the Church of England. ... A few Tractarians, especially Bloxam of Magdalen College, enjoyed ritual revival, but as antiquarians, not as pastors. Newman and Pusey were not sympathetic to changes of trivial detail which might offend, to coloured stoles or rich hangings or unaccustomed postures. Pusey thought that the reassertion of Catholic truth must not be hindered by unnecessary provocation in ceremony, and that the simplicity of English practice was appropriate to the penitential state of divided Christendom. Oakeley on the contrary held that care about the smallest details was the mark of intense and reverent affection. His chapel at Margaret Street in London was loved or feared as a pattern of high Anglican worship.'

'In 1837 a few Cambridge undergraduates formed a group to study church architecture. Their leader was John Mason Neale ... One evening in the Easter term of 1839 he and two others waited upon the senior tutor of Trinity College, Thomas Thorp, prominent among the residents as a high churchman. Thorp became patron and president of their society, and in May 1839 the Cambridge Camden Society was founded. Few undergraduate societies have achieved a comparable success. After four years its patrons or members included two archbishops, sixteen bishops, thirty-one peers or MPs, twenty-one archdeacons and rural deans, sixteen architects, and and more than 700 ordinary members.'

'A society with this membership was not Tractarian. Most of its members regarded it as antiquarian and architectural. In the age of church restoration, amid the flowering of Victorian Gothic, a society was needed to guide taste, afford a centre for information, disseminate comparative ideas. The Camden Society admirably met the need. As its organ they founded a periodical, The Ecclesiologist (November 1841). ... The Camdenians were concerned for decoration, ritual, the structure and seating of churches, because these affect the way in which men worship. ... The Camdenians believed with Pugin that Gothic was the only Christian style of architecture, and loved screens, priest's doors, sedilia, piscinas, gargoyles, concealed frescoes, fragments of brasses, poppyheads, hammer-beams. They uncovered a mass of interesting and important facts about medieval churches, and propounded erroneous theories to account for the facts. They advised modern architects to make exact copies of medieval churches.'

Certainly by the 1860s Anglo-Catholic churches were flourishing in working-class areas, and the received wisdom was that the way to approach the working man was by a more elaborate ritual - that the poor learnt more by the eye than by the intellect. In fact, the poor learnt more by example. Chadwick (ibid., Part II, pp312/3) discusses the force of this:

'(In the early 1890s) the census-makers surveyed London and asked whether Anglo-Catholic churches were more successful among the working men. They found that it was true only in occasional parishes. Roman Catholics mainly held the poor, but did they hold them because the priests were ceremonious or because the poor were Irish? A few Anglo-Catholic churches held the poor though they were not Irish ... The census-makers confessed that such churches succeeded with working men, but argued that it was due not to the ritual but to the quality of priests who used the ritual. ... Charles Booth the sociologist believed that of all Anglicans the high churchmen were more successful among the poor, not because of their mode of worship, but because their lives were more evidently self-denying, their enthusiasm more forceful. "At a little distance", wrote Booth sympathetically (vii, 51) "it is easy to feel contempt for imitations of Rome, to laugh at church millinery, or scoff at "men in coloured garments sprawling before the altar". But coming close, we find beneath all this a true spirit of religion, and as such it is undoubtedly recognised by the people, even by those who care nothing for the doctrines, and to whom the ceremonial is idle show ... Nowhere in London can such devout behaviour and such apparent intensity of religious feeling be seen as in the congregations which gather in the high church." Yet Booth did not think that in the end such services could win the world of men.'

'Another intelligent observer, C.F.G. Masterman, believed that the working man accepted elaborate ceremonial with resignation, and found the ornaments and the processions inexplicable; that he did not mind what they did in church, for he respected them because they went down and lived among the poor and demanded justice for the working man. A working man from an Anglo-Catholic parish told Charles Booth (vii, 35) that they would fight for their parson against Protestant agitators and interrupters, but did not care whether the parson "stands on his head or his heels before the altar". This was not the evidence offered in the earlier days of the revival of ceremonies. In the sixties it was almost an axiom that only a more elaborate service fitted the needs of the urban poor.'

I am reminded of Father St. John Groser in Poplar between the wars, or the public school missions to London's East End.

This same lack of concern for liturgical minutiae is still clearly evident among churchgoers today. It is, of course, true that one becomes accustomed to what one knows; the worshipper who has attended the same church for thirty years, and has known a Parish Communion all that time, accepts that as the norm. He will not necessarily understand the question - is the service celebrated west-ward facing? - unless he trained as a server at St. Albans Holborn before the war! He does not attend other churches, but devotes his time and attention to his own parish, and has neither a basis for comparison, or sufficient interest to pursue the history and details of the liturgy.

Booth's conclusion still concerns the Anglo-Catholic church today, which is all too conscious that it should not forget its mission in a welter of cultic detail and principle. A glance through recent issues of the Parish Magazine of All Saints Margaret Street shows a concern with the role of the Catholic arm of the Church of England today; a concern to demonstrate that it is not stuck in the late nineteenth century, a concern to emphasize its missionary or evangelistic role, and finally a concern to demonstrate that it is not the RC Church of the nineteenth century, but part of the Church of England today. This is a rôle which is exemplified today in the work of the parish of the Ascension, Hulme, in central Manchester, St. John and St. Mary, Camp Hill, Nuneaton, in Coventry diocese, and in a group of three parishes in Birmingham diocese, including St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, and St. Mark's and St. Luke's, Kingstanding.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Prophets of the Post-War Era - The Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture in the University of Birmingham.

I shall consider, in the following chapters, aspects of the life of the post-war Church which were subject to the radical views of visionaries; worship and liturgy, the organisation of parishes and use of manpower, and church buildings were all subject to fresh scrutiny. These radical views all found a forum and a vehicle of expression in the publications produced, and conferences organised, by the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture.

The Institute was established by the University of Birmingham in 1961, with four aims; to provide facilities for research, to promote research, to disseminate knowledge and to educate, and to give advice and information when consulted. The Director was the Reverend J.G. Davies, MA, DD, Edward Cadbury Professor of Theology in the University of Birmingham, and the Deputy-Director was the Reverend Gilbert Cope, MSc, PhD, Staff Tutor in Theology in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at Birmingham University.

The establishment of the Institute is discussed by Professor Davies in an article in the 1966 Research Bulletin (pages 7-9) thus:

'The study of worship has for centuries been a recognised and important branch of Theology. In the past it has been largely a scientific study of documents to trace the forms of worship throughout the ages, the influence of one centre upon another, the emergence of families of liturgies, the differences between East and West, and, since the Reformation, between the different Christian bodies. To these should be added the doctrinal study of the meaning of worship, and this involves sacramental theology, and the influence of non-Christian modes of worship on Christian forms.'

'Only within the last few decades however have scholars begun to appreciate the intimate connection of liturgiology with architecture and the consequent need to study the one in relation to the other. It is now recognized that it is too narrow a discipline to study liturgy without constant reference to the buildings in which it was performed. Moreover the study of church architecture as a history of successive styles alone may also be regarded as unnecessarily limited, since church architecture is the setting for worship. Indeed worship has often influenced the forms of church architecture and architectural forms

have also led to interesting and sometimes bizarre developments in worship.'

'It is considerations of this kind that led the University in 1961 to establish the Institute, which also takes account of wider and more contemporary issues. From a consideration of recent books and periodicals devoted to the subject of church architecture, three conclusions may be drawn: it is generally agreed that, not only has there been, but there will also be much new church building; that there has been and there will be much liturgical re-ordering of existing buildings; and that those churches built in this country are in the main inferior, architecturally and liturgically, to those built on the continent.'

'The reasons for this undoubted failure in England are complex, and it would certainly be wrong to endorse the over-facile thesis that the fault lies with British architects, since there is no evidence that they are lacking in originality or creativity. One of the reasons however can be specified: many of the continental churches are the product of prolonged research, involving the co-operation of architects, liturgiologists, theologians and sociologists. Indeed, there have been established research centres where such a team can work together, e.g. the Liturgical Institute at Trier and the Centre de Pastorale Liturgique in Paris, and the results of this research are visible in many excellent churches in France, Germany and Switzerland. The beneficial results of a similar type of research are to be seen in this country in the very good school buildings for which British architects have been responsible. The Birmingham Institute is the first of its kind in England and indeed, in so far as it is both interdenominational and not confined necessarily to the Christian religion, it is the first in the world. Since church building is one specific item in the whole field of environmental studies, the members of the Institute range from the Engineer of the city to the Professor of Transportation and Environmental Studies, and from the Reader in Comparative Law to the Barber Professor of Fine Arts. And since, especially at the present time, socio-religious studies are an essential part of the whole area of research, the members also include the Head of the Birmingham School of Planning and the Professor of Sociology.'

The Institute was essentially a response to the concerns of the times. It worked by what today would be described as 'networking'; that is, by drawing on the skills and enthusiasms of others, architects and theologians, not associated with Birmingham University, but who had a contribution to make. The first Director remained the only Director; Gilbert Cope was succeeded as Deputy Director, on his retirement, by Denise Newton. Although the Institute survived into the 1980s, it has not survived - as an organisation - beyond the death of Professor Davies.

All that survives of the organisation today is a cupboard full of publications, in a corridor in the Department of Theology in the University. The influence of the Institute is, however, seen across the face of the country, in a range of churches built during the 1960s and 1970s, and in so many more recent buildings, in which the needs of the work and worship of the Church, and its image in the community, are so successfully achieved.

The interests of the Institute included the design and building of new churches, the rôle of the Church and the ministry in New Towns and in existing urban areas, changes in liturgy and the implications for the design of new churches and re-ordering of existing churches, the rôle of the hospital chaplain, and it examined the contribution that scientific socio-religious studies could make in these areas.

One of its earliest public ventures took the form of two contributions to a conference organized by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at Liverpool University, in September 1962, under the title of: 'The Modern Architectural Setting of the Liturgy'. The papers were published by SPCK in 1964. Among the contributors were the Revd. Fr. Charles Davis, STL, Revd. William E.A. Lockett, Staff Tutor at Liverpool, Frederick Gibberd, Edward Mills, and George Pace, with the Very Revd, F.W. Dillistone as chairman. Professor J.G. Davies read a paper on Baptismal Architecture, and Gilbert Cope read one on The Sanctuary in the Parish Church.

The work of the Institute took a number of forms. It produced an annual Research Bulletin - the first in 1966, and the last some 20 years later - which was, in effect, a collection of essays on current topics.

The Research Bulletin for 1967 notes the following students reading for higher degrees in the Institute:

- MA, Revd Peter Bridges; 'The Development of Religious Groups and Religious Behaviour in a New Town'.
- MA, Revd. J.H. Cranswick; 'The Catechumenate'.
- MA, Revd. M.S. Hart; 'A Study of the Relation of Liturgy and Architecture in the first Six Centuries of the Christian Era'.
- MA, P.D. Roller; 'The Concept of the Sacred Place in the Architecture of the Christian Church'.
- Ph.D., Revd. H.E. Chandlee; 'The Rites of Christian Initiation to the Time of Gregory the Great and their Importance for Modern Liturgical Revision'.
- Ph.D., H.R. Walden; 'The Creative Dynamic in Architecture'.

The Institute facilitated a number of special studies; among these was the report of the Diocese of Chichester Buildings Study Group, published as 'Buildings and Breakthrough' in 1966; Socio-Religious Institutes and Pastoralia in Holland, the Rhineland, Belgium, and Northern France, by Peter Bridges; Christian Ministry in New Towns, edited by Gilbert Cope, which was a compilation of papers read at a conference held at St. George's House, Windsor, in April 1967; Cathedral and Mission, edited by Gilbert Cope, 1968; The Eucharist through

the Ages, edited by W.J. Grisbrooke, 1970; Mobility and Religious Commitment, 1971; The hospital, a study of the rôles of the hospital chaplain, 1972; Problem Churches, edited by Gilbert Cope, 1972; Worship and Dance, edited by J.G. Davies, 1975; Further training of Clergy and Ministers, 1975; Religion in the Birmingham Area - Essays in the Sociology of Religion, 1975; The Cathedral and the Arts, edited by J.G. Davies and B.S. Moss, 1976; The Recreational Use of Churches, edited by J.G. Davies, 1978; The Liturgical Re-ordering of Parish Churches, by Gilbert Cope, 1979; Cities, Race and Faith, the Urban situation, 1979; Explorations in Health and Salvation, 1983; Liturgy and Change, edited by Denise Newton, 1983; and, Studies in Pastoral Theology and Social Anthropology, by Douglas Davies, 1986.

Shortly after the establishment of the Institute, in February 1963, the Director and Deputy Director asked the then Bishop of Birmingham (Bishop J.L. Wilson) that consideration be given to commissioning the Institute to build a church in the diocese, and approval was given for the building of a new church at Hodge Hill. The professional architectural work was carried out by Denys Hinton, Senior Lecturer, and subsequently Director, of the then School of Architecture at Birmingham, and one of the Honorary Fellows of the Institute, in co-operation with the School, so that Hodge Hill was included in the 'live project programme' of the School.

The Research Bulletin for 1967 notes (p81):

'The Institute is continuing its work in relation to the buildings at Hodge Hill and in Highgate. It is providing consultant services for church building in Dawley New Town and has recently undertaken to do the same for Redditch. It has agreed to carry out an examination of hospital chaplaincy work with a view to making recommendations about a chapel or other space on the developed Queen Elizabeth Hospital site. In this connection a Research Fellow is to be appointed for three years, financed by a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Trust of York, to study the function, training and selection of hospital chaplains.

The church at Hodge Hill was completed, and opened by the Bishop on 5th October 1968; it was the subject of a special study published by the Institute, under the title 'The Multi-purpose Church', 1971, and was referred to frequently in the Research Bulletins, as the Institute looked back at its work. I shall examine this church in my study of Birmingham Diocese, and also compare it with the work of the Manchester School of Architecture, under Raymond Wood-Jones, at St. John's, Irlam Road, Flixton, diocese of Manchester.

I have described the organisation of the Institute as one of 'networking'; however, a very substantial proportion of the published work of the Institute was the work of J.G. Davies and Gilbert Cope. The range of the names of contributors to the Research Bulletins and other publications gives an idea of the wealth of knowledge, experience, commitment and vision,

upon which the Institute was able to draw. They included: Giles Blomfield, Revd. Peter Bridges, Charles Brown, Revd. David L. Edwards, Revd. Leslie Harman, Professor Denys Hinton, Edward Mills, K. H. Murta (later Professor), Leslie Paul, Martin Purdy, John Wells-Thorpe, and the Revd. John Yates.

Many parochial clergy contributed articles to the Research Bulletins in respect of their own particular churches, both new and re-ordered, but a considerable number of architects were associated with the work of the Institute, and benefited from it. In the early years the Institute organized visits abroad to see churches of the Modern Movement, and influenced by the Liturgical Movement, particularly in Germany, Northern France, and Switzerland. The present writer took part in one of these tours in Spring, 1961, before the Institute was formally constituted. He can testify to the excitement caused by the revelation of the experience, and to the subsequently eminent architects in the field who took part.

I shall refer to the significance of particular papers and contributions under the headings of specific topics, in the following chapters.

Chapter Six.

The Work and Worship of the Church and the Requirements of the Liturgical Movement.

'In Granada, Archbishop Hernando de Talavera expressly stated his intention to found the practices of his diocese on what he considered "apostolic customs". . . . Prominent among his aims were the restoration of eucharistic rites to a foremost place in the church and the more intimate participation of the congregation in the liturgy. Both of these aims were realized in the Granadine cathedral.'

'The Church of England has been and will continue to be profoundly affected by what it conceives to have been the practice of the primitive church, and also by its own medieval past; it has also felt the attraction, and will doubtless continue to do so, of the ecclesiology of the Counter-Reformation. But the buildings of the primitive church, the Middle Ages, or of the Counter-Reformation, were not planned for the services of the Prayer Book; consequently they can only be a very secondary source of inspiration in planning or rearranging an Anglican church. The chief source must be our own past, especially that period in it which emphasized the classic principle of Anglican ecclesiology, that both for the sacraments and for the other offices the altar and the officiating minister must be placed in close relationship to the people.'

The first of these passages relates to the work of Hernando de Talavera, Archbishop of Granada at the beginning of the sixteenth century (Earl Rosenthal, *The Cathedral of Granada*, Princeton, 1961, pages 130 and 168). The second comes from the conclusions of G.W.O. Addleshaw, in Addleshaw and Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, 1948, page 223.

Addleshaw and Etchells are echoed in the booklet 'Building New Churches' (Church Information Office, 1962, prepared at the direction of the Church Assembly), which says, p7:

'The English Prayer Book demanded that the people should not only hear the services, but also take their full part in them.'

The booklet further elaborates this (p21) thus;

'One of the basic principles of the Prayer Book Service is that the Eucharist is the corporate act of the whole people, not something done for them by the priest. This principle was originally expressed ritually by making the communion of the people an integral part of the canon, and ceremonially by bringing the communicants into the chancel to gather round the holy Table, not only at the moment of reception, but also for the whole of the specifically sacramental part of the service. The principle tends to be obscured when the action is concentrated at the extreme end of the building, and the congregation is cut off from

it by a long vista or choir stalls or screen. The action centres on the altar. ... Thus the people should be in close relationship with the holy Table. This does not necessarily mean that they must be physically close; indeed an arrangement in which the seating is crowded round the holy Table tends - especially for those at the back - to weaken rather than to emphasize the sense of nearness. It tends also to blur the distinction between the 'many members' who 'have not the same office', and to destroy the sense of reverence and awe.'

Although the booklet does not use the term, this principle was expressed in the linked forms of the Liturgical Movement and the Parish and People movement. The former in particular drew on the worship and life of the Early Church - it was thus radical in the true sense - and was expressed, or appeared to be expressed, in architectural terms, particularly on the Continent, by creating a functional space, using the latest methods and materials.

The Liturgical Movement itself was not as revolutionary as it appeared to a generation conditioned by worship in stylized buildings of the latter half of the C19th, and the link with 'Modern' architecture is less certain than at first appears. I shall discuss later the Liturgical Movement as a recurring theme in the history of the Western church and the extent to which, in England, it may be said to lie well within the spirit of the Church of England from its formation. Much of the work of the Church of England in the C17th and C18th entailed modifications to churches, and the erection of new churches, designed to permit greater participation by the congregation in worship, including the Communion, and some churches built in this century, in non-revolutionary, traditional styles, encourage participation in worship at least as readily as 'Modern' church buildings; indeed perhaps more readily, in that they are less distracting to the eye than assertive modernism.

The centrality of the Sacrament - although the Liturgical Movement in England looked to the early church for inspiration - is a constant theme of Christian aim and practice.

The Liturgical Movement as Reaction.

To a considerable extent the Liturgical Movement, and the Parish and People movement with which it is so closely linked, were a reaction against the effects of the Oxford Movement, and the Camden Society. Minchin ('The Celebration of the Eucharist Facing the People', 1954, p26) says of it:

'The Oxford Movement was successful in so far as it was possible to carry the laity with it; it was unsuccessful in so far as the lay response was small. It developed too fast to carry the people with it, even those inside the Church, and alienated the majority outside. We have all inherited much good from the Oxford Movement, but, alas, with it a greater gulf between the Church and the world than ever before. This gap will only be closed by a keen

and responsible lay apostolate, each member of the Church carrying the redemptive Gospel of Christ to those around him, each one supported by his or her fellow Churchmen in the fellowship of the Church.'

'In our time, as part of the nexus of ideas we know as the Liturgical Movement, there has been a vital rethinking of the nature of the Church as an essential part of the Gospel of Christ. ... We are not just a number of pious individuals bolstering up our assurance in our own salvation, but a Body that is committed to the great task that was begun by God the Son when He was on earth. ... As a local Church we are not isolated either in time or space. We must work in a specific place and in the here and now, but we belong to a world-wide Church, we inherit the wisdom of past ages and know the support of those who have gone before but are still alive in Christ. The Church is One, and even in our separations we are discovering a Unity of Prayer and Charity that transcends the very real disunity that the sin of man has brought into the outward organisation of Christianity. ... In this mental climate the Church demands a form of worship that enshrines its continuity from past ages ... it must not wander off into individual eccentricities, but demonstrate its true unity with parts of the Church from which we are at present separated. It must be a worship in which each worshipper can take an intelligent and active part, expressing his personal dedication within the Church, and the evangelistic and redemptive vocation of the Church to those outside.'

It is always easier to 'do' than to 'be'; to change the furniture than to change the heart. The obsession with the physical aspects of the medieval church building; the obsession with the minutiae of medieval liturgy, and the acceptance of a pattern of church layout and furnishing, all tended to overshadow the spiritual insights and imperatives which underlay the changes in the nineteenth century Church. The physical changes which accompanied the adoption of the Parish Communion were easier to accept and understand than the spiritual imperative which drove the Liturgical Movement.

The Liturgical Movement and the Parish Communion.

The Liturgical Movement was the mid C20th expression of a movement to return the Sacrament and the liturgy to the centre of the life of the Church. It may be called 'radical' in that it looked back to the essential message of Christianity - the good news of Redemption, it sought to bring the solemn remembrance - the 'anamnesis' - of that Redemption back into the centre of the life of the Church in the Eucharist, and it looked for precedents as to how that should be done to the practice of the early Church.

It was but the latest manifestation of the search for such a purer and more radical expression of Christian faith and work.

The liturgical expression of this - in the form of a free-standing altar, westward-facing celebration, the people gathered 'around' the altar at a Parish Communion, was the expression of a vision of Christian life and work, encapsulated, in this country, in the Parish and People movement.

Origin and Development of the Liturgical Movement in England.

The development of the Liturgical Movement in England is discussed by Donald Gray in his study; 'Earth and Altar', (No. 68 of the Alcuin Club Collections), in which he examines the evolution of the Parish Communion in the Church of England, to 1945.

Gray traces the immediate ancestry of the movement in England to the work of F.D. Maurice, Stewart Headlam, and Henry Scott Holland, and Conrad Noel, Percy Widdrington, Jim Wilson, and others, and to the Christian Socialist movement. The latter he identifies as one of two elements. or parties, within the Anglo-Catholic movement. This he describes as a party of social democrats, as opposed to an authoritarian, sacerdotalist, Ritualist and exclusive element. Gray says in his Conclusion, (op. cit.

'It is the fact that this underlying association between liturgical development and social witness has existed in one vigorous and lively part of the Catholic party in the Church of England over the past one hundred and fifty years which gives the thesis of this book its momentum,'

'It has been shown that, from the time of Headlam and Scott Holland and through the life of the various Christian Socialist societies, there has always been the strongest possible teaching by them about the inter-connection which they believed to exist between the Eucharist and the Church's calling to serve sacrificially in the world. This is why at each stage they can be accurately described as "Sacramental Socialists". ... They were those who wished to emphasize the proposition that the Church is the extension of the Incarnation, and they are also one in acknowledging F.D. Maurice as their prophet and inspirer. If they are to be given another label it would be "Liberal Catholic", a thread which would serve to join Maurice, through Headlam and Scott Holland and Gore, to Temple and Ramsey. They stand out in contrast with the imitative "Romanizing" tendencies of other parts of the Anglo-Catholic Movement; but slowly, not least through the influence of Widdrington's Anglo-Catholic Summer Schools of Sociology, the Liberal Catholics were able to fill the vacuum of theological leadership in the party.'

Gray continues his thesis thus (op. cit. p2):

'The liturgical developments which will be examined began to emerge during the period in which the Church of England was facing the greatest possible challenges to its pastoral policies. These arose, first of all, from the continuing

growth of urban and industrial society at the end of the nineteenth century, which was too soon followed by the awful calamities and catastrophes of the First World War. Both these events posed urgent and basic questions for the Church which it could not easily answer, and there were particular challenges which arose to test the Church. One of these concerned the growing awareness among some churchmen that there was in the secular world a craving for fellowship. These same churchmen realized that this was an area in which the Church had something to offer, the fellowship of the Lord's Table. Chaplains from the front and priests in urban parishes urged the Church authorities to support them in developing a form of worship which would be, at one and the same time, true to the primitive concepts of the Eucharist, expressive of Koinoinia, and would also make the point that the Eucharist is the extension of the incarnational concerns of the Gospel in the workaday world.'

The insights gained by the chaplains who accompanied the troops in the First World War had a great deal to offer to the Church as it sought to re-define its mission in the rapidly changing post-war world. All too often the vision was neglected. Gray comments in his Conclusion (op. cit. p221):

'The First World War chaplains had pleaded for a rebirth of fellowship within the Church; ... they and the servicemen they represented had an instinctive (and admittedly accurate) feeling that something was very lacking in a church where there were institutionalized divisions in worship, with the divide being either between the rich and the poor or between the devout and the more casual. Unfortunately the abolition of such divisions was an ambition which few of the bishops of the Church of England were willing to support, the notable exceptions being those who had been influenced at some stage in their lives by the Christian Social Union.'

'In consequence, when the War was over, a great opportunity for liturgical renewal was missed. The Church had before it the task of liturgical revision ... yet the 'official' church proved to be consistently deaf to the promptings of the war-time experiences of many dedicated and committed priests and laymen who were convinced that out of the red-hot furnace of war some of the more precious elements should be preserved. Among the most valuable, they believed, was the discovery, in reality a rediscovery, of that dimension in worship which is the joy and inspiration to be gained by the open recognition of one's fellow-worshippers around the Table of the Lord rather than the anonymity which obtains when each disappears into the pew. Officer and soldier alike discovered in the grim surroundings of battlefield worship that each was the "brother for whom Christ died". They discovered this fact as together they prepared for the very real possibility of their own impending death by receiving together the symbols of Life under the signs of His death: the broken Body and the poured-out Blood. Here was a deep corporate

experience crying out to be built upon and developed for the good of the nation, but the Bishops and Convocations ... were in no mood to be deflected by such matters. Even such erstwhile Christian Socialists as Walter Frere were too pre-occupied with liturgical minutiae and the consequent church politics to find time to listen to those who wished to persuade them to design a form of worship which would have linked the unique fellowship of a simple Eucharist in a Flanders field with the Sunday morning worship of urban England, despite the evidence being available from the work of the National Mission that such a service was widely sought after. The opportunity was lost and it might be thought that God's judgement was passed on such an unadventurous church when the parliamentary fiascos of the 1927 and 1928 Prayer Book debates occurred.'

'With the benefit of hindsight we can feel relieved that the Church was not saddled with the 1928 Prayer Book because it is very possible that it would have prevented the Church of England from giving its mind to that later process of revision which resulted in The Alternative Service Book with its tacit recognition of the Parish Communion as the "type" of Anglican worship for the contemporary Church'.

Gray discusses the Liturgical Movement within the Roman Catholic Church on the Continent and cites two articles by J. Perret, published in 1932 and 1933 in 'Christendom', the journal edited by Maurice Reckitt, which he describes as the organ of the Christendom Group. Gray refers to "an expression of the liturgical life of the Church which manifests its rôle as being the Body of Christ in the world and its consequent social vocation".

He comments briefly of work by J. Perret, published in 1932 and 1933, in the periodical Christendom, in which, says Gray:

'He made it clear that the Liturgical Movement was a reaction against the religious individualism, subjectivism, and sentimentalism inherited by the Roman Catholic Church from the eighteenth century. Whereas, in the Liturgy seen properly, there is a tremendous social power which can transform congregations into

"a strong and powerful body acting as God's arm interfering in human affairs, becoming, as it were, an apocalyptic power which alters the course of history."

Gray also discusses the rôle of the Congrès National des Oeuvres Catholiques at Malines in Belgium as the scene for the birth of the Liturgical Movement, and the work of Pius Parsch at Klosterneuburg.

The Augustinian monastery at Klosterneuburg, north of Vienna, has been involved in pastoral work increasingly since the late C18th, and the monks now oversee 22 parsonages mainly around Vienna. Pius Parsch (1894-1954), a canon of the monastery, exercised pastoral care in the church of St. Gertrud, on the

edge of the town. In this small and simple Romanesque church he experimented with a liturgy in the vernacular, with a simple stone altar - a mensa set on a single pillar - permitting celebration facing the people. The church today looks rather sad and neglected.

Gray comments on the 'home-grown' nature of the Movement in England thus (op. cit. p2/3):

'Without any detectable borrowing from the comparable Roman Catholic Liturgical Movement which was developing on the Continent of Europe, the idea of the Parish Communion began to take root in the 1920s and 1930s. The evidence exists that this type of service commended itself, in the first place, to priests who had an awareness of the need of the Church to identify with the hopes, aspirations, frustrations, and pains of the community in which it was placed, those who were not content with a separation of the Church from the body politic in every sense. ...'

'For the sacramental socialists the pattern was quite clear: they were convinced that the Corpus Christi, which is the Church, needs to feed together in fellowship on the Corpus Christi, which is the Body and Blood received in the Holy Eucharist, in order that it may fulfil its rôle to be the Corpus Christi, the loving hands, feet, and eyes of Christ active and incarnate in his Servant Church.'

The contribution of A.G. Hebert

The main proponent of the Liturgical Movement in England, in the light of Continental experience, was A.G. Hebert. Gray says of him (op. cit. p196):

'His writings did bring to the attention of many, who had not previously given it any consideration, that this was a possible way of tackling the problem of Sunday morning worship. Hebert's books must be acknowledged as having ushered in the first period in which there was a rapid spread of the Parish Communion in the Church of England. The second stage came in the post-war period after the formation of the Parish and People organization.'

His initial work appeared in 'Liturgy and Society', published in 1935. The relationship of the Liturgical Movement and the Parish Communion, and the significance of the Parish Communion, is discussed in the book of essays, 'The Parish Communion' (SPCK 1957), edited by A.G. Hebert. Hebert says of the Parish Communion, in the introductory essay (pp3-7):

'It is ... part of the Liturgical Movement which is going on in our day in every part of Christendom, and which is fundamentally a movement of return to the Sacraments and the Liturgy, as the sacramental expression of our redemption through Christ and of the nature of the Church as His mystical Body.'

'By "the Parish Communion" is meant the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, with the communion of the people, in a parish church, as the chief service of the day, or, better, as the assembly of the Christian community for the worship of God; for even the phrase "the chief service of the day" is unsatisfactory if it is understood to mean a service - one among several - and not the service - the divine liturgy.'

'The Holy Eucharist is the central act of worship of the Church, the People of God, God's universal spiritual family. It is the worship in spirit and in truth of which our Lord, according to St. John, ch. iv., speaks to the Samaritan woman, since it is the worship of God through Christ who is the Truth, through the Spirit in whom the mystical Body of Christ lives. As the sacramental showing-forth of the one Sacrifice of Christ and of the offering-up of the members of Christ through union with Him to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice to God, it sums up in itself the whole Gospel of redemption and the whole nature of the Church, Christ's Body. The subject of the Parish Communion is therefore infinite both in spiritual depth and in the range of its application, which extends to every side of the Church's life and her witness to the world.'

Hebert goes on to warn that the Parish Communion should not be seen as a panacea for all the Church's difficulties, nor should it be seen as the property of one part only of the Church of England. He says (pp4/5):

' There are two dangers in particular against which it is necessary that we should be on our guard. ... The first is the danger of a materialistic perversion of the sacramental principle. It is too easy to assume, as soon as it is admitted that the Parish Communion is right in principle, that the institution of a service at 9 or 9.30 a.m., labelled 'the Parish Communion' or 'the People's Eucharist' will prove a panacea for all difficulties. If the matter is approached in this way, experience will soon prove the falsity of the assumption. The problem of the Church's worship is a spiritual problem; it is the problem of the spiritual life of each parish, of the growth of priest and people in grace and the 'fellowship of the Gospel'. And spiritual fruits are not gained except by spiritual means, by prayer and love and pastoral care and spiritual discipline. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.'

'Further, since each parish is the local unit of the Church, Christ's Body, and the problem is that of its spiritual life "in Christ", each parish presents a separate problem. Thus, if it be admitted that for many parishes 9 or 9.15 is a very suitable hour, it would be absurd to claim any special sanctity for the hour of nine.'

'It is a matter of the spirit, not of the letter: of the Parish Communion not as an end in itself, but as the

sacramental expression of the Church's common life in Christ'.

'Secondly, since the Sacrament belongs to the Church, it would be disastrous if the Parish Communion were to become the badge of some party or group. There is in the Church of England a large diversity of ceremonial practice; we may regret the fact, but it exists, and a sane realism will recognize it. But the Sacrament itself matters infinitely more than the ceremonial dress in which it is clothed; and it is the Sacrament itself that is the outward and visible sign of our unity in Christ, a unity deeper than all our differences'.

This last point is echoed today in the concern of the Catholic arm of the Church of England that it should not become bogged down in liturgical minutiae but should be engaged in the missionary work of the Church, and should be seen as a part of the Church of England - not a group which wishes it belonged to 'Rome'. Hebert expresses this concern thus:

'In this, as in other big issues, we ought to think of what may come to pass in the course of twenty years, not of two years or five. If in the next twenty years the Parish Communion becomes something like the normal practice in English parish churches, in those places where real spiritual work is going on (not elsewhere), that fact alone will have done much to heal our party divisions. As it is by the calling and grace of God alone that we are Christians, and in Him we are one as members of His Church, so in proportion as we put the Sacrament and the Communion in the centre of our worship we shall thereby be brought to an understanding of one another far deeper than any that can be attained by Round Table Conferences.'

Hebert goes on to discuss the meaning of "ecclesia", the role of the local community or parish as "pars pro toto", and the place of the Eucharist. He says (pp8-9):

'It is generally acknowledged that the word ecclesia in the New Testament is taken not from the secular use of the word, as the democratic assembly of the Greek city-state, but from its Hebrew meaning in the Greek Old Testament, where it means the congregation of the Lord, the People of God, Israel. The Church of the apostolic age regarded itself as the inheritor of the Old Testament; the Church of God had, indeed, begun with Moses, if not with Abraham, but Jesus was the Messiah to whom the whole Old Testament had looked forward, and in Him Israel had been reconstituted as the Church of the New Covenant.'

'It follows from this meaning of ecclesia that the Church as a whole cannot be thought of as made up of a federation of the local communities, the churches of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, and the rest. It is the Church as a whole that is Israel; the whole is prior to the parts, and the whole is present in each part.'

'The Church of God has been re-constituted in the person of Jesus the Messiah, by His death and resurrection. His resurrection is not one individual's survival of death, but is inclusive, so that in it, the Church, which is His Body, is also raised to life ... To say that the Church is the Body of Christ is to say that the Church's essential nature is expressed in this dying and rising again. The life of the "old man" is the isolated life of self-centred man, of man in the state of Original Sin; the life of the "new man" is the life of koinonia in which "ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price". ... And what do Christians do when they meet for worship "on the first day of the week"? They meet as the Israel of God, scattered in many places all over the world, yet so that the whole is present in the part, and the unity of the whole Body is present and is expressed in the worship of the local community. ... The central act of their worship must therefore be the act which the Lord instituted on the night that He was betrayed, as the summing-up of all His life-work:

"Do this in remembrance of Me, do this for My anamnesis".

What is anamnesis? In Biblical usage it is not a subjective remembering, lest we forget, but a concrete and objective bringing-back from the past into the present'.

Basil Minchin said of the liturgical expression of the Movement:

'It will not increase the corporate spirit of a parish one jot if the celebrant gets behind the altar, unless first the people are beginning to know what the real unity of a congregation means. But if they are already trying to live and work together and to bring God's redemption to bear on the world in which they are placed, they will see in this way of worship something that increasingly helps them to understand and carry out this corporate vocation' (Minchin, *The Celebration of the Eucharist Facing the People*, 1954).

Architectural implications of the Liturgical Movement; in the 1950s and 1960s, and today.

I shall make frequent reference to what I describe as 'churches of the Liturgical Movement'; this is a phrase which requires some definition. What sort of buildings did the Liturgical Movement require? It required, first, a space in which the Eucharist could be celebrated with dignity, in which all present could be participants in the Liturgical Action. The shape of the space, location of the altar and sanctuary, and the disposition of seating, were principal matters to be resolved. Such a priority led to the need, theologically, symbolically, and architecturally, to resolve the question - What do we do with the Font and the Pulpit? Finally, because of the continental examples which provided the impetus to British architects, and the sense in which the Liturgical Movement was a revolt against the Victorian concept of what

was a 'proper' church, the architecture of the Liturgical Movement came to be associated with modern, and anti-historicist, design.

The nineteenth century-based concept of the 'proper' church.

I shall refer on numerous occasions to what I describe as the concept of a 'proper' church, and it may be useful to summarize briefly what this means. This is the type of building and internal layout which became familiar as a result of the Gothic revival of the second half of the nineteenth century, and which was used for the design of new churches and for the remodelling of a vast number of old churches, throughout the country, during a period of large urban and suburban expansion. The scale of new building can be judged from, for example, the Faber Guide to Victorian Churches, and that only lists churches of architectural merit. There were far more built than are illustrated, and the pattern was continued up to the Great War, and well into the middle of this century.

The driving force behind this was the Cambridge Camden Society, the tenets of which were expressed forcibly in the writings of John Mason Neale. A particularly helpful study of the Cambridge Movement - the product of the Cambridge Camden Society - by Professor James White, published in 1962; to what extent this was in any way 'propaganda' for Modern architecture and the Liturgical Movement I do not know, but the timing is particularly apt.

White comments on the influence of the Cambridge Camden Society on the building of new churches, thus:

'The tremendous expansion of urban areas in the nineteenth century necessitated the building of hundreds of new churches throughout England. This provided a golden opportunity for the Society to exercise a creative rôle in guiding those responsible for the new buildings, (although) the Society never undertook the responsibility for erecting a new church.

and he depicts the Society as driven by the same intellectual confidence, and assumption of the moral high ground, that characterizes some of the Conservation lobby today.

Not all the churches of this period were built to the same pattern, but a pattern emerged which was widely used and, as a result, became familiar to several generations of churchgoers, and by that familiarity became accepted as the pattern of a 'proper' church. It became almost a parody of itself.

The 'proper' pattern comprised a church with nave, aisles, a long chancel with choir stalls, and a sanctuary with the altar against the east wall.

The external appearance was a recreation of a notional medieval church which, depending on the skill of the

architect, the choice of materials, and their weathering, might give a passable imitation of a medieval model, or not, or might be a reinterpretation of Gothic, sometimes vigorous, sometimes not.

Internally, this 'proper' pattern comprised seating in the form of pews, rigidly aligned facing east. Particularly in the case of remodelled, older, churches, the seating was arranged across the nave and aisles, leaving a central aisle and narrow access passages to the seating in the side aisles, with little or no regard to the original architectural form of the building. The seats of the Churchwardens would be distinguished by their staffs, set in holders at the side of the seat.

The chancel, no wider than the nave, would be raised above the floor level of the nave by several steps and would be separated from the nave by a low wall - sometimes decorated, or by a reconstruction of a full-blown choir screen. It would be filled by two or three rows of choir stalls on either side, i.e. running at right angles to the line of the pews, with the organ, pipes and console, set behind one side of the stalls, housed in what, in medieval times, would have been a side chapel. At the western end of the choir stalls would be seats for the officiating clergy, in a slightly grander form than the choir stalls. To either side, and immediately in front of the low screen wall, would be a substantial pulpit, in timber, or, more often, stone, and a lectern of brass in the form of an eagle.

The sanctuary would be to the east of the choir, with the altar set against the east wall, and altar rails in front.

The result is a layout suited to a pattern of worship which has now largely ceased. It is singularly inflexible; the axial emphasis, so rigidly confined within the architecture of arcades, screen walls, raised levels, and long choir, makes any remodelling very difficult, and expensive; the pews are uncomfortable, and their rigid layout does not contribute to a sense of fellowship; the form of the choir and placing of the sanctuary give an emphasis to the members of the choir, and a distance to the priest, which are at odds with present-day conceptions of the nature of the Christian community at worship. It also makes the use of the building for concerts, drama, or informal forms of worship, appear to be make-shift.

Architectural requirements of the Liturgical Movement.

The Liturgical Movement had implications for the Church, for the individual parish, and for the individual, which were partly formal and physical, and partly religious and spiritual. The Movement placed the Eucharist at the centre of Christian life, as the service on Sunday, in which all participated, but also as the means by which the people of each parish:

'try to live and work together and to bring God's redemption to bear on the world in which they are placed, (and) they will see in this way of worship something that increasingly helps them to understand and carry out this corporate vocation (i.e. to be the People of God in their parish).

The task of finding expression for this primacy of the Eucharist, in terms of the planning and design of church buildings, was notably explored in the works - both written and built - of Rudolph Schwarz. The influence of both became widely known among British architects as a result of the work of the Birmingham Institute, especially through the visits to Germany, France and Switzerland. Reading books and looking at illustrations is useful to a point, but for the appreciation of buildings, especially in their context, there is no substitute for visiting, preferably when they are in use.

There is an aspect of the resolution of this task, which became inextricably linked with the Movement in the thought of architects, but which is not of the essence of the Liturgical Movement.

Because the Liturgical Movement was in part a revolt against the non-participatory, the-priest-does-it-all-on-your-behalf, view of the Eucharist - which was given expression in the layout of Anglican churches during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and thus gave rise to what was considered to be the correct way of planning a church - it also became a revolt against historicism, both in the layout of churches, and in their very architectural expression. The new approach to Worship and the Christian Life seemed to require a New Architecture. This is seen at its most striking in the work of Rudolf Schwarz. I include descriptions of his church at Matzleinsdorf, in Vienna, and churches by Austrian architects in the city, in Volume 2, pp , and illustrations in Volume 3, pp

The first requirement was for a single space for the celebration of the Eucharist, with the altar and seating for the congregation disposed in such a way that all could see and hear what was going on, so that that all could participate in the action of the Eucharist, and could be conscious of their unity, as the People of God in that place, at worship.

There is no requirement as to the architectural dress in which that space should be clothed.

Secondly, although the Liturgical Movement stressed the primacy of the Eucharist, and led to the adoption of the Parish Communion as the Sunday service, it was necessary to take account of the place of the sacrament of Baptism and of the Word. Since Baptism is the entry point to the Community, it was considered appropriate that it should be near the entrance to the church - for the purposes of symbolism, and that it should be readily visible by the congregation, as the welcoming Community. It was also necessary to find a

location for the proclamation of the Word - preaching - so that, first, and particularly in a Church which is both Catholic and Reformed, the Place of the Word should not overshadow the Place of the Eucharist, nor vice-versa, and, second, that that Place should be related to the sanctuary, and not totally disassociated from it.

The resolution of the first requirement was met by the use of centralized plan-forms; anything but a nave-and-aisles-choir-with-stalls-and-sanctuary. These included circular plans, oval, octagonal, square - often laid out in diamond fashion with the altar in the angle, and rectangular with the altar in the middle of a long side. As I shall discuss, in the main body of this Study, there are examples where seating was disposed around the altar, sometimes in blocks, laid out in a fan shape, sometimes in three blocks, with each block aligned in straight rows, facing the altar face-on, or facing side-on. At St. Mary's, Hob's Moat, the seating for the congregation, on six sides of an octagon, means that for a speaker to address the congregation he or she has to swivel uncomfortably from side to side. At St. Columba's, Bannersgate, seating on either side of the altar is unpopular, partly because of the difficulty of hearing, and partly because of the effect of facing a block of congregation opposite; there are a number of other examples of this. Fellowship can be achieved by being shoulder to shoulder, in a gentle curve, but being set en face gives the wrong signal.

The requirement for the setting of the font is still a difficult one to resolve. In the early post-war years, fonts were usually placed by the entrance, at the west end. The location at St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, works, since, with the entrance to the church being to one side of the sanctuary, the font can be placed near the entrance, but in visual proximity to the altar from the viewpoint of the congregation, so that the congregation can take part more fully when baptism is held within the context of a main service - usually the Parish Communion. When the entrance is at the liturgical west end it is almost impossible to meet both requirements. A number of churches resolve this by having a movable font; at St. Stephen's, Astley, the font is being moved from the west end to one side of the altar. The William Temple Memorial Church, at Wythenshawe, Manchester, has the font on the axis between the entrance and the altar, and has a steel canopy, formed around three vertical structural members - a strikingly successful solution.

In the early post-war years the pulpit tended to be designed, and located, as a prominent feature, to one side of, and forward of, the sanctuary - examples are St. John the Divine, Willenhall, Coventry, the rather spidery design at Christ Church Staines, and St. John and St. Mary, Camp Hill, Nuneaton, of 1963/4. Increasingly, the pulpit is reduced in size and simplified, to form a pair with a reading desk, and in many cases, today the Word is preached from a movable stand, before the altar rails.

Some of the churches examined in this study, which I have identified as being Liturgical Movement ones, are those which are very obviously designed, from the beginning, to accommodate the Parish Communion, and which show clear evidence of inspiration from Continental sources. This was often gained as a result of the Tours arranged by the Birmingham Institute. At their best, they demonstrate a deep understanding of the work of the continental architects, and especially Schwarz, and the ability to transfer that successfully to England; amongst these are buildings by Raymond Wood-Jones, George Pace, Denys Hinton, Potter and Hare, and Maguire and Murray. Other, individual churches, include St. Stephen's, Astley; St. Chad's, Limeside; St. Mary's, Hob's Moat; St. Peter's, Hall Green; St. Michael's, Bartley Green; St. Mark's, Kingstanding; and St. John and St. Mary, Camp Hill, Nuneaton.

A number of these I consider are significant historical documents demonstrating a particular architectural solution to a theological concern of the day, and the various attempts at the resolution of conflicting requirements. This historical importance does not mean that they are without some disadvantages: the roof at William Temple Memorial Church is one example. St. Mary's, Hob's Moat, has its sanctuary constructed so massively, and so prominently, that any alteration to the layout is physically difficult, and costly. The seating for clergy, behind a parapet wall behind the altar, makes the priest appear defensive, defended, remote and superior. Again, the arrangement is difficult and expensive to alter.

A second, and larger group of churches, comprise those where the architects have clearly seen a number of continental churches, but have sometimes not fully appreciated what they were looking at, or, because of compromise, or a failure to understand what the parish required, or being pushed by the diocese to create a building of an inappropriate size, erected something which did not enable the parish to use the building effectively. Amongst these are St. Paul's, Bordesley Green; St. Peter's, Tile Cross; All Saint's, Langley; I am also inclined to include St. Francis of Assisi, Wythenshawe. It was churches like these which Peter Hammond seems to have had in mind when he wrote (Towards a Church Architecture, 1962, p25):

'There are plenty of recent churches which draw upon the whole rag-bag of contemporary clichés - random windows, Betonglas, skeletal bell towers, monumental crosses and the rest - but which are no more than caricatures of modern buildings.'

Finally, many of the smaller churches, although not obviously designed for the requirements of the Liturgical Movement, are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the type of internal layout for the Parish Communion; the churches at Lea Hall and South Yardley, by Denys Hinton, work very well, as do those by David Nye in Guildford.

Chapter Seven.

Thoughts on new patterns of ministry.

The Most Reverend Richard Holloway, DD., Bishop of Edinburgh, in the 10th Eric Symes Abbott Memorial Lecture, delivered at Westminster Abbey on 4th May 1995, warns against the assumption that our systems have divine authority. He says (p4/5):

'All our systems, moral, theological, ecclesiastical, political, are created for our sake not God's. We need them because of original sin, because we have to learn to co-operate, because we are social creatures who need structures and some order in our lives. But it is a dangerous step to claim divine warrant, in any but the most general sense, for any of our systems. The text here is our lord's word on the Sabbath, when he told us it was made for us and not us for it. The test is always pragmatic. Do our institutions, our moral systems, our ecclesiastical structures make our lives more abundant; do they increase our maturity, our joy; do they enhance or diminish human flourishing?'

'A recognition that all human systems are provisional, are made by us and can therefore be unmade by us, is another liberating insight; it gives us permission to search for systems that are more appropriate to our day. This means that we will not invest too heavily, either theologically or morally, in our systems. We are redeemed not by them, but by the God who is already on our side. The question Christians should ask themselves every day is "Given that we are already redeemed and forgiven, how should we live responsibly and joyously? How should we express that saving reality in our systems and relations?'

The comment about structures applies equally to structures of brick, stone, timber or concrete, as to organisational structures, although this is not what Holloway has primarily in mind.

One of those to question the continued pattern of ministry, based on the planting of churches, and formation of new parishes according to the numbers of the population, in the new housing areas of metropolitan areas, was Eric Saxon - subsequently Rector of St. Ann's church, Manchester, and Rural Dean of the Manchester Deanery, in an article in Theology, in February 1944. He had initially intended to pursue a career in local government, before being ordained. He writes, in his article (p32):

'In the discussions which are at present proceeding on the reorganization of the Church's life, one notices a tendency to treat the whole subject on a level which does not raise a fundamental problem. This may be briefly stated as the relationship of the parish to the civil society as it actually functions in the twentieth century. The superficial approach to the subject takes the form of

renewed evangelistic efforts - directed possibly by a Central Commission from Westminster; or of increased and hectic exertions on the part of the clergy to prove themselves as second to none as club leaders; or, worst of all, of the attempt to infuse new life into the parochial system just as it is, as though it were divinely given and unalterable.'

This echoes Holloway's warning. Saxon goes on to discuss the nature of the parish. He points out that:

'In the days when there was one pump, and one street and one church, the parish was a natural Christian community. ... Until as late as 1894 the effective organ of local government was the Vestry Meeting, and the functions of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities were in the same hands of the same body. Thus the parochial system corresponded admirably with the social life of a predominantly rural England.'

He discusses the changes in the civil administration, with the growth of District and Borough councils, and the vast growth of population, particularly in the industrial towns and cities, to the extent that, at the time he wrote:

'The parish area is now simply a section of the larger district in which the people live and work and amuse themselves. Parishes are measured by the size of the population - i.e., the number to which one man, with perhaps some assistance from curates, can reasonably be expected to minister. They have no longer, especially in urban areas, any correspondence with "functioning society", to use Drucker's term.'

'One of the reasons why the earlier parish was an effective functioning unit was that the inhabitants had lived there for many generations. Community life is ultimately spiritual, resulting from the close and enduring relationships between the members of a society, and it cannot be created overnight. Community can only exist therefore in a relatively stable society ...'.

Saxon goes on to discuss the effect on society of large-scale movement of population, and the break-up of older communities and the consequent lack of a sense of community, on the role of the parish now. He says of it:

'Being a survivor of a division of English society which has now passed away, the parochial system is forced to fight a weary battle against almost hopeless odds, and at best succeeds only in artificially infusing life into a defunct unit of society.'

He goes on to ask:

'How is the parochial system of an unwieldy city, such as Manchester, to be adjusted to the existing social life of the area? The city as a whole does not possess a real

civic life, since it is far too large to evoke the sentiments which naturally arise in a smaller town. In fact those urban districts which have been absorbed into the city area have tended to disintegrate socially. The parishes, on the other hand, are simply blocks of unrelated population, whose ecclesiastical boundaries bear no relation to the realities of the present social structure.'

'In the new housing areas a completely new situation exists. Merely to erect houses and shops does not create a community. Only time and the right cultural and social relations can do that. ... The Church here has the chance of reviving the old conception lying behind the Vestry Meeting, if it regards the worship of the new and developing community as involving concern in civic affairs. One may hope that, in the new satellite towns which are being planned on the lines of Wythenshawe, new parishes will not simply be carved out and tacked on to the nearest R.D. Chapter, but that each town will be treated as a unity, a basis on which the religious community may be built.'

He goes on to suggest that the Rural Deanery - or perhaps Urban Deanery - is the unit of administration for the future. This is the conclusion that Robin Gill has come to, nearly forty years on, in the conclusion to his study, 'The Myth of the Empty Church' (SPCK 1993).

The Paul Report.

The parallel problem of clergy deployment was examined with great rigour, twenty years later, in the 'Paul Report' of 1964. This report, by Leslie Paul, entitled 'The Deployment and Payment of the Clergy' (Church Information Office, 1964), made suggestions for structural change in the Church of England, based upon rigorous empirical analysis. As Gill discusses (op. cit. p276);

'He was well aware of the numerical and social decline of the Church of England and plotted it in some detail using the, then recently published, "Facts and Figures about the Church of England". At the very beginning of his report he noted that, "whether we base membership most broadly on infant baptism or more narrowly upon confirmation figures, there is in both cases serious evidence of decline"'.

Paul introduced his proposals for change thus:

'There is no doubt that what the evidence urges upon us is a reform of the ministerial structure and of the pastoral machinery of the Church, or rather not one single reform, but an interlocking series of reforms; in fact, an operation of the utmost delicacy and complexity. Though the difficulties stare us in the face, the alternatives are chilling - to do nothing, which means to abandon the nation to its religious decline and the clergy to their isolation, or to attempt a few piecemeal reforms which may save face but leave the central missionary problem to the

conurbations unresolved. The crux of the whole problem of deployment seems to me this - though short of manpower the Church cannot use the clergy it has as effectively as it ought to: it is bad stewardship. It needs more clergy, but it has no moral right to ask for them unless it can deploy them effectively'.

Paul remarks, (Gill, op.cit.p277) 'If this was the situation of decline three decades ago, it is even more so today. ... Decline in almost every measurable form has characterized the Church of England in the last thirty years.'

Paul made recommendations, specifically, in respect of clerical pay and clerical deployment. His recommendations on pay have been largely implemented. Those in respect of clerical deployment have also been largely implemented, and those concerned with the balance of manpower between urban and rural parishes have been implemented by the 'Sheffield formula', which aimed to:

'Enable the Church, over a period of years, to use the manpower that was available in the most effective way possible, and in a manner which would ensure fairer shares as between dioceses than the existing distribution, based on historical patterns rather than present needs, provided.'

Gill comments on the results of the implementation of the Sheffield Formula thus (op.cit. p281):

'Leslie Paul envisaged a great expansion of stipendiary clergy. To improve clergy-population ratios he argued that the 15,488 full-time clergy in 1961 (with an average population each of 2,838) should be increased to 17,581 (to reduce this population to 2,500) and ideally to 29,301 (to reduce it to 1,500). On this basis he calculated that by 1991 there would need to be 21,761 full-time clergy to achieve the 2,500 ratio and 36,268 to achieve the 1,500 ratio. In fact by 1991 there are 10,480 male and 596 female full-time stipendiary clergy (with an average population each of 4,340). Given this huge discrepancy, it is not surprising that rural/urban redeployment resulting from the Sheffield Formula has also been accompanied by worse clergy-population ratios in both areas. Paradoxically, it has also been accompanied by an increased economic subsidy to rural areas - a subsidy that has not stopped rural attendances declining faster than urban ones. ... Furthermore, this increased subsidy has not stopped attendances in the most rural dioceses from declining faster than those in the most urban dioceses. ... All of this suggests the ironic conclusion that a radical policy of implementing equal payment among clergy, regardless of levels of parish giving and allied to more gradual policies of rural/urban redeployment, has actually increased the problem of subsidy in the Church of England. Leslie Paul's own warning, quoted above - that 'to attempt a few piecemeal reforms which may save face but leave the central missionary problem to the conurbations unresolved'

- has sadly proved to be prophetic. The additional sting is that neither has this done anything to resolve the growing missionary problem in rural areas.'

The implications of the report for the need for local congregations to produce leaders from within, to work as a community, with non-stipendiary clergy, are only slowly being implemented, but the situation it envisaged is galloping upon the Church. The days of one parson to one village have now long gone. The expectation by each parish that it should have its own parson is now met by ordained clergy, racing from one church to another on a Sunday, to give each community its Holy Communion or Parish Communion, ameliorated in part by a slowly increasing use of local ordained or non-stipendiary ministry. Policies on the employment of non-stipendiary clergy - and the responsibility given to them - varies from diocese to diocese, and from parish to parish. Some parishes are adventurous in their use of the lay ministry, and non-stipendiary clergy. A parish such as one I am familiar with, within easy commuting distance of London, and with a large college of the University of London within reach, has a reservoir of able and educated laity, who can make a very considerable contribution to the life of the parish, and who are encouraged to do so. Other parishes, particularly in parts of Hampshire, have substantial numbers of retired senior army officers. In both cases, such parishioners are able to play a very effective rôle in the life of the parish, but they can appear somewhat threatening to a lone clergyman! Team ministry, and interdenominational co-operation, are increasing, but the task of ministering to the great Outer Ring Concil estates, where so many of the post-war churches were built, is one of the great problems for the ministry today.

Chapter Eight.

Principles of church architecture in the Post-War period.

The pre War inheritance - Church planting in the inter-war period.

Much of the thinking about churches in the immediate Post-War years drew on the thoughts of the leading church architects of the immediate Pre-War years. In a supplement on Modern Churches in 'Architectural Record' for February, 1938, (pp60/61), Bernard Miller contributed an article on the design of churches, in which he discusses the planting and designing of new churches in the new housing areas as the Church adapted itself to meet new challenges.

Miller looks at the problems within the context of contemporary thought and practice on the design of housing development and new areas, and clearly sees a role for 'quality' of building and setting as contributing to the general quality of life for the inhabitants:

'To meet this problem successfully a closer understanding of the psychological outlook, conditions and needs of new and often impoverished communities is an all-important factor. Poverty and cramped surroundings, even under the best possible conditions of housing, is only too general. To combat this we need to plan sunny and attractive church centres provided with large open churches, as large in scale and as cheerful in colour as we can afford to make them, together with well-planned halls, and attractive open spaces. The vicarage planned with a waiting-room, and open to all-comers, and, if possible, a school on modern progressive lines might well be included in such a group. A unified scheme of this kind ... offers a prospect of sunlit cloisters, courts and quadrangles forming effective links and open spaces between the principal buildings. It is as well to stress here the importance of comprehensive site planning at the outset under one architect, otherwise meddlesome interference and muddled thinking might result.'

Miller's sketch perspective for St. Christopher's, Withington, and his proposal - not built - for St. Chad's, Bilston, Staffs, - show his own application of these principles. He goes on to offer a word of caution on the use of temporary buildings as the solution to providing accommodation when, as so often, funds are short.

Of the planning of a church he says:

'The primary aim should be to plan imaginatively a building possessive of atmosphere, not of artificial contrivance, but arising naturally from the deepest religious sensibilities of the designer; reverent, universal and enduring in its appeal.'

He speaks of the need for:

'dignified proportion, not only in the mass but united sympathetically to the smallest details..... Modern churches built in town and urban areas are often criticised for their failure to secure a comfortable "homely" character. In practice this generally implies low buildings, with the inevitable steep timber roofs, multiple parts, and with plenty of nooks and corners, in short, the country church type. The appropriate distinction necessary between town and country character is thus overlooked. Further, the "homely" church is questionable on psychological grounds. As already stated, life in the cramped and drab surroundings of poky little parlours, kitchens, and sculleries is only too prevalent in all our newly developed areas, and inevitably induces a welcome escape to open air playing fields and spacious and colourful buildings.'

I question whether his condemnation of small churches in towns is justified. Certainly, for a civic or town centre, church an architectural presence as a focal point, and as a building of sufficient scale to take its place within the commercial and civic buildings of a town centre, is required. The new housing areas - particularly ones such as Withington and Burnage - were almost entirely areas of small scale housing; a small church, of village character, would have served just as well, and would not have brought with them the present problems of excessive seating capacity and excessive maintenance costs.

Miller comments that church architecture in this country :

'conspicuously fails to keep pace with the best contemporary developments in architecture'

and he contrasts new developments in worship and social outreach with a lack of adventure in church architecture, although he does remark that:

'there are signs of a reaction against long and lofty proportions rather in favour of a plan that draws the area of seating within closer range of the altar, pulpit and lectern. There is much to commend this.'

As to modern materials, he commends the use of reinforced concrete, and, for roof vaults, the Diagrid system, used by Cachemaille-Day at St. Michael's, Lawton Moor, Manchester.

There seems to be no general questioning of the assumption that Church life would proceed in much the same way that it had before, and that the type of accommodation, and the pattern of use, would stay much the same, although he is aware of the Parish Eucharist, and communal Breakfast, and of increasing involvement by the Church in the community generally. The Parish Eucharist, and Parish Breakfast, and the increasing involvement in the Community, were to be a familiar part of parish life only some 20 years later.

"Post-War Church Building - A Guide", of ten years, and a World War later, was little different in its air of conservatism. St. Christopher's, Withington, Manchester, did suffer from 'long, lofty proportions'; the one church Miller appears to commend is Cachemaille-Day's St. Michael's, Lawton Moor, the 'Star' church, although he would probably have approved also of the Smithsons' design for Coventry Cathedral.

A more narrowly architectural view of contemporary church building was offered three years earlier in a paper read by Edward Maufe at the RIBA, in December 1943, on the occasion of the presentation of the RIBA London Architecture Medal to Herbert Welch, of Welch, Cachemaille-Day and Lander, for their church of St. Saviour, Eltham, a Paper was read by Edward Maufe, and the occasion was reported in The Builder, 21 December 1943.

Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, as President, was chairman, and commented on St. Saviour's that:

'it seemed to him to possess qualities of atmosphere conducive to worship, and it was a simple, austere and impressive building'.

Welch, in replying, commented that it was the first church, and, apart from the President's own house, the smallest building to receive that honour. He took this:

'as an indication that no building was too small to be considered worthy of that high distinction, which should be a great encouragement, especially to the young men.'

The lecture coincided with an exhibition of new churches in the RIBA. Maufe commented, in his paper, that comparison of church buildings with those of other classes brought home to them that English churches especially suffered somewhat from sentimentalism. He showed illustrations of examples from the Continent where, he commented, they did not seem to be so prone to sentimentalism, but did incline to build churches primarily to surprise

'which was not an enduring motive for our work'

As reported in the Builder, he commented further:

'Antiquarianism was mainly a modern feeling. It must be realised that it was traditional to be modern; that was to say, our forebears built as well as they could to suit their own conditions, and did not attempt to copy the past - in fact, they thought they could build better than the past.. Their urge to good work was largely a very normal, a very human one - a spirit of devotion to the Church, of rivalry with adjoining parishes, and a desire to make their own particular church just as beautiful as they could. ... However ... the liberation given to design by the new materials and the new methods of construction was obviously dangerous if not used wisely - in churches we must not merely experiment, we must as far as possible use proved

knowledge. ... The new materials and the new methods of construction readily solved some of the long-standing difficulties of church building, particularly with regard to large spans and fire-resisting construction.'

Maufe commented thus on the role of a building of quality to proclaim the message of the Church:

'Moreover, now that the sermon had to some extent lost its potency, it was realised again how effectively the lessons of the Church could be taught by her buildings if these be but worthy of her.'

He commented further on the infrequency with which fine churches were built:

'The reason that the proportion of fine churches over poor churches was, and is, so small, was that the proportion of people who wanted fine churches was so small. In the main, architects gave, and must give, what was demanded of them. If the Church did not want fine churches, the architects of fine churches were not employed twice. They either ceased to exist as architects, or were forced to build churches at such-and-such-cost-per-sitting, or whatever it was the Church did demand. As had been said, "such architects lose heart and make money". It must be recognised that there was a limit of economy below which the Church could not go. Slum spiritual conditions were possible in churches just as in houses. We must stand out at least for a sense of quality; not only quality of materials and workmanship, but also quality of space and atmosphere.'

The comment about per capita funding is very relevant to the Manchester churches of the post-war era. Manchester seems to have been reasonably adventurous in its immediate pre-war church building, with two churches by the Cachemaille-Day partnership - St. Nicholas Burnage and St. Michael and All Angels, Lawton Moor, , and one by Bernard Miller - St. Christopher's, Withington. These three buildings all offer a striking architectural expression, and contrast, in an area of suburban housing. They all offer a light and lofty interior, they all give greater emphasis to the altar, and permit a greater sense of "togetherness" than in the typical late-Victorian plan form - St. Michael and All Angels is the most significant in this respect. Unfortunately, all were constructed on a scale which has proved to be too large for the needs of their congregations today. All were adventurous in the use of materials; the detailing of brickwork is imaginative in all three, but the use of reinforced concrete has, in the end, proved the death of St. Christopher's as a building.

The Post-War period.

In parallel to the thought and planning which had been taking place during the latter years of the war, in preparation for the general reconstruction of towns and cities which was to

take place when the war was over, thought had also been given to the preparation of the building of new churches, both as a result of war damage, and for the new areas of housing which were planned. This is discussed in the collection of essays, published in 1947 as: 'Post-War Church Building - a practical handbook', edited by Ernest Short, and with contributions from, amongst others, Stanley Eley, N.F. Cachemaille-Day, Sir Charles Nicholson, Judith Scott, Geoffrey Webb and Francis Eeles. In the Introduction, Short echoes the theme of post-war idealism, and the role played by the building of churches in the affirmation of the renewal of the country after the devastation of war, when he remarks:-

'A Christian Church is more than a building and its designer more than an architect. Something of the poet must be added. His task is to create a symbol, and he must ever have in mind the full purpose of his building, always remembering the particular denomination concerned. ... In a very real sense the planning, building and furnishing of a new church is an act of worship. When churches are built to mend the destruction wrought by the years of war and meet the needs of changing social circumstances due to the economic reconstruction following the War, church builders will have to approach their tasks in this mood of dedication. So to be fully worthy a church should carry the imagination of the worshippers back through almost two thousand years of Christian history, embodying the idea of a vast chain of prayer and thanksgiving, a chain, moreover, in which the worship of today is by no means the final link.'

Short goes on to discuss the question of quality in the design of a church, and he emphasizes that "small can be beautiful". This is a salutary comment, and it is a reminder that, certainly with hindsight, Manchester diocese misread the future pattern of church life. Short says:

'The building may be a small church as lovely in design, material and craftsmanship as that of Thomas Garner and G.F. Bodley at Hoar Cross, a metropolitan cathedral as majestic as the designs of Sir Giles Scott for the Anglican cathedral at Liverpool, or a Christian Centre as carefully planned as that Sir Giles designed to replace the war-ruined cathedral at Coventry. On the contrary, the building may be a relatively humble suburban or village church in which the architect is strictly limited by the funds available; nevertheless, because of its high and enduring purpose, there should be no second best in design or craftsmanship. When C. Harrison Townsend designed the village church of St. Martin, Womersley, near the hamlet of Blackheath in Surrey, (he means, the Church of St. Martin in the hamlet of Blackheath, near the village of Womersley) he was content to convert an old cottage into a vestry and to this he added his church, just over sixty feet long and no more than fifteen feet high. Necessarily, the proportions of the structure were not noble, but they were fully adequate for the needs of the community and that sufficed.'

J.G. Davies, Peter Hammond and the Birmingham Institute.

A breath of fresh air was brought into the debate with the work of Peter Hammond, and the work of J.G. Davies and Gilbert Cope at Birmingham University. Peter Hammond set out his ideas in an article in *The Architectural Review*, April, 1958, entitled "Liturgical Brief". He is scathing about the majority of new churches constructed by then. He says:

'All over western Europe the decade just ended has been one of unparalleled activity in the field of church building. In western Germany more than 350 churches have been built or radically reconstructed in the one diocese of Cologne. In France new churches and monasteries are multiplying so rapidly that it is difficult to keep abreast of the latest projects. On this side of the Channel the destruction of the war years, and the growth of new centres of population, have given rise to extensive programmes of church building in almost every English diocese. ...'

'It must be confessed that the results of all this activity have been somewhat disappointing. While a great deal of interesting work is being done on the Continent, very few post-war churches can be accounted wholly successful. In this country we have yet to build a church which will bear comparison with Sir Ninian Comper's St. Philip, Cosham (completed in 1938), and the recent survey *Sixty Post-war Churches* is a depressing catalogue of timidity and mediocrity. Much the same might be said of the exhibition organized by the Central Council for the Care of Churches. It seems evident that the Church of England has failed lamentably to seize an opportunity such as is unlikely to recur.'

'While it is widely recognized that there is no problem in contemporary architecture where the need for radical solutions is so imperative as that of church design, the real character of the problem is still far from clear. A great deal of hard thinking is necessary if we are not to waste still more time and money on misguided projects which, though not without a certain superficial attraction, are essentially irrelevant. One has of course to recognize that the majority of new churches in every country of western Europe are still pathetic attempts to give new life to dead formulae. ... I do not think ... that the persistence of these historical souvenirs, these sterile exercises in neo-Gothic or sham-Romanesque, need concern us overmuch today. This particular battle has already been fought. Sooner or later - even in this country - where the building of new churches is still inextricably confused with the preservation of old ones - it will be recognized that it is no use speaking to the contemporary world in a dead language.'

'I believe that the real danger is rather that, for want of any clear grasp of the problems at issue, the Church will identify itself with false solutions based on a highly superficial understanding of the present situation. This

is happening already, and the first fruits have proved dispiriting in the extreme. There is very little to choose between the familiar essays in dead languages and many of the 'frankly modern' churches which have sprung up all over western Europe during the last few years. It can hardly be too strongly emphasized that the fundamental problem is not one of style, of finding a "contemporary idiom". It is rather a matter of rethinking afresh the whole question of what a church is for: and the answer to this question cannot, as is so often supposed, be taken for granted. It is all very well to say that the designing of a church is not a planning problem but an opportunity to create a shrine to the glory of God. A vague religiousness can never be more than a very imperfect substitute for an informed understanding of the essential function of the church, any more than a lofty conception of the benefits of universal education can take the place of a precise grasp of the problems involved in designing a school.'

'The most successful churches of recent years have been inspired by a movement which is fundamentally theological in character ... the Liturgical Movement ... Significantly, it is in those countries of western Europe affected by the Liturgical Movement that church architecture is beginning to emerge from the depths of sterility and irrelevance into which it had fallen.'

In Germany and Switzerland, and, more recently, in France (where the Liturgical Movement failed to establish itself until the years of the German occupation), a new kind of church has begun to appear: a church which reflects a new theological outlook, a deepened understanding of the liturgy which gives the building its *raison d'être*.

'It has been said that one of the difficulties of church architecture in the past has been that architectural form has followed too closely an inadequately conceived function. I believe that this is true not only of the past: it is the crucial difficulty today, particularly in this country. We have no clear conception of the function of the church building, and until the client is in a position to supply the architect with an adequate programme he can scarcely complain if he gets an unsatisfactory church. The reason why the best of recent Continental churches are so far in advance of any we have built in England is, quite simply, that a great deal more thought has been given on the other side of the Channel to the question of what a church is for. ... The fact is that the best Swiss, German and French churches of the last decade are theologically informed to a far greater degree than their English counterparts.'

Hammond goes on to comment about Coventry Cathedral, then under construction:

'The new Coventry Cathedral promises to be a particularly spectacular example of architectural form following an

inadequately conceived function. Basil Spence himself has asserted that "a cathedral in England has a greater purpose than a church in which only to hold services. . . . The object of this cathedral is turn the visitor who may go into the cathedral alone for a half hour's peace - to turn him from a visitor into a worshipper" (Religious Buildings for Today, New York, 1957, p132). . . . To conceive the primary function of a cathedral in terms of its effect upon the casual visitor is rather like describing the Festival Hall as a building where one can have a pleasant meal with a view of the river. It is to ignore its fundamental *raison d'être* while giving undue prominence to something that is essentially incidental and derivative.'

'Coventry cathedral will no doubt be praised or criticized in due course on aesthetic grounds. It seems to me that its fundamental weakness lies elsewhere: in an inadequately conceived functional analysis. This church contributes nothing to the debate which has been proceeding during the 35 years since the building of Perret's epoch-making church at Le Raincy. It springs from an entirely different world of thought. The quest for sparkling and beautiful altars at the end of long vistas is strictly irrelevant to the problems of church planning and liturgy which are exercising Continental architects like Metzger, Schwarz and the Bohms, and which will sooner or later have to be faced in this country also, if ever we are to build a church worthy of its purpose. We are in no position today to build cathedrals. Our immediate task is to apply ourselves afresh to the grammar of church architecture - not to compose epic poems.'

'So far as the Continent is concerned, a great deal of hard thinking has been done since the 'thirties. If the Liturgical Movement has as yet produced very few really outstanding churches, it has at least created a widespread awareness of the true character of the problems at issue. It has also inspired a considerable number of unpretentious churches which combine great artistic integrity with a lucid grasp of liturgical principles - by which I mean far more than the arrangement of church furniture.'

'The prospect for church architecture on this side of the Channel is at the moment somewhat cheerless. It is to be feared that, as the ecclesiastical authorities begin to grasp the revolutionary notion that it is traditional to be modern, we may expect to see still more examples of what are essentially medieval churches masquerading rather self-consciously in contemporary fancy dress. There are, nevertheless, some grounds for hoping that the next ten years will see an increasing awareness of the problems confronting the church architect. Robert Maguire's new church at Bow Common may well prove to be of far greater importance than any church built in this country since St. Philip's, Cosham. It is the outcome of a systematic application of functional analysis to the problems of church design; the unusual plan springs "from an attempt to relate the altar to the priest and people in such a way

that they can best carry out their functions in the liturgy." This unpretentious church promises to be a notable landmark in the development of church architecture in this country.'

The article includes drawings of the elevation and plan of St. Paul's, Bow Common, and notes that the church:

'has an experimental arrangement with freestanding altar, the seating, pulpit and other furnishings can be moved to other positions in the light of experience. The chairs are stackable'.

This new thought about the design and building of churches led to the formation of the New Churches Research Group, and to a series of conferences, and study tours, organized at Birmingham University by Gilbert Cope. A conference held in April 1960 was reported in the AJ by Andor Gomme (AJ 28 April 1960). Gomme, then a lecturer in English at Keele University, shared Hammond's own radical views, and his views are illuminating, and expressed succinctly I quote them in extenso. He says:

'A large-scale get-together between clergymen and architects sounds like being impossibly solemn or impossibly hearty. And there were moments when the recent conference which Gilbert Cope organized at Birmingham, "Church brief Architects", did become preposterous - as when two loads of people were dumped in a dreary new church in a dreary new suburb of Coventry and spent an hour or so popping in and out of pews, pulpits, fonts etc., trying to find out what they were doing there at all.'

In April 1960, it seems almost certain that Gomme is discussing one of the Spence churches, then only recently completed.

'Such a situation is preposterous because so few new churches in this country have a thing to be said for them in any way: hence the need for conferences of this kind and for the existence of the New Churches Research Group. After one conference, one member at least has realized something of what is wrong: that, despite all the eagerness of the ecumenical movement, more or less no clergyman has the faintest idea of how to brief an architect to build a new church, that in fact architects just aren't presented with briefs - they simply have to turn a few hints, thrown at them in idle conversation, into a building as they go along. And in fact one of the things that became clear as we saw and discussed churches, models and pictures is that the only tolerable designs come when the architect briefs the churchman; then perhaps there exists a chance of coherence at least. Unfortunately in such vague conditions architects are quite likely to build churches out of their own head without paying the slightest attention to a programme. Consequently we have what Peter Hammond calls the Maufe-

Spence pictorial approach, a matter of compositions, of "spontaneous architectural expressions of religious feelings" of architecture seen as decoration. But "artistic symbols, however contemporary, are no substitute for architecture" as Mr Hammond said: the architect's job is to provide a church which will work as a setting for the liturgy in the particular place where it is to be. For this a three-stage programme needs to be worked out - firstly a general liturgical brief (similar to those produced by Catholic churches in Germany and America) in which the function of the church building can be clearly marked out; secondly, a study into the particular problems of the community to be served; and, thirdly, with the architect in sole charge, the architectural solution of the crystallized local issue.'

'At present in this country there are no general liturgical directives from any of the churches, there are virtually no clergymen aware of the kind of briefing which an architect requires and virtually no architects capable of responding to it if produced.'

'Consequently the discussion between the incumbent (Peter Vowles) and the architect (Robert Maguire) on the genesis of the proposed new church at Perry Beeches on the edge of Birmingham was remarkable and encouraging. Here is a case of a lot of hard thinking going into the programming, of a long and continued collaboration between a clergyman who knew what he wanted and an architect who understood and sympathized with him and had the talent to respond in a genuinely architectural manner. The result looks like being one of the tiny handful of new churches in Britain which are not only notable buildings in their own right but also work as churches. "There is no substitute for talent", as Aldous Huxley observed, but it must be a talent that can be used, not one for producing unworkable masterpieces like Notre Dame de Royan, which Peter Hammond, in the most memorable môt of the meeting referred to as "a rather belated attempt to build the Sainte Chapelle in reinforced concrete."'

This lack of any brief, which is based on a careful analysis of the function of the building - and which is replaced, rather, by a request to produce a 'religious building', seems to account for the persistence of the late Victorian plan-form up to, and beyond, the last war. Of the churches illustrated in the Incorporated Church Building Society's "Fifty New Churches - 1930-1945" the vast majority provide for a pattern of worship employed, and a size of congregation envisaged, at the turn of the century. Any modernity in the buildings is essentially the architectural dress, and this seems to come from the architect. There are exceptions - notably Cachemaille-Day's St. Michael and All Angels, Wythenshawe, but even here, the reflection of contemporary Continental liturgical thought seems to have come from the architect.

The planning of churches with a freestanding altar, and seats which are movable, and generally aligned other than in a

single block of rigid parallel rows, facing in one direction, is now a commonplace, both for new churches, extended older churches, and re-ordered churches. The emphasis on the need for a proper briefing by the client, and indeed, a proper understanding by the client of what the building had to do, has now become common-place. The best early example of this is, perhaps, St. George's, Hillmorton, Rugby, where the influence of Hammond, through his writing, and a meeting with the then curate-in-charge, led to a complete reappraisal by the parish of what it wanted. The link with the Modern Movement in architecture, which Hammond seems to regard as essential, has not lasted, and only too often the use of what were then new materials, and experimental building techniques, has given rise to major problems with these churches. Even in the 60s, churches were being built, which incorporated the pattern of flexible internal layout, which Hammond advocated, but using building materials and techniques which were hardly revolutionary; the cruck-framed churches in Guildford diocese, by David Nye, using laminated timber crucks - now readily available because of the invention of new glues, are most interesting examples. Their external appearance is a blend of traditional materials, cladding a form inspired by the structure, which itself is an expression of the flexible modular space within. As a bonus, they seem to have lasted surprisingly well.

**A STUDY OF CHURCHES BUILT FOR THE USE OF CONGREGATIONS
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BETWEEN 1945 AND 1970 AND OF
THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING THE NEEDS OF THEIR
CONGREGATIONS TODAY.**

Churches in the diocese of Manchester.

Manchester Diocese - introduction to the diocesan programme of church building after the war.

I am reminded of the historian who was writing a history of the C18th in England. A short distance into his research he realised that he could not understand the C18th without understanding the C17th ... when last seen, he was comfortably into the fourteenth century!

The programme of church building in Manchester in the post-war years was largely, but not entirely, one of the planting of churches in new housing areas. Even in the case where a new church replaced one destroyed by bombing, the opportunity was taken to build the new church on a different site. This pattern of planting churches in new housing areas was one which can be traced back at least to the late nineteenth century in Manchester, and was maintained in the inter-war years.

Manchester, in common with many large industrial towns and cities, inherited major problems from the early nineteenth century, when houses of poor quality were built cheaply, and at speed, to accommodate the people flooding into the urban areas to work in the new mills and factories. James Phillips Kay, in his classic study of Manchester cotton workers in 1832 (cited in J. Burnett, 'A social history of housing 1815-1970', 1978, p55), notes:

'The houses, in such situations, are uncleanly, ill-provided with furniture; an air of discomfort, if not of squalid and loathsome wretchedness pervades them; they are often dilapidated, badly drained, damp; and the habits of their tenants are gross - they are ill-fed, ill-clothed and uneconomical - denying themselves the comforts of life in order that they may wallow in the unrestrained licence of animal appetite.'

Nassau Senior described the homes of the Irish in Manchester in 1837 (cited in C. Bauer, 'Modern Housing', 1934, p15) thus:

'These towns, for in extent and number of inhabitants they are towns, have been erected with the utmost disregard of everything except the immediate advantage of the speculative builder. A carpenter and builder unite to buy a series of building sites and cover them with so-called houses. In one place we found a whole street following the course of a ditch, because in this way deeper cellars could be secured without the cost of digging, cellars not for storing wares or rubbish, but for dwellings of human beings. Not one house in this street escaped the cholera. In general the streets of these suburbs are unpaved, with a dungheap or ditch in the middle; the houses are built back to back, without ventilation or drainage, and whole families are limited to a corner of a cellar or garret.'

Such crowded conditions, within, or on the immediate edge, of the town centre were almost inevitable at the time. As Bauer points out (op cit p14);

'It was not possible in most cases for them to live at any great distance from the center. In many cities there were actual walls, often with gate-tolls and customs inspection. Cheap and convenient transportation means were still lacking. Often outlying land was kept from development through being in large estates, or in the hands of speculators who did not desire to build as yet. Moreover, particularly in the Continental cities, the ancient traditions of a close town life and urban culture, centering around the market-place and the inns and the public halls (he might have added the church), made life in a vorort or banlieu seem hardly worth living, even to the poorest denizens of the alleys. (And who can say, looking at some of the Anglo-Saxon suburbs, that they were not right?)'

The Manchester Improvement Act of 1867 led to the preparation of bye-laws which regulated the provision of open space more carefully; the minimum street width was increased to 30 ft.; this became 36ft. where the houses were more than two storeys in height, and 45 ft. where they were more than three storeys. Each house was to have an open space at its rear of a minimum of 70 sq.ft. The first Corporation tenements appeared in 1891, and were described as:

'gaunt, gloomy and barrack-like'.

These were followed by the first flats in 1896, and a suburban cottage estate at Blackley.

Churches were built to serve these new housing areas. A nineteenth century example is St. John's, Old Trafford, where a 'tin church' was established to serve new, privately built, housing, in an area looking out onto open fields. The 'tin church' was built as a temporary expedient, and was rapidly followed, in 1908, by the new permanent church, an essay in hard red brick, in the characteristic 'Gothic', nave, choir, sanctuary and aisles layout of the period. This was one of a number of churches built as a result of a Commission set up by Bishop Knox, into the need for new churches for the growing housing areas. This pattern of a short-life, temporary building, followed fairly swiftly by a new permanent church, in which the organisational life of the parish could be established, was to become the norm.

Some initial work has been carried out on the history of church building in Manchester by Canon Dobb, in his history of the diocese, entitled: 'Like a Mighty Tortoise', 1978. In particular, he emphasizes the link between the local authority and its housing programme, and the response of the diocese. Much post-war housing was the continuation of housing programmes begun before, but interrupted by, the Second World War. I am indebted to Canon Dobb for his assistance.

Church building in the 1930s - The Housing Context.

The impetus towards the provision of better housing for the inhabitants of the city, and the replacement of the slums, was slowed by effects of the Great War of 1914-1918, but in Manchester it regained that impetus in the late 1920s and 1930s. There were two main areas where new housing was provided, one was in Wythenshawe, the other was nearer to the centre of the city, but still on the south side, in areas opened up by the construction of two new arterial roads; one was Kingsway, which gave rise to Burnage, and Princess Road, which served the westward extension of Withington. In all these instances, the City Corporation provided the greater proportion of the housing.

In 1926 Manchester Corporation, finding that there was insufficient parcels of land within the city boundaries to carry out its housing programme, acquired for housing development the Tatton Estate of Wythenshawe which lay south of the river Mersey and hence outside the city borders and within the Diocese of Chester. Wythenshawe was planned as a very large satellite garden town, and its development began in 1930. The total area was eight and half square miles, including a surrounding belt, planned to be retained permanently as agricultural land. There was also lavish provision for public open space within the estate. The projected final population was around 100,000. The Master Plan for the estate was prepared by Barry Parker, who had been largely responsible for Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb. A feature of his plan was the incorporation of parkways - wide through roads with broad margins planted with grass, trees and flower-beds. Most of the houses were to be erected by the City Council, but sites were left for middle and upper-class private house building. Of the first 5000 houses built, in the first few years, 4600 were low-rental dwellings built by the Council (Bauer, op cit, p174).

The involvement of the Church in housing was not, of course, confined to the provision of church buildings. In Leeds, notably, the local authority was galvanized into a more vigorous slum clearance programme by the efforts of Councillor Charles Jenkinson, an Anglican priest who represented a ward containing some of the worst slum properties in the city. Supported by a few close colleagues, Jenkinson succeeded in rallying the Labour Party and then the electorate behind his plan for a massive extension of council housing in Leeds. Through his work in committee, and his speeches to the Council and public meetings (which gained extensive if not always favourable coverage in the local press) Jenkinson politicized the making of housing policy to a degree unprecedented in the post First War period (cf M.J. Daunton, ed., 'Councillors and tenants: Local Authority Housing in English Cities, 1919-1939', Leicester 1984).

The involvement of the Church in the Wythenshawe estate is described thus by Canon Dobb (op cit pp198-200):

'In 1930, through an Act of Parliament, the land was incorporated into the city and in 1933, by an Act of the Church Assembly ratified by Parliament and given Royal Assent, it became part of the Diocese of Manchester. At the heart of the area stood the ancient parish church of St Wilfrid, Northenden which was to find itself responsible for tens of thousands of people who had moved into the parish under one of the world's most intensive slum-clearance programmes. At that moment the Rector, The Revd H. Chigwell, was working alone providing the ministry at the parish church and a mission school.'

'Bishop Warman launched an appeal for £50,000 in 1934 "to make spiritual provision for Wythenshawe" and appointed two curates with special responsibility for the new housing areas; the Revd Harry Nightingale moved to Lawton Moor and was provided with a hut and the Revd Colin Lamont started work at Hollyhedge farm to cover Benchill. Both areas were made Conventional Districts and allowed to develop their own identity and make provision for the erection of a permanent church.'

'The first church to be consecrated was St. Michael and All Angels, Lawton Moor. In 1935 the hut was replaced by a new mission church, which later served as the parish hall until it was replaced in 1968. The permanent church was consecrated on Saturday 14th December 1937 by Bishop Warman. The building has been described as "the most original of pre-War churches". On plan it resembles an eight pointed star whose main feature is the two-sided east window which fills the forty-foot space between wall and ceiling and provides the total walling of the sanctuary. The roof is carried on sixty-five feet long concrete columns (twenty-five feet are below ground) and the ceiling reflects one of the earliest uses of the 'Diagrid' system of building; a framed concrete grid which means that the outer brick walls only carry their own weight. In more recent years plans have been made to make side chapels in the points of the star - the first one is the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, made in 1968. The architect of the church was Cachemaille-Day who intended, in the original scheme, to have a central altar below the imposing light fitting. This innovation was just too much, with all the other novelties, for the Bishop who refused to sanction the proposition. He did allow the Bishop's chair to be replaced in the apex of the sanctuary in the manner of early Christian basilicas. (This has since been moved). The cost of the whole project, which included the vicarage was £13,500 but this left the successive generations of congregation to provide adequate furnishing and the organ.'

'St. Luke the Physician, Benchill, designed by Cecil Young, was consecrated in 1939, immediately prior to the outbreak of the War. The parish received the first phase of Manchester's post-war housing and by 1948 it was estimated that over 40,000 people lived within its boundaries. It was this situation with an average of 350 baptisms a year and about 150 weddings, which gave rise to the concern of

Bishop Greer to provide churches for the new housing council estates in the diocese. Under the Bishop's New Churches Appeal three churches were built in Wythenshawe to share the load of ministry - St Martin, the William Temple Church and St Richard of Chichester.'

Closer to the centre of the city, St. Nicholas, Burnage, was built facing onto Kingsway, and St. Christopher, Withington, overlooks Princess Road.

The early history of the parish and church of St. Nicholas is described in a booklet produced when the present building had been designed, but before it was completed, i.e. circa 1930/31.

The first incumbent, the Revd H.A. Barnett, in his contribution describes the area as he knew it in the years immediately preceding the Great War as an area of cornfields, where one could take a pleasant walk through cornfields. After the War, the fields were still there, but a 'great trench' had been excavated for the new arterial road, Kingsway.

By October 1928, when he was appointed first incumbent of the new parish of St, Nicholas, Burnage, he walked through streets lined by small, largely identical, houses. A plot, one of the last remaining pieces of pasture, had been blessed in July 1928, and the first sod cut, for a temporary building to be erected to serve as church and hall. Barnett describes how:

'Within the first year of the life of the new district, most of the organisations generally found in connection with a parish had been started though no society was launched before a definite need was felt for it, and someone had been obtained to act as leader.'

The characteristic of the parish, as with all the parishes in the new estates, was the large number of children who flooded the church's organisations, and its available space.

It is in this characteristic feature, of a homogeneous community artificially assembled, that the first evidence of the life-cycle of an estate may be seen. It foreshadowed the demographic pattern which was to lead to the problems of over-large buildings, with populations declining both in numbers and in wealth, that was to lead to the problem so well illustrated in St. Christopher, Withington.

The building of the new permanent church was eagerly awaited, but Barnett adds the comment:

'We do not, however, lose sight of the fact that our primary concern is the building of a living Church of which we are members. The Church of Saint Nicholas in Burnage is composed neither of bricks nor of stone, but of people; but they need a material Church where worship may be given to God.'

The architect also contributed to the booklet, with a description of his task as he saw it. He describes the general problem, facing the architect working for the Church at the time:

'Churches we must have, and have quickly in the fast-growing new parishes, and it is for the architect to help the ecclesiastical authorities and the bravely working incumbents to meet this need; as in the national crisis, so in the ecclesiastical, nothing but strong and brave measures can hope to solve the problem which has been set.'

He describes St. Nicholas itself as:

'a serious effort to cope with the problem of design presented by the necessity of building a dignified place of worship for a relatively small cost.'

'There are certain somewhat unusual features in its planning and design ...; nothing, however, has been done just for the sake of being peculiar, or even what is sometimes called "modern", but rather the whole form of the building has been called into being in answer to the especial nature of its site and in view of the present economic conditions of the world.'

He sets out the qualities needed in the building as spaciousness, room to breathe, lightness and simplicity, and he rejected ornament; good ornament as an unwarranted - and inachievable - expense, and cheap ornament as undesirable on any count. He says:

'Architectural effects could not be obtained by expensive ornament or means of construction, nothing really but the plainest and most straightforward forms of construction were possible, so that the building must be designed in such a way that the bare lines of its mass and proportion should have an impressive and inspiring effect',

and he explains how the constraints of the site; the arterial road, with the East end of the church abutting, and yet the need to place the principle entrance at the East end, without compromising the area of the sanctuary, and obtaining a sense of spaciousness while yet filling the church with fixed seats, and the need to permit as many people as possible to see the altar pulpit and lectern clearly, with light behind them, enabled the distinctive design to be achieved, and were exploited as positive, rather than, negative elements in the design.

As to materials, he says:

'... The Church will be built of a beautiful, light yellowish grey brick giving almost the colour and durability of stonework, and these grey bricks will be used for the piers inside and for the pulpit and lectern and will tone in with the internal plastering of the main wall surfaces. It is proposed that the ceiling of the Church

should be finished in colour, bright in tone over the chancel but subdued in colour over the nave; the effect of the bright colour in the ceiling and in the glass of the clerestory windows in the apse will tend to direct attention towards the East end and to intensify the effect of simple spaciousness it is desired to achieve. In this way an effort has been made to find a worthy substitute for the expense of rich ornament and complicated construction.'

A most impressive element here is the speed, and the confidence, with which St. Nicholas' Church was built. Work started on the temporary church in July 1928, H.A. Barnett was appointed first incumbent in the autumn of the same year, work started on the new permanent church in 1930, and the building was complete in 1932. There seems to have been no doubt about the need for a permanent church, or about the size of the building, or the impact its architectue should have. There was a stress on the need for accommodation to cope with youth work, but there is no suggestion that it could be met other than by the parish providing permanent accommodation of its own.

Conclusion.

The pattern of church planting in new housing areas, whereby a temporary building was established, to enable the parish to 'find its feet', and then rapidly superseded by a permanent building, was a pattern established at least by the late nineteenth century. St John's, Old Trafford, which was established in a 'tin church', when the area was being built, which was followed in a very short time by the present church. The main difference here was that the housing was provided by private enterprise, but the need for the presence of a church was, of course, no less.

Church building in the Post-War period - The housing context.

Burnett, (op cit, p279) describes the development of housing policy in the post-war era thus:

'The location of post-war local authority housing was planned to a much greater extent than in the past and, in particular, opinion generally ran strongly against the further development of amorphous suburban council estates. In 1948 a Committee on the Appearance of Housing Estates pointed out that although some pre-war developments had been attractively laid out and provided 'a pleasant and neighbourly background for real community life', there were many others 'where all individuality and homeliness have been lost in endless rows of identical semi-detached houses. The depressing appearance of these estates is very largely due to monotony in design and layout, and to the repetition of the same architectural unit in dull straight rows or in severe, geometrical road patterns which bear no relation to the underlying landscape features.'

'Much of the thinking which was to dominate public-authority housing policy in the future was already evident here - the concern for environment and community, the desire to encourage variety while preserving harmony and beauty in the whole, above all, perhaps, the anxiety to prevent the spread of further suburban dormitories which had neither the advantages of town or country nor real identity of their own. Caught up in the spirit of socialist euphoria, many architects and planners saw themselves as social engineers whose principal, and complementary, tasks were to create community and beauty, and to reunite the social classes.'

Development of Wythenshawe was halted during the Second World War, but the intention was that Manchester would emerge from the War with a large and already established modern estate ready for immediate expansion.

Church building in the Post-War period - Dual-purpose buildings.

The diocese returned to the theme of meeting the needs of the inhabitants of the new housing areas after the war, and, following the established pattern, erected temporary buildings in order to create new church centres swiftly, but this time employed structures specifically designed as dual-purpose buildings. This was promoted by the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee, under the chairmanship of the Archdeacon of Manchester. The administration set up to secure the building of these structures, and the difficulties which arose, are described clearly in the minutes of the Diocesan Church Building Committee.

In early 1950, the minutes note that Herbert Rhodes had prepared plans of a dual-purpose building at the request of the Reorganisation Committee, with the aim of receiving the approval of the Church Building Committee to erect these on "sites to be chosen as occasion arose. The two Wythenshawe sites already purchased must at once be developed in this way". Rhodes was confirmed as architect and the inevitable sub-committee, consisting of the Archdeacon of Manchester, Rev. E.A. Weir, F.L. Eaton and F.L. Meadows, was appointed "to consider the plans in detail".

At the following meeting authority was given for the erection of dual-purpose buildings at "Wythenshawe, Baguley Hall and Newall Green, and in the Canterbury Road area of the parish of Davyhulme, St. Mary". It was agreed to approach the General Purposes Committee for allocation of £20,000 to the New Churches Fund from the Centenary Appeal Fund. It was recommended that the Diocese purchase the site for the erection of a dual-purpose building, and bear the cost of erection - exclusive of furnishings - with half to be repaid by the new area on terms to be arranged in each case. The sites - in new housing estates - were in the ownership of the local authority.

At the meeting of 14 June 1950 it was reported that the General Purposes Committee had allocated £15,000, that the plans had been approved by the sub-Committee, and by the Church Commissioners, who were granting loans for the Wythenshawe churches. At Baguley Hall, a building license had been granted, Corporation approval of the plans obtained, and planning permission applied for. At Newall Green a building license had been obtained, and at Davyhulme a block plan had been submitted for planning permission. Local progress and supervision committees were appointed, with the Archdeacon of Manchester, the local Rural Dean, the incumbent, Mr F.L. Eaton, and local representatives. The Reorganisation Committee had decided to acquire sites offered by Oldham Corporation on the Oldham estates at Limeside and Fitton Hill.

On 20th September 1950 it was reported that the contract for the building at Baguley Hall had been let, to J. and J. Parish, at £8,451., and a tender for the same sum, by Parish, was accepted for the dual-purpose building at Newall Green. Work had started at Baguley Hall, and planning permission, bye-law permission, and a building license had been obtained for Newall Green. Planning permission had been obtained for Davyhulme, and negotiations were under way with the de Trafford Estate for the purchase of the site. Negotiations had also started with Oldham Corporation for the purchase of sites at Limeside and Fitton Hall. It was also decided to purchase sites, at the expense of the New Churches Fund, on the Hollins Estate, in the parish of Middleton, and on the Lever Edge Estate in the parish of Bolton, SS Simon and Jude. In the cases of the Wythenshawe buildings, the Church Commissioners offered loans of £4,225 in each case, repayable at half-yearly intervals, over 20 years. On the Hollins Estate, the parish conducted the negotiations for the purchase of the site from the local authority, and achieved very reasonable terms. Mr Rhodes was instructed to take action for the erection of a dual-purpose building at Limeside. By June 1951, he was inviting tenders for its construction.

By 12th June 1952 the construction of the building at Limeside was proceeding, Baguley Hall was finished, but there was trouble with the wood-block floor. It was decided to proceed with purchase of a site at Woodhouse Park, and Mr Rhodes was instructed to prepare drawings, etc.

On 21st November 1952 it was reported to the Committee for Church Buildings that a building license was still awaited for Davyhulme, terms for the purchase of the site at Woodhouse Park were agreed, and the building at Limeside had been dedicated on 8th November 1952. It was suggested, and agreed, that: "in order to indicate more appropriately the nature of the building a cross should be erected on the gable at the east end". Item 3(e) of the Minutes of that meeting refer to:

"POSSIBLE ALTERATION of plan and elevation of the DUAL-PURPOSE BUILDING. The architect had submitted revised plans and elevations to the Sites and Buildings Committee. Though the building would be five feet smaller in length,

the cost would be some £2,000 more than that of the present building (i.e. an increase of some 25%). Such was the result of an elevation containing a tower and being generally more ecclesiastical in character".

No decision was made, and the new plans were considered at the next meeting, on 28th January 1953, when, it was reported;

'A full discussion took place upon this matter. The architects submitted plans of a building designed to produce a greater ecclesiastical appearance. The additional cost could not be less than £3,000 (£1,000 more than last reported). The suggested plans provided for the same internal facilities as now obtained. It was felt that the general plan and elevations of the present building should be made use of in the future. It would be inadvisable to create a state of mind which would be prepared to allow the dual-purpose building to become the permanent church. But it was realised that the present appearance was unsatisfactory in that from the outside it was almost impossible to tell that the building was used even in part for public worship. The architects were instructed to design a small cross to be fixed on the building, and were asked to prepare designs and to obtain estimates for a large and conspicuous cross to be placed conveniently near to the building in order more clearly to indicate its church nature.'

By the middle of 1953 contracts had been let for the erection of a dual-purpose building, and a curate's house, at Davyhulme, at £10,189 and £2,989. The purchase of the site at Woodhouse Park was proceeding, and a curate-in-charge had been appointed. He was occupying a council house on the estate. A site at Kirkholt would cost £1,360, and was to be purchased, and sites were being sought at Bowlee. The architect was instructed to apply for licenses for the three sites. On the design of the dual-purpose building, it was reported that:

'On the chairman's invitation the three curates-in-charge expressed their general views and impressions. In general the building performed its several functions very satisfactorily. Indeed, the lay folk of one district had expressed appreciation of the facilities provided and of the refreshing newness of conception in design. But it was capable of improvement. ... Storage space was quite inadequate; the rooms on either side of the stage were too small for general use; if the stage could be provided with a shutter, it would be much more useful as class room or committee room; the main porch, at the church end, could be removed to the hall end.'

At the meeting on 23 June 1953 it was reported that it was hoped to have the building at Davyhulme ready for opening by November of that year. The criticisms mentioned at the previous meeting had been considered, and it had proved possible to increase storage room at Davyhulme by excavating under the stage, an expedient which would be followed in

future buildings. The cost of enlarging the rooms either side of the stage was to be explored, but the shutter was considered too expensive, and difficult, and the matter of the main porch would be looked at case by case. Details for wrought iron crosses for gable ends were submitted; the cost would be £23/10/- each: this was considered too expensive. Large crosses were designed, in oak and cast stone; one in cast stone was priced at £41/10/-.

Conclusion.

The building of dual-purpose buildings, to serve as both church and hall, seems to have proceeded quickly, once the idea had taken root. The policy was adopted in 1950, and by the end of 1953 most of the buildings were in use, although a dual-purpose building was under way at White Moss, Blackley, in 1958. By June 1953 plans, working drawings, bills of quantities, and the results of tendering were submitted to the CB Committee. The lowest tender was £17,570, which included £1,800 for special site works: 'It was felt by the committee that the cost of site works might properly be looked upon as an instalment of the cost of erection of the permanent church in future to be built'. In general, the programme moved quickly, given the administration necessary to achieve it, including acquisition of sites, and the problems of building in the post-war era.

Temporary dual-purpose buildings were selected to create some usable plant for the church in the new estates as quickly as possible, in order to establish a church community, following the pattern established since at least the late nineteenth century.

I have found no trace of any discussion about the symbolism, theology, or liturgical requirements of these dual-purpose buildings, except for the suggestion of a gable-end cross for purposes of identification; again, this may have occurred simply because the building was destined to be temporary, and therefore not considered to be of sufficient importance. At least one parish approved of its building, and three curates-in-charge witness that the buildings 'performed (their) functions very satisfactorily'. It was not until 1960 that the minutes show evidence of a questioning of the established pattern.

Church building in the Post-war period - the building of permanent churches.

The permanent churches followed quite quickly on the heels of the temporary buildings. Canon Dobb describes the initiative taken by the Bishop thus:

'The one and only diocesan-planned large scale attempt to reach the expanding parishes by building new churches began in August 1956 when the Archdeacons wrote to all the Rural Deans: "The Bishop is very seriously considering a proposal to launch a diocesan appeal for a large capital sum for the provision of new parish churches likely to be required within the next ten years" and asked especially for the needs of new housing areas. It was estimated that sixteen new churches later reduced to fourteen, and ten parsonage houses, with a total capital expenditure of about £750,000 was required. At this point in time the diocese operating through the Board of Finance, had already raised and spent since the end of the war £220,000 on buying and fencing sites, erecting dual purpose buildings and providing homes for curates at strategic points in new housing areas. It seemed unlikely that the existing parishes, who had already given about £100,000 of those initial monies would be able to provide all the sum required and so it was decided to ask for some contribution not only from the parishes in which a new church would be built but also appeal to industry for £500,000 and to the parishes of the diocese for a further £50,000. This became "The Bishop's New Churches Appeal".'

According to the minutes of the Diocesan Church Building Committee of 17 April 1959:

'The informal priorities committee set up by the Bishop in connection with the appeal had prepared a first list as follows:- St. Martin, Baguley Hall; St. Francis, Newall Green; St. Mark Chadderton; Civic Centre, Wythenshawe; St. Aidan, Langley; White Moss, Blackley; St. Hilda, Old Trafford. The first three of those projects were in hand. A building committee had been set up for the fourth, which would address itself to its task on the site becoming available. In addition to these four projects, the appeal was committed to provide £7,000 to the church of St. Michael, Peel Green.'

Dobb continues:

' The agreed list of fourteen churches included ten to be built in areas already designated conventional districts with the added proviso that those districts would become parishes upon the consecration of the churches. The ones finally built are: St. Martin; St. Richard of Chichester; The William Temple Church and St. Francis of Assisi to serve the Wythenshawe district; All Saints and Martyrs, Langley; St. Chad, Limeside; St. Thomas Kirkholt; Christ Church, Davyhulme, and St. Thomas, Clifton Green, placed into the list when it was decided not to build a second

church at Woodhouse Park, Wythenshawe; two were to be built in parishes which had already attained district status but had never been provided with a parish church: St. Mark, Chadderton and St. Ambrose, Oldham; St. Hilda, Old Trafford was to be replaced after being destroyed by bombing and St John, Bury, which had become a dangerous structure, was to be offered some money for replacing the church on a new site. The fourteenth church is St. Mark, Blackley, which has remained a Conventional District.'

'Bishop Greer visited and lunched with chairmen of companies, directors of boards, professional men, trades union officials and ultimately raised £259,000 from the business world while the parishes produced £62,000. The Church Commissioners made a further £112,000 available by grants towards new church building projects.'

A summary of accounts is as follows:

Sums expended:

£220,000	- already spent on sites.
£259,000	- contributed by business.
£ 62,000	- contributed by the parishes.
£112,000	- grants from the Church Commissioners.
<hr/>	
£653,000	-
£114,000	- loans repaid by parishes
<hr/>	
£767,000	

Amount sought in Appeal:

£220,000	- already spent on sites.
£500,000	- sought from industry.
£ 50,000	- sought from parishes.
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£770,000.	

The building of each new church was the responsibility of a 'joint building committee' which functioned as a sub-committee of the Diocesan Committee for Church Building, to which it submitted minutes and reports. The choice of architect would rest largely with the curate-in-charge (see DCCB minutes, 10 Oct 1958, re William Temple Church). The committee consisted of the Right Reverend K.V. Ramsey, then Bishop of Hulme, as chairman, five others appointed by the diocese and five people from the congregation. The financial basis was that funds would be made available at the rate of £110 per sitting "to build and equip a sober, dignified and architecturally interesting building of a permanent character which will be furnished with very considerable exercise of economy". Due to the shortfall in the "Bishop's New Churches Appeal" the new parishes were to be asked to pay back 25% of the capital cost, plus any sum over the permitted figure for a church of 250 sittings, plus any trimmings, over a twenty year period but free of interest. Nevertheless it meant that the benefitting parishes provided around £114,000 of the sum expended.

Dobb continues:

'Six new houses were built at St. Mark's, Blackley; All Saints and Martyrs, Langley; St. Chad's, Limeside; St. Thomas', Clifton Green and the two Wythenshawe churches of William Temple Church, Woodhouse Park and St Francis of Assisi, Newall Green.'

'It is to be admired that different architects were commissioned to design the new churches and they were allowed to experiment with new ideas. The first church to be consecrated was St. Martin Wythenshawe designed by Harry S. Fairhurst and Son in the idiom of traditional-ecclesiasticism. St. Martin is the only one which managed to keep within the cost limitations.'

The last of these churches to be built was St. Richard of Chichester designed by Gordon Thorne and consecrated on 21st June 1969 by the Rt. Revd. Kenneth Ramsey. The exterior is most austere and this is a deliberate ploy to make the church distinctive from the surrounding houses whilst keeping to a domestic scale of building due to economics. There are no wall windows to the street facade and this emphasizes the notion of the church as a prayer-cell besides removing the temptation of a static target for vandals; it is the interior of the church which holds the charm. Suspended over the altar is a cross which was brought from St. Aidan's Theological College, Birkenhead and the church is the custodian of the college bell but this has not been hung.'

'This major attempt to cover all the new housing areas of the immediate post war proved the end of attempting to build parish churches on any grand scale and the following years saw the trend of worship rooms in church complexes and small chapel extensions in church schools.'

The following table is based largely on the Minutes of the Diocesan Committee for Church Building.

The first permanent church to be built in the diocese after the War was All Saints, Stretford, which replaced a bombed church.

1956, August. Inauguration of The Bishop's New Churches Appeal.

1958, April. The Church Building Committee for St Martin's Church, Baguley Hall had considered half-inch scale plans, together with sketches of the altar, pulpit, lectern, font, pews, entrance porches, etc. It was hoped to have bills of quantities ready for tendering by mid-July, and that building work might start by the end of August.

1958, June. The Church Building Committee for St Francis, Newall Green, heard that the architect - Basil Spence - was at

work on revised interior plans, for an over-all budget of £35,000.

1958, 10th October. The plans for St. Clement, Broughton, were approved. The architect was A.H. Walker; the ceiling figure was £15,000, and the building was in brick, with a stone tower and a reinforced concrete roof, which, it was noted, 'may possibly have to be covered with copper'. Seating capacity was 200.

1958, 10th October. At St. Francis, Newall green, the elevations, by Basil Spence, were accepted, but the discussion about the location of the choir rumbled on, and the diocesan committee decided that it would prefer the choir to remain in its western gallery.

1958, 10th October. At St. Martin, Baguley Hall, the lowest tender came in at £54,000, giving a total cost of £59,000. The ceiling was £45,000. The architect managed to find savings to bring the cost down, but, the committee were informed: 'the whole of the copper roofing had been omitted, as also chancel, vestry and meeting room furniture'.

1958, 10th October. A first meeting had been held by the sub-committee for the new St. Mark, Chadderton. It had been decided to demolish the existing church in order to secure the largest site possible for the new church. Seating capacity, including the choir, was to be 350, and George Pace was sought by the parish as architect.

1958, 10th October. The curate-in-charge at William Temple Church, Wythenshawe, W.B. Wilkinson, had asked that a building committee be set up to make arrangements for the building of a permanent church. The Committee decided that the time had not yet arrived.

1959, 17 April. It was noted that the church council of St. Michael, Lawton Moor, owed £322 to the diocese by way of repayment of its share of the cost of the church. ... The fund which had financed the building projects of the period between the wars was £577 in credit. The Board of Finance was recommended to waive collection of the £322, and transfer the £577 to the New Churches Fund.

1958, 28th November. The contract for St Martin had been let, and construction had begun; George Pace had been appointed architect for St Mark, Chadderton; the diocesan bishop had over-ruled the diocesan committee about the Church Building Committee for William Temple Church, and it was put in hand. In order to raise cash for the New Churches Appeal, the diocesan committee, at the request of the Bishop, 'cordially recommended the Board of Finance to consider the advisability of borrowing money on the security of covenanted income'.

1959, 17th April. The Revd. G.V.H. Elliott asked for the setting up of a joint building committee for a new permanent church for St. John, Bury. The committee decided that a joint building committee for St. John's should not be set up

1959, 26th June. DCCB over-ruled by the Bishop and a JBC was set up for St John's, Bury.

The details of St. Francis, Newall Green, had been agreed, although furnishings were still to be finalised with the architect. The heating system was to be by electric under-floor embedded warming system.

Late 1959/early 1960. (by 8th April 1960?) The contract was let for St. Francis and work started immediately. At St Mark's, Chadderton, George Pace had submitted preliminary sketch plans, and was working on working drawings. The church at St. Clement's, Broughton, was effectively completed, and would shortly be consecrated.

Late 1959/early 1960. (by 8th April 1960?) At the William Temple Church, Woodhouse Park, it was decided to erect a church to seat 500, at a cost of £60,000, of which the New Churches Appeal would provide £50,000, the church council £5,000, and £5,000 - it was hoped - from extra-diocesan sources. In the meantime, the New Churches Appeal had agreed to underwrite the costs. George Pace was appointed architect, and Leach Rhodes and Walker, who had been commissioned to build the new parsonage house, were invited to withdraw - which they did.

Late 1959/early 1960. (by 8th April 1960?) At St. Aidan, Langley, it was decided to set up a joint building committee, since the site for the church was in the process of being acquired. The Minutes report that:

'The secretary said that this project was next on the priority list for attention... This conventional district contained 24,000 people. Construction of a permanent church was from that point of view much overdue. The Church of England should expand its activities as soon as possible.'

There was an element of competition here with the Roman Catholics, who had already erected a large and imposing church on the estate.

1961, 13th October. It was reported that the Bishop had agreed to provide funds for a house of 'minimum parsonage house size' at Limeside, and to provide £6,000 towards the cost of the new permanent church at St. John, Bury. To date, the New Churches Appeal had commissioned 7 of the 14 new churches, and 6 of the 7 new houses. The Bishop had the new church at St. Hilda, Old Trafford, next in line, to be followed by the new church at Limeside, although, due to shortage of funds, he took no decision at this time. St. Hilda had £4,500 in parochial funds, £1,300

arising out the sale of the site of the former church, and a war damage claim - amount unknown.

1961, October. St. Martin, Wythenshawe, and St. Francis, Newall Green, were virtually completed, and St. Clement, Broughton completed, and in use for a year, but there were defects still to be attended to.

The plans for St. Mark, Chadderton, and St. Aidan, Langley, had been approved by the DAC, and work had begun at St. Mark's.

Surviving minutes of joint church building committees, for individual churches, give a useful picture of progress, and problems.

1961, 1st December. St. Hilda's JBC set up.

1961, 5th December. William Temple Church. The Bishop had agreed to provide £49,500 for the new church, on the understanding that 450 seats were provided, together with £12,500 for the hall annexe, and £8,000 (actually a maximum of £8,300) for the house. It was intended that the house should be ready for occupation by December 1962, with construction of the church and hall being begun in June 1962 and completed by the end of 1963.

1962, 9th March. At a meeting of the joint building committee for St. John, Bury, held on 9th March 1962, it was reported that the Bishop had agreed to provide £6,000 from the New Churches Appeal towards the cost of the new church. F.H. Bradley was now selected as architect for the new church.

1962, 10th March. At a meeting of the joint building committee for William Temple Church, Woodhouse Park, held on 10th March 1962, it was reported that George Pace had accepted the commission to design the new church, and had taken over the commission for the new house from Leach, Rhodes and Walker. The committee approved Pace's preliminary sketch plans, and it was hoped to submit sketch plans to the DAC and the DCCB in April.

1962 (late). Contract let for the construction of St. Thomas, Kirkholt.

1963, early March (?). It was reported that N. Nightingale had been appointed architect for new churches at Highfield and Claypool. The sketch plans for St. Hilda, Old Trafford, had been approved by the Church Commissioners and the Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches, and the foundation stone laid. Paterson and Macauley, architects, had been appointed architects for St. Chad, Limeside, and their sketch plans had been approved by the ACCC, and the foundation stone had been laid. A contract had been let for the construction of the new church at Langley, dedicated to All Saints and Martyrs. St. Thomas, Kirkholt, was due to be consecrated on 22nd March, 1964. Work was under way at St. Saviour, Chorlton-on-Medlock.

1964, 26th June. At a meeting of the DCCB it was reported that St. Thomas, Kirkholt, had been consecrated on March 22nd, and St John, Bury, on 6th June 1964. The Bishop had allocated an additional £2,000 to St. John's. The foundation stone of St. Hilda, Old Trafford, had been laid on March 21st, and it was hoped that the consecration of Langley, All Saints and Martyrs, might take place on 1st November 1964, and that of Limeside St. Chad on 2nd March 1965. St. Saviour Chorlton-on-Medlock had been dedicated on 21st March 1964.

1965, 26th March. Houses at All Saints and Martyrs, Langley, and at St. Aidan Kersall, were largely complete, and the accounts close to final settlement. No news had been received about the architect's preliminary ideas for St. Ambrose, Oldham. Christ Church, Davyhulme, had been in informal contact with Melville Construction Company, of Radcliffe, about a church of standard concrete frame construction. St. Chad, Limeside, had been consecrated on 30th January, and St Hilda, Old Trafford, on 20th March 1965. The house at Woodhouse Park was occupied, but there was no information as to the likely completion of the church. At St. Chad, Limeside, expenditure was £4,200 more than would be provided by the Bishop's Appeal, but the parish had £2,200 in hand towards the extra cost.

1966, 25th March. At the meeting of the DCCB, it was decided to set up a joint building committee for Christ Church, Davyhulme.

The end of the New Churches Appeal.

By March 1964, the New Churches Appeal had begun to run out of steam. Item 6 in the minutes of that meeting record:

'New Church projects held up for lack of funds.

On the motion of Mr E.P. Poole, the committee registered its concern that no steps appeared to be in mind for construction of the churches remaining to be built after the Oldham St. Ambrose project, which was due for planning in the autumn.'

At the quarterly meeting of the DCCB on 26th March 1965 it was reported that the Alkrington site was being sold back to its original owner. The minutes continue:

'The Committee was reminded that its reference to the Board of Finance on the future of this fund had been referred by that body to its Trust and Finance Committee, the board before doing so authorising completion of purchases of sites at Claypool, Alkrington, Hurst, Burnside, Langley, and Wood Street Langley. The Trust and Finance Committee had considered the position. It viewed with some disquiet the possibility of an extension of spending without knowing where the money was to come from; it undertook to provide as had been authorised by the Board of Finance; and it felt that this committee should work

out a scheme for repayment before any further commitments be entered into.'

New thoughts on the building of new churches.

By late 1960, a new note had entered the discussions of the Diocesan Church Building Committee. At the meeting on 7th October 1960 the committee received a report on a new church at Blacon, Chester, by A.C. Bennett, architect, which had been erected at a cost of approximately £75 per place. It was noted that: 'there did not appear to have been any skimping in construction, decoration or furnishing'. At the same meeting D.W. Buckler, of Leach, Rhodes and Walker, reported on the conference on new church architecture which had taken place at Liverpool University on September 19-21. The committee recommended that plans, pictures, photographs and drawings of recently erected churches should be displayed at the next Diocesan Conference, and that the Central Council for the Care of Churches might be approached for material.

At the last meeting of the committee in 1960 the Revd. P.G. Guinness, a newly appointed member, sought information as to the method of choice of architects for the new permanent churches to be built out of the New Churches Appeal. He expressed the hope that 'the diocese would receive the benefit of the best professional thought of the day'. The minutes record that: 'the committee's method of setting up joint building committees was explained. It was pointed out that in effect choice of architect lay with the curate-in-charge of the district concerned'. Guinness's point was referred to the Sites and Buildings Sub-Committee for consideration. At a meeting of the DCCB in the spring of 1964 the last item in the minutes notes:

'Post-Graduate School of Research of Manchester University School of Architecture.

The chairman said that he had received an invitation by Dr. Raymond Wood-Jones, senior lecturer, to the diocese, to participate in an investigation of architectural and building problems in the diocese. It was proposed to investigate the architectural aspect of the complete church building programme of the diocese. The research would be divided between the new church building programme and existing churches and ancillary buildings. As to new church building, it was hoped to evolve a recognisable character of church building that was truly contemporary, in contrast to the haphazard, speculative and formalistic approach to church design which was at present prevalent. In a letter to him which had accompanied the formal document setting out the project, Dr. Wood-Jones had expressed the view that had the project been carried out before now mistakes which had been made might have been avoided. The chairman said he had offered diocesan support and co-operation. The committee supported the chairman in the action he had taken in this matter.'

The meeting of the DCCB on 25th March 1966 heard reports on two interesting aspects. Item 12 in the minutes reads:

'Flixton St. John. Mr A.D. Sherwood gave a report on the proposed new church of St. John in Flixton. Plans had been prepared by Dr. Raymond Wood-Jones using standardized systems for certain elements and yet preserving much that was conventional in design. It was an essay in low cost building, the original target being £9,000 including minimal furniture and the present suggested figure £11,550. The area of the proposed building would be 2,500 sq.ft. with approximately 750 sq.ft. of ancillary accommodation and 300 sq.ft. of covered way linking it with the existing hall. Church seating would be 250 for normal purposes with choir and additional seating up to 350. A warm-air heating system was included in the cost. The original design to use felt roofing had been changed to a Broderick copper-faced roof deck for the main church to satisfy the requirements of the Church Commissioners. The architect suggested a negotiated contract.'

'The feeling of the Committee was that this was an interesting design well worth a trial, but before recommending further churches of this type it would be well to see the finished product and to test it in use over a period of time. It was felt that insufficient cost had been allowed for site works and that possibly this would be an expensive building to heat.'

A further stage, in the City's housing programme, and the response of the Diocese which was to lead to the Church of the Ascension, Hulme, was reported in item 14 of the same meeting, which noted:

'Redevelopment in Hulme. The Revd. F.J. Hoyle gave an outline of the proposed redevelopment of the Hulme area by Manchester Corporation. Considerable modification might still have to be made in the plans, but it was the intention of the Diocese to have a new parish church and a site had been allocated for that purpose. The dedication had not yet been decided as the parish was to replace several existing parishes.'

List of individual churches in Manchester diocese,
considered in this study.

- 1) 1931. St Nicholas, Kingsway, Burnage, by Welch, Cachemaille Day and Lander.
- 2) 1935/7 St Christopher, Withington, by Bernard Miller.
- 3) 1938/9 St Luke the Physician, Benchill, by Cecil Young.
- 4) 1955. All Saints, Barton Road, Stretford, by Leach, Rhodes and Walker.
- 5) 1959. St Mark, White Moss, Blackley.
- 6) 1959/60. St Martin, Blackcarr Road, Wythenshawe, by Harry S. Fairhurst and Son.
- 7) 1959-61. St Francis of Assisi, Greenbrow, Newall Green, Wythenshawe, by Sir Basil Spence.
- 8) 1960-2. St Saviour, Denton Lane, Chadderton, by Taylor and Roberts. (Now converted to offices). Replaced in 1986 by a new St Saviour's church.
- 9) 1962-3. St Mark, Ogden Street, Chadderton, by G.G. Pace.
- 10) 1962-64. St John's, Bury.
- 11) 1963/4. All Saints, Wood Street, Langley, Middleton, by Leach, Rhodes and Walker.
- 12) 1964/5. St Chad, Limeside, Hollinwood, Oldham.
- 13) 1964/5. St Hilda, Old Trafford.
- 15) 1964-5. William Temple Memorial Church, Simonsway, Wythenshawe, by G.G. Pace.
- 16) 1968. St. John's, Irlam Road, Flixton.
- 17) 1968. St Stephen, Astley, near Atherton. Wythenshawe, by Gordon Thorne..
- 18) 1970. Ascension, Hulme, by Maguire and Murray.
- 19) 1976. St Cuthbert's, Miles Platting..

St Nicholas, Kingsway, Burnage.

Revd. TSR Chow, St. Nicholas' Rectory, Fog Lane, Burnage,
Manchester M19 1PL. 061 432 3384.

Population: 5000. Seats 400. Electoral Roll 155.

Foundation stone laid: 4th October 1931.

Consecrated: 24th September 1932.

Architects: Welch, Cachemaille Day and Lander.
Illustrations, and Historical notes, see Vol. 3, p418ff.

St. Nicholas, Burnage, is one the most significant of the churches built in the decade preceding the Second World War, both in Manchester diocese, and in the country. The early history of the parish and church is described in a booklet produced when the present building had been designed, but before it was completed, i.e. circa 1930/31. A study of Cachemaille-Day's Manchester churches, i.e. St Nicholas Burnage and St. Michael and All Angels, Lawton Moor, was carried out in an unpublished MA Thesis in the Faculty of Arts, at Manchester University, submitted in 1991, by Michael Bullen. According to Bullen, it seems clear that Cachemaille-Day, who was 34 at the time, was appointed architect by the incumbent largely on the suggestion of the then Dean of Manchester, Dr. Hewlett Johnson.

I quote from booklet of 1930 at length in Vol. 3, p418ff, since it gives a clear insight into contemporary thought about the church and its role, but a report in the Manchester Guardian, 30th July 1931, gives a concise statement of the aim of the incumbent, who is quoted as saying:

'Somehow we have to interpret in the twentieth century something of the spirit of the century. I thought that the best thing that could be done was to build something simple and good. A church must be beautiful in itself, and must help people to realise Christian ideals. The new church has been designed on modern principles, but its shape conforms to the ancient basilica style, with a suggestion of the cruxifixion plan adopted by medieval builders.'

Perhaps the most impressive element is the speed, and the confidence, with which St. Nicholas' Church was built. Work started on the temporary church in July 1928, H.A. Barnett was appointed first incumbent in the autumn of the same year, work started on the new permanent church in 1930, and the building was complete in 1932. There seems to have been no doubt about the need for a permanent church, or about the size of the building, or the impact its architecture should have. There was a stress on the need for accommodation to cope with youth work, but there is no suggestion that it could be met other than by the parish providing permanent accommodation of its own.

Present condition.

By the early 1980s the condition of the building was giving rise to considerable concern. The Report on the Quinquennial Inspection, carried out over three days in mid-summer 1982, delivered a strongly-worded warning about the future of the building. In the general comment on the future of the fabric the report says:

'This portion of the report contains the same comments as previous quinquennials and arises from the same points touched on in the body of this report. With devoted work and care a lot of minor defects can be put right but the essential repair work for damp penetration will require extensive funds and much hard work. It cannot be avoided. The building is beginning to deteriorate visibly and could almost be said to be entering the next phase of rapid decay. If this is to be halted it is clear that much maintenance work must be undertaken.'

'We recommend a radical conversation with the Diocesan Authority, research as before stated, into grants for maintenance, the possible conversion of the church into smaller units, the possible sale of land and the possible attraction of investment capital to produce a scheme for all of these, including perhaps some new building.'

'WE SHALL FIND IT PROFESSIONALLY EMBARRASSING TO HAVE TO MAKE THESE COMMENTS AGAIN AT THE TIME OF THE NEXT QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION AND, ON BEHALF OF THE RECTOR AND PARISH CHURCH COUNCIL, SHALL BE GRAVELY DISTURBED IF MAINTENANCE WORK IS NOT NOW UNDERTAKEN.'

'The Chairman of the Fabric Committee is a retired Quantity Surveyor and it is clear that a number of other members of the Parish Church Council and Fabric Committee have considerable experience in building matters. Unfortunately for the future of this building, a knowledge of building maintenance is really of no value. The radical questions which arise are those of diocesan policy and the raising of large sums of money to stop the rapid deterioration of the fabric.'

I quote further detailed comments from the Report in Vol. 3, p418ff.

During the years 1986-1991 a great deal of repair and restoration was carried out. In 1986, essential fabric repairs (phase 1) were carried out at a cost of £40,225; in 1987 repairs to, and installation of some new, windows, at a cost of £12,534, together with restoration of the Compton electronic organ, at cost of materials and transport; in 1990 electrical engineering services - rewiring and re-lighting, at a cost of £28,445.

Out of a total of approximately £85,000, £48,497 came from direct grants, and £34,645 was raised by the parish.

The Quinquennial Inspection report of May, 1992, gives a very different picture. It describes the building as:

'Listed Grade II. Excellent Cachemaille Day Church, still as original.'

The general comment on the future of the fabric now reads:

'Good if looked after, well maintained',

and the summary notes:

'Items of utmost urgency: Check if roof leaks cured. Work was done on this some years ago. Complete heating system.'

'Items which should be completed within the next 18 months: Replastering and re-decorating. Check and clear all gulleys.'

It is clear that the parish has 'got a grip' of the problems of the building, although there is a good deal to be done to the interior; this, of course, was quite properly given a lower priority than the works to prevent the ingress of damp. The report notes about the walls:

'All walls are plastered and in poor condition, badly crazed, and in some cases losing adhesion to the wall. Some areas patched recently, other areas damaged from past rain-water leaks, particularly to North Chancel Arch. Baptistry added later, and has always suffered from dampness. Paint peeling and water damage obvious at beam where two join and also to soffit of flat roof. Plaster has been removed in parts and cracks evident in concrete which appears to be insitu, badly damaged and stained, particularly on West Wall.

Of the fittings and furniture it says:

'All as original designed with Church in Oak and in first class order.'

Present use.

The population of the parish at present is approximately 5000, with housing which is roughly half council housing, and half privately owned, mainly semi-detached small houses. This compares with the estimated 10,000 to 11,000 at the time the church was built. The demographic composition of the parish has changed, with far fewer young people, a largely elderly population, and more especially congregation, and a large element of unemployment. The seating capacity is 400, and the average congregation nearly 100. The main Sunday service is Parish Communion. In spite of the size of the building - really far too large for the needs of the present congregation - the congregation do seem to be proud of their building, and after a difficult period, described in the QIR of 1982, the

parish have achieved a great deal in the way of repair and restoration of the main structure, and are continuing with the repair and restoration of the interior. At present the interior, with failing plaster, and undecorated, is a depressing sight, and the continued commitment of the parish shows a remarkable degree of tenacity.

Church organisations include the Sunday School (called the Maker's Club), Mothers' Union, Women's Fellowship, Tuesday Dancing Club, Mrs M. Bradley's whist drive, Choir, Guides, Brownies, and Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade. In general the building provides the right accommodation - if too much - the sanctuary could be modified and enlarged to provide more space if this were required. The aisles are somewhat narrow, but are just adequate for circulation, including processions. The pews are fixed, and therefore provide a rigid layout; they are of very good quality, but they do restrict the flexibility of the building. The PA system needs renewing. The acoustics are very good, and particularly so for concerts.

The building provides a prayerful atmosphere, and there is a good sense of fellowship, particularly for the elderly. As elsewhere, the Parish Communion is followed by coffee and the opportunity for fellowship. Public baptism is now held once a month, and a portable font is being installed, to overcome the problem of a fixed font, at the back of the church, which the congregation can see only with difficulty.

St. Nicholas does provide a good cross-section of the problems associated with a building of this type, and a remarkable example of the tenacity of a congregation is supporting the building as part of their Christian witness.

Cachemaille-Day intended to demonstrate that a fine church could be built modern materials and techniques, and to a large degree, succeeded.

St Nicholas, Burnage, is a building of very considerable architectural merit. The building suffers, as so often with churches in Manchester, from the effect of the atmosphere, and the pointing of brickwork is a constant area of weakness. The main roof, which has slated slopes, remains sound, but the flat roofs, particularly on the additions of the baptistry and the West End, have given rise to major problems. Together with failing copings on the main walls, and suspect gutters, damp penetration has caused major problems with the interior, particularly the plasterwork. By careful use of grant aid, and the raising of some £35,000 by the parish, these problems have been largely overcome. The building is a prominent and distinctive landmark on Kingsway, and it does say: Here is the Church. It is a symbol of the faith and commitment of a local Christian community, and an expression of the idea of what a church should be at the time the surrounding housing was erected. Nonetheless, one has to wonder whether the expenditure of so much time and energy by the parishioners, to maintain a building which is over-large for their needs is a

proper use of time and talents, or a proper expression of the role of the Church today.

The next building I discuss, St. Christopher Wythenshawe, provides an instructive contrast; here the building, with its problems, is to be demolished, and the parish will worship in the parish hall, which will be adapted as a dual-purpose building.

St. Christopher, Princess Road, Withington.

Revd Gisela Raines, 197 Old Hall Lane, M/c. 0161 224 6643.

The 1930s church was demolished in 1994, shortly after I visited it. Illustrations, and extracts from Quinquennial Inspection Report, see Vol. 3 p425ff.

In 1994 - Population 6000; Seats 440; Electoral Roll 136.

Introduction.

St. Christopher's Church was built in 1935-1937 to serve as the parish church of a new City Council housing estate. The site for the church was bought from Manchester City Council in 1932. The Church and ancillary buildings were composed, to a grand design, as a suite of buildings around a central drive, with the church in the centre, with its central tower and main entrance aligned on a short street leading from the main road - Princess Road. The principal view of the church, and its main axis, is therefore aligned on Princess Road, and the Church appears to turn its back on the housing and their occupants whom it serves. The Church itself is aligned north-south, with a forecourt and approach on the west side.

To the south of the forecourt is the Rectory, which slightly predates the Church, and on the north side of the forecourt is the parish hall, added in 1957, built on the site, but not to the design, allotted to it by the architect in the original concept.

Two temporary wooden buildings, one on the site of the Church, used as a Church, and one used as a hall - which still survives, were erected to provide the first accommodation for the church on the site.

The Church was to be a 'new church for a new age', for a recently-completed model council estate rehousing families from inner-city slums. Once highly desirable, with a vigorous church life, the estate is now experiencing many of the problems of urban decay, its population has almost halved and the congregation is small and elderly.

The architect.

The architect was Bernard Miller, ARIBA, of Liverpool, a friend of Ronald Allen, who was appointed Rector of the newly-created parish in 1932. Miller was responsible for three churches on Merseyside; St. Columba, Anfield, of the mid 1930s; St. Christopher, Norris Green, also of the mid 1930s; and St. Aidan, Speke, which dates from the 1950s, but which shows a clear conceptual link with his pre-war work. Miller also produced a design, in the 1930s, for a church in Wythenshawe, St. Michael's, Peel Green, which was never built.

St. Christopher's, Withington, is the largest, and most experimental in technique, of all his churches, with a single-level flat roof of concrete beams and slabs throughout. A

note on the church building, compiled by the Revd Michael Ainsworth, incumbent in 1994, comments:

'He is sometimes said to have been more of an artist than an architect; certainly there have been problems with the roof, and with subsidence (caused by underground springs) from the start.'

Description of the church - Exterior.

The church is built of a thin - 2in - Dutch brick. The nave and sanctuary comprise a simple, and continuous, tall rectangular space, flanked by a lower space forming aisles either side of the nave (geographically east and west, but liturgically north and south) and widened behind and to one side of the sanctuary to form vestries and a chapel. The main space - nave and sanctuary - is 111'6" long, 31'8" wide, and 35'6" high, with the tower rising to 67', surmounted by a concrete cross, 15' high. The church seats 440. The tower rises above the centre of the rectangular block, with the main entrance on the west, facing Princess Road, and, opposite the entrance, facing as one enters, is the baptistery in a tall apse.

The exterior is austere in the extreme, with little decoration, but with tall and narrow window openings, and with a reinforced concrete grille built into the upper part of the tower, and surmounted by one of the first examples of a fluorescent cross. The building has been likened, with some justification, to a power station.

Description of the church - Interior.

Mr Ainsworth comments on the interior:

'The internal plan was conceived on progressive liturgical principles that reflect Miller's sacramental inclinations.: two axes, one leading the eye from the back up to the altar, the other across from the main door to the baptistery. The arrows set in the floor (another Miller characteristic) reinforce this, as do the slightly sloping (9") floor and a top altar step calculated to bring the priest to back pew eye-level. The clergy stalls and ambo-style pulpit and lectern are also typical. The interior was never plastered, and there is debate about Miller's intention here; probably the funds ran out.'

Description of the church - decoration and fittings.

The decoration and fittings of the church - including the fine oak-veneered pews - are of a high standard, and considerable thought was given to them. A detailed description of the interior, by Ainsworth, is included in Vol.3, p426.

Condition.

The last Quinquennial inspection was carried out in November 1991. The Report summarized the current situation thus:

'In the past quinquennium considerable concern has been expressed about the fabric of this church, culminating in a detailed report commissioned by the parish in conjunction with the Diocese. The report prepared by structural engineers and the author of this report examined in depth the state of the deterioration of aspects of the fabric. A firm of Quantity Surveyors also costed out the necessary repair work. This report was presented in March, 1989. This quinquennial inspection has found that there would appear to be further deterioration of the fabric, to the point that there could be risk of injury from falling debris from the roof. I am therefore obliged to recommend that the main body of the church is not used until remedial repairs are carried out.'

Detailed comments from this Report are included in Vol. 3, p427ff.

Use of the church.

When I visited, in February 1994, the church was no longer in use. However, it is clear from the comments of Mr Ainsworth that, were it to be brought back into use, major re-ordering of the space would be necessary if it were to 'work' for the congregation. The church was demolished later in 1994. Now - April 1999 - the hall has been converted - as was planned - to provide a worship area seating about 60, and a hall, separated by a folding screen, which can be incorporated into the worship area when the need arises. I understand that it works well. Housing has been built, by a Housing Association, on the site of the church.

Conclusion.

Ainsworth concludes his note on the church with the following comment on its future:

'The future of the church is in doubt. It is far too large for present needs. The roof leaks in several places and is corroding, the brickwork is damp and efflorescing, and the low-level sections are subsiding, especially at the rear. A feasibility study on the church and site has been conducted by the diocese, and decisions on this are pending. If the church is retained, internal modifications will be necessary to produce a more viable worshipping area. If a pastoral scheme for demolition is put forward, the parish hall (in which Sunday services are now held during the winter) will be adapted to provide permanent worship accommodation. We would be sorry to lose a distinctive building, but it may be the only realistic option if the parish is to survive. It is listed as a Grade II building.'

St. Christopher's, Withington, is a classic example of the coming together of problems of such magnitude that the only solution is demolition.

When first built, the church must have been a most imposing building, and as much regard seems to have been paid to the design of the interior and fittings, and the decorative finishes, as to the exterior. Unlike some churches, which were erected as rather bare shells, with the congregation left to fit out the interior as best it could, the congregation here acquired a most impressive building.

Sixty years on - the life span normally allotted to council housing - it has proved to be too large to house the present congregation, and too expensive to maintain. In addition, it had weaknesses in the structure which have compounded the problem.

The population of the parish has halved in the years since the church was built, from 12,000 to 6,000. Even in the 1950s, St. Christopher's was a lively and go-ahead parish with substantial outreach work, although, even then, the congregation was not very large.

The parish at this period is described by Michael Goulder, the then incumbent, in his introductory chapter to the book he wrote with John Hicks, "Why Believe in God?". Although the parish was 'busy', with a good deal of work among young people, Goulder found that, although increasing numbers came to organisations, and were confirmed, the rate of lapsing, in the years immediately after confirmation, was very considerable, and he questions, very seriously, the effectiveness of the endless work with which he busied himself.

Now, the congregation has declined drastically in numbers, and lacks younger members, and as a result of the unemployment situation in the city, has very few members in full-time employment; the building is, as a result, far too large for the present congregation

(it may always have been somewhat too large, but kept going by the residue of enthusiasm from its beginnings, and the fact that structural problems have 'crept up' on the parish, and only accelerated in recent years - research on this is needed);

and, finally, severe structural problems have made the cost of maintenance far too great for the congregation to bear. The diocese itself is in dire financial straits, and is unable to assist, nor could it justify assistance, even if money were available.

The Hall meets the present needs of the parish better than the church. At present, furniture has to be assembled on each occasion - i.e. each Sunday - prior to the use of the hall for worship, which is tiresome. It is possible to create a prayerful atmosphere, provided one works at it! Notices etc

are given out before the beginning of each service, and the commencement of the service proper is marked by a solemn, although small, procession. (This compares with daily Mass in the hall at The Holy Family, Chesterfield, where a prayerful atmosphere is readily apparent. At both places, there is a tendency for the congregation to chatter before the service more than they might in a church, but it does not seem to represent a serious problem.) There are facilities for coffee after the service, which is easily accommodated.

In a different situation, the size of the building and the structural defects would not be insuperable problems. I asked the incumbent whether, if he had a congregation of 300-400 evangelical yuppies, he would have a problem. The answer was an emphatic NO!. Raising £300,000 would present no problem, and a worshipping group of 300, in that building, would be tremendous! However, one has to face the problem of that building in that place. The comment by Robin Gill on the depressing and off-putting effect of a too-small congregation in a too-large building, the maintenance of which dominates their time and energy, applies only too aptly here. There is no likelihood of a revolution in the size of the congregation for the foreseeable future, and even if there were, there is no likelihood of a revolution in the wealth of the inhabitants of the area. Moreover, one cannot 'freeze' the building until such time as things might change, since this would require expense which is not obtainable and, in any case, the diocese has a policy that pastoral decisions are made on the basis of the needs of the people, not the needs of the building. I consider that this is a perfectly proper approach for the diocese to adopt.

St. Christopher's is a good place to ask what went wrong.

St. Christopher's, Withington, is a building of architectural merit. It is listed; in my opinion quite properly so. It is not of the same quality, perhaps, as the two churches by Cachemaille-Day: St Nicholas Burnage, and St. Michael and All Angels, Lawton Moor, but it is noteworthy, in addition to the building itself, for the quality of the fittings and furnishings.

First, it is reasonable to ask whether the church should have been built, to that size, and to that structural method, in the first place.

As to size, the church was built to a grandiose design, as a major feature in the townscape, but in a housing estate, not in a town centre. As the church of a large community - a civic church - it might have served well. The experience of close on a century of church building, through the period of expansion of the industrial towns and cities of the Midlands and the North, could have shown that over-large churches became more of a burden than a benefit. Although this was disguised to some degree by the willingness of central church authorities to provide subsidies for men and buildings, and by flourishing youth work - even if this did not lead to a proportionate increase in adult membership, the figures

revealing declining membership and attendance were there - as Robin Gill has demonstrated - if anyone were brave enough to ask the right questions.

As to the structural method - i.e. a flat roof of reinforced concrete construction - this is not necessarily a 'bad thing' in itself. The Post Office had been building their sorting offices of reinforced concrete, and with flat roofs, since the erection of the Sorting Office at St. Martin's le Grand, City of London, in 1907, by Sir Henry Tanner. The Sorting Office in Newton Street in Manchester is of this design, and seems to have survived well. These buildings were extremely substantial in structure - the flat roofs could be used as outdoor areas, or even, in London, for drill for the Post Office Rifles - and were well maintained. They were sufficiently strong for additional storeys to be constructed if required. If the roofs are not built to such a substantial specification, and are not maintained, then problems are far more likely to occur. If there is no overriding reason for a flat roof, one has to ask whether it is wise to adopt the pattern. I do wonder whether, in a climate as notoriously damp as that of the South Lancashire plain, a flat roof is not a most unwise option?

St. Luke the Physician, Benchill.

Revd. D.T. Thomas, St. Luke's Vicarage, Brownley Road, Benchill, Manchester M22 4PT. 061 998 2071.

Population 19,000; Seats 300; Electoral Roll 94.

Consecrated: 1939. Illustrations, and extracts from Quinquennial Inspection Report, see Vol. 3, p431ff.

The church was designed by Cecil Young, and was consecrated in 1939, shortly before the outbreak of war.

This is the third of the pre-war churches in Manchester which I consider in detail. I have included these for purposes of comparison with the later buildings, since they demonstrate a continuity with those buildings in respect of the way the parishes were established in the new housing areas, in similarities in general design, in similarities in the defects which were to emerge, and in the tradition which was established in the immediate pre-war years of using imaginative and forward-thinking contemporary architects.

History.

A brief history of the church and parish was produced in 1989, under the title: 'Fifty years from the farm', by Don Egan, of the Church Army. The 'Farm' is a reference to the beginning of the parish, when the parishioners - occupants of the housing then being erected, met in Hollyhedge Farmhouse at Easter 1934. Later in the year a wooden hut was purchased. Work began very shortly on the permanent church, which was completed in March 1939. The history includes some comments by the architect, including the following:

'The Church in the past has been the dominant feature of every town and village in England. Following such tradition, the Church of St. Luke the Physician is designed to express outwardly the service the service to which it is to be put and to be a lasting landmark. No striving after sensational effect is aimed at, but a feeling of strength and endurance has been the motif.'

Description of the building.

The church was designed with a traditional, linear east-west, layout; the main body of the building, incorporating nave and chancel, is a tall, rectangular space, lit by paired lancet windows; to either side is a low aisle, widening at the west and east ends into ancillary space of porch, vestry, etc. At the western end, fronting the road, is a tower rising above the roof of the nave, with a belfry of reinforced concrete, with a steeply pitched tiled roof, surmounted by a cross. As originally laid out, there was a chancel, with choir, and a sanctuary beyond. The chancel has been shortened, by the introduction of a screen wall, and the sanctuary is now a shallow space, barely projecting beyond the end of the nave. Seating is in the form of fixed pews, of Columbian pine and of

good quality. There is a movable, purpose-made, font, just to the west of the altar rails. The construction is of brick, with pre-cast stone copings, and the walls are of 9" brickwork each side of a 9" cavity and the roof is of reinforced concrete.

Condition.

The last quinquennial inspection was carried out in November 1992. The report includes the ominous general comment on the fabric:

'The fabric of the building continues to deteriorate and assuming that the Church, when built, incorporated as 'basic' methods of construction as those used in the Church Hall, which have been revealed in the work done on this building in the past months, then considerable concern must be expressed about leaving the church building in its present state. The penetration of water and moisture to the brickwork and reinforced concrete of the roof must be stopped and prevented in future.'

'With the limited financial resources of the Parish, it is a surprise that the fabric of the Church is in as good condition as it is. The items of work required to the Church at this time are of a scale beyond routine maintenance and should be the subject of discussions outside the remit of this report.'

The building has not stood up well to the Manchester weather, and the report identifies two main areas of concern. The pointing to the brickwork is in very poor condition; on the south side the pointing has, in places, been totally eroded out of the joints, and all the brickwork, and many of the joints between the pre-cast concrete copings, need repointing. There is also a crack in the brickwork between the nave and chancel. There appears to be a straight joint in the original brickwork, but since there is some cracking across the bricks themselves, the architect suggests that this may be due to movement of the roof slabs. The common brick backing to the parapet walls is spalling in places due to frost damage, at the junction with the asphalt upstand on the upper roof. The real problem lies in the roof itself, which is discussed in detail in the Report, and in a subsidiary specialist Structural Engineer's Report, carried out a few months prior to the Quinquennial Inspection. Lengthy comments from these Reports are included in Vol.3, p431ff.

Conclusion.

This church is one with one of the most serious problems in building terms.

Benchill is part of the Wythenshawe estate complex, and the parish shares similar problems to those of other Wythenshawe parishes. There is an ageing population, who remember the idealism of early Wythenshawe, who still see it as a pleasant

place to live, but have to struggle against the life styles of the younger residents - single mothers, unmarried couples, single men, and very few in work. There is a drug problem, with its attendant violence and crime.

There is a rôle for the Church; the parish has ample ancillary space, including a good hall, for 'engagement' activities, but the church building itself is a drain on resources, and any solution is going to be expensive. The latest estimate is puts the costs of repair at about £100,000; 'It might just as well be £10 million', says the curate. The sanctuary has been shortened already, but the present area and layout is unsatisfactory. It is difficult to see how the present building could be satisfactorily adapted for present-day liturgical practice, and the height of the nave is so great that heating is always going to be a problem.

One suggested remodelling was to insert a floor, with the worship area above and offices, etc., below; this was abandoned when the partner withdrew, but the suggestion does offer the possibilities of using the present buildings to create accommodation to enable the Church to function in a variety of ways in Benchill.

The architecture of the building recalls St. Christopher's, Withington, but on a smaller scale, and of poorer quality; it is a manifestation of the traditional plan, and the building as an 'architectural presence' in the parish, of which the last manifestation was probably St. Hilda's, Old Trafford.

St. Luke the Physician, Benchill, does not appear to be regarded as being of notable architectural merit. The use of a flat concrete slab for the roof structure has given rise to major problems with the building, and the structural engineer's report on the roof is a most useful discussion of this type of problem. The present building, in its present form, is a drain on the resources of the parish, and offers inflexible space for worship.

Postscript.

The report above was written after a visit in 1994. I now learn - 1999 - that the roof has been repaired, and the interior re-decorated. By working with other social-work agencies the work of the parish has been widened, to the general benefit, and the outlook seems a good deal more positive than one might expect.

All Saints, Barton Road, Stretford.

Revd. P.K. Townley, The Rectory, 233 Barton Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 0DT. 061 865 1350.

Population 11,800; Seats 330; Electoral Roll 132.

Built: 1955. For photographs; see Vol.3, p437.

This is the first post-war church to be built in the Manchester Diocese. It was built in 1955 to replace one destroyed during the war. It was designed by Leach, Rhodes and Walker, Architects, of Manchester. It was re-ordered in 1970 by James Chamberlain, by reversing the direction of the building, so that the original sanctuary area and front part of the nave is now the church hall.

The present main entrance was built in 1970. This is a new porch with toilets, giving access to hall and church, and is built of concrete block.

General description.

The church is rectangular in plan, with an apse at the original east end, built of brick, with a shallow-pitched roof, covered in copper, set behind a low brick parapet. The lower flat roofs are of concrete construction, covered in felt. At the original west end, and offset, is a low tower surmounted by a bell chamber, again with a shallow pitched roof clad in copper, and surmounted by a cross. The nave window surrounds are of reconstituted stone, with a vestigial pediment above. Internally, the flat ceiling is of plaster, in rectangular panels, with lighting set behind cut-out stars or sunken spot lights. The ceiling remains in its original form. If one removed the fittings, the building would make a perfectly acceptable school hall, or even a small theatre/cinema/social hall.

Following the re-ordering, the building now consists of a large hall space, divided by a folding screen. To the west is the re-ordered church area, with a fully glazed west wall behind the sanctuary. To the north is a small 'Meditation Chapel' (formerly the baptistry) and to the south the vestries and tower. Beneath the tower is the original main entrance to the church, now not used.

To the east of the dividing screen is a church hall space with a platform in the former sanctuary, with a curtain concealing storage space.. In the north-east corner is a small meeting room and kitchen and in the south-east corner a larger meeting room, formerly a side chapel. The original sanctuary was apsidal, but a corridor behind squares off the external form.

The seating in the worship area uses the original pews, which are of good quality, and have been re-fixed to the floor. The present sanctuary is narrower than the nave, and is flanked by brick walls, concealing ancillary accommodation to either side. The altar is on a raised, carpeted, plinth,

square in plan, with chamfered corners, and has light-weight altars rails. These were added at the request of the congregation. The worship area is relatively small, and the president (celebrant) is not far from the congregation; nonetheless, the altar is rather constrained, both by the flanking brick walls, the rails, and the step formed by the plinth, and there is a good deal less flexibility in the way in which the Eucharist can be conducted than one would expect after a substantial re-ordering.

Condition.

The last Quinquennial inspection was carried out in June 1992. The report concluded:

'The inspection found the church to be in good general order. The main item of concern is the pattern of movement cracks. As has been reported above, this is more of an aesthetic than structural problem and should not threaten the future of the building.'

'The parish take a responsible attitude to the repair of the building and money has been spent as necessary to look after the church, e.g. renewal of the heating system. It is important that the roof gutters are cleaned out regularly and at the same time the condition of the copper roof checked. It is encouraging to note that the parish have attended to the principle items mentioned in the last report.'

No necessary works to be undertaken are noted as being of the utmost urgency; rainwater pipes should be cleaned down and repainted, and the wall to the heating chamber steps repaired, within the next 18 months, patch pointing to the clerestorey windows and repointing of the surround of the west window should be carried out before the next inspection; and raking out and repointing cracks, and the securing of the external doors should be undertaken, but could be postponed until after the next inspection. Except for these last two items, the necessary work was priced at no more than £5,000.

Use of the church building.

The adaptation of the church was carried out, not because of falling numbers, but to make more effective use of the plant. For the Sunday Parish Communion, with a congregation of about 120, the church is opened through to the hall, through folding doors. During the week, the hall provides accommodation for a youth group, a Well Woman clinic, a playgroup, children's parties, etc. The apse, which originally housed the sanctuary, is curtained off, and provides storage space.

Conclusion.

The parish are clearly in control of the building, and although it is hardly an exciting structure, in architectural terms, it has been successfully modified to meet the needs of the parish, and can be said to 'work'.

All Saints, Stretford, is not a building of particular architecture merit, although it sits happily in its residential setting, and complements the housing around in its scale and materials, and its tower and small flèche help to identify the church building, without overpowering the buildings around. It is of a size and type with which the parish have been able to cope. In particular, its design permitted it to be the subject of a major re-ordering scheme after it had been in existence for some 15 years, and it now seems to serve its purpose well.

St. Mark, White Moss, Blackley.

Revd. R. Leatherbarrow, St. Mark's Rectory, 70 Booth Hall Road, Blackley, Manchester, M9 2BL. 061 740 7558.

Population 6000; Seats; Electoral Roll 35.

Opened 1959, as multi purpose Church and hall.
In 1968, a Church extension was opened on the north side of the hall. For photographs; se Vol.3, p438.

History.

[This short history of the building is given in the introduction to the Quinquennial report of November 1991 (the first quinquennial report)].

St. Mark's was designed as a permanent dual-purpose building. A multi purpose Church/hall was constructed and opened in 1959 with a main hall and stage on an east-west axis, the stage being at the west end. The chancel area was screened from the main hall by a sliding partition with other ancillary rooms consisting of kitchen, store and vestry/stage dressing room situated on the south wall with a second dressing room/Vicar's vestry being provided on the north side adjacent to the stage. The main entrance and toilet facilities were situated at the east end.

In 1968 a Church extension was opened on the north side of the hall with folding sliding doors to enable the hall to be used as an overflow space to the Church. The extension also provided for a new entrance to the Church but utilised the 1959 accommodation for the Vicar's vestry.

The original hall is of brick construction with a steel truss shallow pitch roof to the main hall covered with copper faced felt on woodwool slabs and flat concrete roofs to ancillary rooms with asphalt finish. The Church extension appears to have a steel frame construction with brick walls to the east and west end and a full height timber framed and glazed infill between steel stanchions to the north wall. The building is identified as a church - apart from the notice board, by a cross on the exterior of the end wall of the worship area.

The worship area itself is a simple rectangular space, running alongside the hall, and with windows on the long side, and the altar placed in the centre of the room, aligned with the window wall, but standing well forward of the wall. The altar is of timber, in the pattern of a carpenter's bench, and is on a raised dais of two steps, with altar rails, of a simple pattern, around the perimeter of the lower step. The seating, in the form of pews, is on three sides of the altar, so that no one is far from the altar.

Present condition.

The report of the Quinquennial inspection, November 1991, concludes with the following comments:

'Comment on the future of the fabric. There is much evidence that both the Church and Hall are being constantly maintained and if this continues the buildings should remain in good condition.'

Comment on Maintenance. The buildings are clearly well used and maintained. However, the standard of some recent painting is not good with paint splashes on floors and on glass, particularly the high level hall windows. This unfortunately detracts from the good work being undertaken and more care needs to be taken.

In detail, the walls are generally sound, but some local re-pointing is needed, and the east and west gables will need re-pointing within 5 years. The glazed doors and screens to the Church and Hall have been replaced with brickwork and solid doors - for security. The copper faced felt to the main hall is some 7 or 8 years old, i.e. it has already been replaced, with the same material as original. It is generally sound, except where one panel has been loosened by vandals. The asphalt with reflective paint to the concrete roofs of the 1959 building appears to be generally sound. The felt roof to the 1968 building is to be renewed (as at November 1991). The paintwork is generally in poor condition, and needs repainting.

As to fittings and furnishings, the hall is noted as generally well cared for, but the built-in cupboards are showing signs of wear after 30 years use. The church furnishings are noted as well cared for, but, the report continues:

'some of the fittings e.g. the pews, are not of particularly pleasing design or quality. The Vicar and PCC are currently considering re-ordering the church and have submitted a preliminary application under the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure for this work. The worship area is small and there could be great benefit in a re-ordering to take advantage of the limited space and provide greater flexibility by way of loose seating rather than pews.'

The report summarizes the necessary work as follows:

'Items of utmost urgency. Wet rot to choir vestry door frame; repairs to roof; repairs to fascia boards; clean gutters; repair s.v.p. and r.w.p.; replace fixings to window grilles; overhaul external paintwork and redecorate; stain frames to stained glass windows; check ventilation grilles for heating chamber and provide if required.'

'Items to be completed within 18 months. Point horizontal crack in kitchen wall; point crack above stained glass window; work to chimney stack; point joints in window cills; repair wall tiling etc.'

'Repairs which should be carried out during quinquennium. Repoint gable walls; repair concrete soffit over door;

renew reflective coating to roof; replace broken flags in paths.'

The report also comments that the quality of light fittings is poor, particularly in the church, and suggests that the opportunity be taken to up-grade them as part of the possible re-ordering.

Present use.

The housing in the parish is predominantly, but not exclusively, council housing. The population of the parish is about 6000. At one time there were large numbers of elderly people - reflecting the result of the 'planting' of the estate; the numbers are now declining, due to deaths, and the new population is largely of young couples (often unmarried) with children, who are moved into the area. Out of a congregation of 50 to 60, only 3 people are in full-time employment.

The building seems well-used, and well-maintained, and is clearly within the capacity of the congregation to support it. This is one of the last of the 1950s dual-purpose buildings, but was built as a permanent structure, and to a somewhat better standard than most. The complex is a simple building, with the appearance of a school hall. The hall itself is used for a variety of social purposes; it is hoped to develop a drop-in centre for the unemployed, and to develop the hall as a social centre for the estate.

The buildings as they are at present constituted - with a useful, general-purpose hall, and a simple worship-area, and all, because of the simplicity and small size of the buildings, being fairly easily maintained - seem to serve the parish well.

St. Martin, Blackcarr Road, Wythenshawe.

Revd. Dr. P.J. Dines, St. Martin's Vicarage, 2 Blackcarr Road, Baguley, Manchester, M23 8LX.

Population 10,500; Seats 450; Electoral Roll 103.

Consecrated: March 1960.

Architects: H.S. Fairhurst and Sons. Photographs; see Vol.3, p438.

Description of the building.

The structure consists of load-bearing brick walls and piers. The nave and sanctuary roofs are of timber construction on steel trusses and are covered externally with clay tiles. Internally there is a suspended ceiling of acoustic wood wool slabs on a sub framing. The aisle and vestry roofs are of timber construction on timber beams flitched to steel plates. This is covered with acoustic wood wool and finished externally with copper.

The plan consists of nave, sanctuary, a south aisle with an altar at the east and a baptistry at the west end. On the north side of the nave reading from east to west are the choir entry to the nave, flower room, lavatory accommodation, and entry to the tower. West of this complex is a choir vestry and meeting room which can be thrown into one room by opening a sliding folding screen. West of this again is the north entrance vestibule and the clergy vestry and parish office. The choir and organ are accommodated in a gallery over the west end of the nave.

The walls are faced internally with heather coloured brickwork with large panels of decorative plywood with an acoustic backing in the sanctuary, flanking the large fabric dorsal, and on the face of the gallery. The sanctuary floor and steps are of York stone and the sanctuary and baptistry south windows are of artificial stone with leaded lights and some coloured glazing. The pulpit, lectern and font are in York stone and polished hardwood.

Flooring throughout, apart from the sanctuary, is of p.v.c. tiles in a 27" chequer pattern of light and dark grey. The altar is in decorative hardwoods with an incised and filled design. The dorsal by Michael O'Connor is in heavy slub linen with a differentially dyed design with a central motif of Christ the Good Shepherd. The pews are of a simple design in solid African hardwood.

The bell tower is a load bearing brick structure with reinforced concrete ring beams at intervals.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in July, 1991. The report makes the general comment:

'In general the church is in good condition and well maintained.'

In detail, the report identified the need for some re-pointing, notably the stones at the bottom of the gable copings, and some cracks due to thermal movement. The roofs appear sound. The timberwork of the Flèche over the font needs repainting, but the timber supporting columns to both porch roofs have been repaired since the previous inspection.

Present use.

The church was built to an entirely traditional pattern, but with clichés of the period; notably the zigzag roofs of the porches, and the tall, free-standing tower, with mullions to the windows and belfry in reconstituted stone or concrete, and the copper roof. Internally the church is a large hall structure with aisles approached through low arched openings; the sanctuary is the width of the nave. There is a tapestry running the full height of the east wall behind the altar which is flanked by full-height timber panels, in a chequer-pattern in square veneered panels - with the grain running alternately vertically and horizontally, and with the squares separated by fillets of dark-stained wood (ebony?). The altar is of timber, and stands just sufficiently forward of the east wall to permit westward facing celebration. The chequered pattern of timber panels is repeated on the east wall behind the altar of the week-day chapel, and along the front of the western gallery. The main altar is raised on a dais of four steps; raising it just sufficient to enable the celebrant to be seen comfortably, and the altar in the week-day chapel is raised on two steps. The sanctuary is lit by a tall window on the south side.

Although the building is well-kept, and obviously cared-for, the lay-out is inflexible, and steadfastly rejects contemporary thought about the planning of churches for the liturgical movement. Externally, with its round arched clerestorey windows, the building has a curious neo-Byzantine-1950s look about it.

The early post-war temporary dual-purpose building still survives, and is used as a hall.

Nikolaus Pevsner, (Buildings of England, Lancashire, 1969; Vol.1, P342) says:

'Nothing to recommend in its architecture.'

Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Greenbrow, Newall Green, Wythenshawe, Manchester.

Revd. A. Atherton, St. Francis Vicarage, Chalford Road, Newall Green, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M23 8RD. 061 437 4605.

Population 8700; Seats 320; Electoral Roll 50.

Architect: Basil Spence.

Foundation stone laid: 23 April 1960.

Church consecrated: 25 March 1961.

Photographs, and extracts from Quinquennial Inspection Report, see Vol.3, p439ff.

History.

The permanent church was preceded by a temporary building, opened in 1951, now used as the church hall. The initial design was prepared and submitted in 1957; the contract was placed in December 1959. The foundation stone was laid on 23rd April 1960, and the Church was consecrated on 25th March 1961. It was the second church to be built under the Bishop of Manchester's New Churches Appeal. The final cost, excluding the cost of the site, was £46,000; the diocese paid £35,500, and the parish £10,500, with the parish repaying to the diocese 25% of £35,500.

Something of the history of the building, and the discussions which took place, can be found in the Minutes of the Diocesan Church Building Committee. In June 1958, the Church Building Committee for St. Francis, Newall Green, heard that the architect - Basil Spence - was at work on revised interior plans, for an over-all budget of £35,000. The architect designed the church with the choir in a gallery at the west end, but the parish church council expressed a wish that it should be at the east end, and linked in some way with the congregation. It was also decided that the altar should be free-standing, and that there should be north and south aisles, and the architect was asked to submit revised plans.

At a meeting of the Diocesan Committee on 10th October 1958, it was reported that the elevations for St. Francis, by Basil Spence, were accepted, but the discussion about the location of the choir rumbled on, and the diocesan committee decided that it would prefer the choir to remain in its western gallery.

The body of the church is a rectangular structure, with the altar set slightly forward of the east wall, lit by windows at an angle on either side. The vestries and toilets etc. form a low single storey wing across the west end, projecting to the south, and the side chapel continues the wing to the north. The church is built in a light golden brick. To the west, joined to the entrance to the church by paving, is a tall cross in reinforced concrete, 73' high, supported in a 'V' of darker brickwork, 52' high.

The church is entered, in the west wall, by porch formed as a screen 12' by 18' of vertical bars of afrormosia wood and glass in which are set pivoted doors of similar design. To the left - i.e. north - of the porch is an entrance to the side chapel. Within the porch is a vestibule, separated from the nave by a screen of similar design to the porch. The church is 40' wide, 96' long, and 27' high to the ceiling of Columbian pine. The booklet, produced for the opening of the church, says of the Sanctuary;

'The unbroken walls and concealed windows direct attention to the sanctuary. The chancel step binds together the sacraments of baptism, preaching and communion. The font in the east is convenient for public baptism, whilst the pulpit above the lectern relates the preaching with the reading of the Word. The suspended cross dominates the sanctuary. The communion table, carved with Alpha and Omega, allows celebration facing the congregation and speaks of altar and board.'

The choir and organ are placed in a gallery across the west end of the nave, above the entrance vestibule. The chapel is separated from the nave by a sliding glass partition which permits an unrestricted view of the east wall and also enables the chapel to become an extension of the church. The pulpit and seating, including clergy stalls, are of sapele wood; the pews have attached kneelers; the communion rail in the sanctuary, designed and worked by pupils of Newall Green Secondary Modern School, is formed of five moveable sections. The font cover has a carving by Ralph Beyer, the embroidery of the sanctuary and clergy stalls was designed by Paul Walker, the communion silver was designed by Gerald Benney, Des. R.C.A., and the embroidery for the altar was designed and worked by Beryl Dean and her Associates. The consecration marks were cut onto stones from Achaia, Iona, Canterbury and Assisi.

Architecturally, the church is an essay in the use of simple rectangular forms, with the windows forming an abstract pattern, and a tower-like structure identifying the building above the roofs of the surrounding houses, recalling a number of Continental churches. Particular attention was paid to the quality of some of the fittings and furnishings.

Liturgically, the building pays some regard to the liturgical movement, but is very much a compromise. Although the sanctuary is designed for west-facing celebration, the proportions of the building - the length is rather more than twice the width - the location of the altar close to the - short - east wall, and the use of seating in the form of fixed pews, all indicate a compromise between the practices of the late-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries.

The immediate ancillary accommodation - vestries etc., forms part of the church complex but, as commonly happens, the former temporary church is used as a church hall.

The building has received a good deal of critical acclaim. Pevsner, (Buildings of England, Lancashire, 1969, Vol.1, P 341) says of this church;

'One of the small suburban churches of which Sir Basil Spence did some equally excellent ones at Coventry. 250 seats only. Triangular brick tower, at some distance from the church. The side of the tower to the street is entirely open, and in it a concrete pier rises and ends in a cross. The church front is composed of cubic shapes. It is brick, but with wood slatting to allow a view in and a side chapel faced with Portland stone, tucked under and kept independent of the rest. The chapel is for weekday services. The interior of the building is a plain oblong, except that the side walls of the chancel project triangularly so as to allow light to fall on to the altar. The ceiling is flat. There are no pretensions, which is a blessing in a church of the sixties.'

The Quinquennial report of 1991 says of the building:

'The church is a very carefully composed design, an elegant, spacious and well proportioned building. The plan is really very simple, but the use of materials and scale makes the design appear more complex. The main body of the church is a single cellular space, with an angled arrangement for the windows of the sanctuary. This makes the windows invisible from the congregational seating, whilst throwing light onto the east wall (this detail compares to the similar arrangement of the nave windows at Coventry).'

However. it is interesting to compare these comments with those of the clergy, who do not express the same admiration for Spence's work.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial inspection took place in March 1991. In summary the report says:

'The inspection found that the church was on the whole in sound condition, except for the roof. The electrical installation is also now probably in need of renewal. Little significant change was noted since the last report, but the roof areas give serious cause for concern and considerable expense will be necessary in the next few years. Vandalism is also a serious problem and damage has resulted to windows etc.'

'The main body of the church is built of robust, simple materials and care and maintenance should be simple. The church and grounds are kept tidy, clean and in good order. The parish obviously care for the building. The problems with the fabric, however, are ones that ordinary church members cannot be expected to remedy. However, routine inspections of the roof should be carried out to ensure

rainwater outlets are not blocked and obvious holes are patched.'

The roof has given rise to problems from the beginning, and the inability of the parish to cope with it may result in the demolition of the building. Detailed comments from the Report are given in Vol.3, pp439/440.

Present use.

The congregation of about 30 is now elderly, and the population of the parish is either elderly or transient. Although there are baptisms - with the parents usually unmarried - the families usually move on fairly quickly.

The church building is likely to be demolished, since it is far too large for its present use, and too expensive to repair and maintain for its present congregation. Plans are being made to use the nearby Baptist church jointly for worship, and the present church hall (formerly the temporary dual-purpose building) will be used for 'social engagement', as it is now.

St. Francis of Assisi is a church which arouses conflicting opinions to a surprising degree. It might perhaps be described as an 'architect's church'; certainly it is the professionals in the building industry who speak highly of the qualities of the building; the clergy seem to find any appreciation of the building overshadowed by the continuing problems caused by the roof, and the degree to which the problems this raises occupy the thoughts and efforts of the congregation, and hinders them from other work.

The church is surprisingly traditional in layout, with the seating, in the form of pews, in rigid ranks, parallel and facing east; the altar at the east end, separated by the altar rail from the clergy seats, either side, reminiscent of Spence's parish churches in Coventry; in contrast to those churches, the choir is at the west end, in a gallery, and there is a temporary font in front of the sanctuary. The building itself is very stark, and marked by clichés of its time.

The use of vertical slatting for doors and partitions, and the use of materials of high quality, such as the stone of the weekday chapel, are common features of a building of 'quality' of the period; the use of good quality timber, carefully detailed, for the seats, pulpit, etc. again recalls features of other, non-church, buildings of the period, and gives the impression that the architect employed a commercial vocabulary for a religious building. The building is an interpretation of a pre-war church, using contemporary, and commercial, patterns of design and materials then in vogue - shades of the Festival of Britain - but the elements do not appear to be designed specifically for a church; the concept of the building is not an analysis of what a church should be and should do, based on a study of first principles.

St. Saviour, Denton Lane, Chadderton. District Church.

Revd. D.P. Banting, Christ Church Vicarage, Block Lane, Chadderton, Oldham. OL9 7QB. 061 624 2326.
(Curate: Revd C.L. Albin, 23 Lindale Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 9DW. 061 624 0278.)

Photographs of both buildings are included in Vol.3, p441.

St. Saviour's, built 1960-62; architects - Taylor and Roberts. This building suffered from major roof problems and was sold, and is now converted to offices. A new church was built in a short distance away, also in Denton Lane. The new building is a simple single storey structure, rather like a small school in appearance, built of brick, with shallow pitched roofs clad in clay pantiles. The worship area is a plain rectangular space, with the roof supported on RC portal frames, and the soffit clad in timber boarding. The sanctuary is at one end, raised on shallow steps and surrounded by a light coloured timber rail; the altar, seats and reading desk are all in the same timber. The seating is formed of chairs. The arrangement is surprisingly traditional, but is, of course, easily capable of adaptation. There is a meeting room at the west end of the the building, which can be incorporated into the worship area through folding doors. The main Sunday service is matins. The present building is simple to maintain, flexible, and light and friendly in character; it seems to work extremely well. Although the worship space can be enlarged for special occasions, the much larger, nineteenth century, parish church is geographically close, and therefore available for occasions requiring even greater capacity. The church is in the care of a curate who acts, in effect, as vicar. In many ways this arrangement foreshadows the type of arrangement suggested by Robin Gill. In architectural terms, the building sits happily with the housing around - largely two storey late-nineteenth century terraces - and follows the pattern of quasi-vernacular, user-friendly buildings, used for small schools. It is distinguished, externally, as a church by a cross on the gable wall, facing the access path.

St. Mark, Ogden Street, Chadderton.

Revd. A. Cooke, St. Mark's Vicarage, Milne Street, Chadderton, Oldham. OH6 0LR. 061 624 2005.

Population 6600; Seats 350; Electoral Roll 68.

Date: Work started: late 1961.
Consecrated: 15 December 1963.

Architect: George Pace. Photographs; see Vol.3, p443.

According to the minutes of the Diocesan Church Building Committee of 17 April 1959, St. Mark's, Chadderton, was the third church on the first list prepared by the informal priorities committee set up by the Bishop in connection with the New Churches Appeal.

A joint building committee had been set up, and had held its first meeting by 10th October, 1958. It was decided to demolish the existing church in order to secure the largest site possible for the new church. Seating capacity, including the choir, was to be 350, and George Pace was sought by the parish as architect. By 28th November, 1958, George Pace had been appointed architect, and by late 1959/early 1960, (certainly by 8th April 1960) George Pace had submitted preliminary sketch plans, and was working on working drawings. By October 1961, the plans for St. Mark's had been approved by the DAC, and work had begun. The church was consecrated on Sunday, 15th December, 1963.

The church is described in the Manchester Diocesan Leaflet for February 1964, in a report on the consecration, thus:

'Mr George G. Pace, FSA, FRIBA, designed a building which had for its first consideration the desired liturgical use. There are no gimmicks, the sole criteria by which it can be judged are its use for worship and its existence as an act of worship in itself.'

'The main entrance leads into a spacious narthex where two stones, taken from Lichfield and Manchester Cathedrals, have been built into the wall. From the narthex there is access to a completely enclosed chapel which can be heated and used independently.'

'The main church is an irregular pentagon with seating for 318. The pews have been taken entirely from the closed church of Christ Church, Glodwick and look entirely "at home" in their new setting. The placing of the choir and the organ at the point of the pentagon level with the front pews ensures that choir, organist and congregation are more wholly together than more traditional arrangements always allow.'

'The eastern part of the church is one large coherent area, making possible the act of communion without aesthetic and liturgical squalor. The altar table, which suggests the

carpenter's bench, has been left free-standing; a large iron cross, carrying a gilded seventeenth crucifix figure, rises from the floor, with the Bishop's chair at its base; the east window is a mosaic formed from Victorian stained glass - from the church of St. Andrew, Ancoats - broken and rearranged under the direction of the architect. This window inspires, without dominating, the whole building.'

'Towards the west end of the church, in the centre crossing, is a simple font, formed (on the spot) from a massive block of York stone, with running water supplied from a pillar alongside. The total cost of the building, including furnishings and organ, is approximately £47,000. Of this, £38,500 has come from the Bishop's Appeal for New Churches; £1,100 has come from a special diocesan fund; and the remainder has been raised by the parish.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial inspection for which I have seen a report took place in 1988. The report comments that the building has been maintained to an average standard and concludes:

'The building incorporates materials of high quality but it has now reached a stage where quite a lot of maintenance is necessary. Providing maintenance is conscientiously undertaken, the building should have a long future ahead of it.'

The report comments in detail as follows:

'Walls. On the north side there are cracks in the concrete eaves beam... I am of the opinion that the cracks are most likely to have been caused by initial shrinkage, or thermal movement. ... It is important that the open joints/cracks are pointed up .. in a flexible mastic .. to prevent ingress of water which would lead to a worsening of the situation.'

'There is quite a lot of pitting in the concrete surface of the edge beam and, whilst this beam was probably designed to have a textured surface, it could lead to further breakdown and it is suggested that small openings be pointed up.'

The same fault is found in the edge beam on the south side. There is a flat roofed section with a slate dpc beneath the concrete of the flat roof; the edge of this slate is shaling, and needs to be cleaned, pointed and siliconed. There is some cracking in the brickwork - not serious - which needs pointing carefully, to match the original work, and the brickwork on the north side of the tower will soon need repointing. The report comments:

'In comparing the extent of cracking to concrete and walls with that recorded in the previous quinquennial report, I have formed the opinion that the situation has not

significantly worsened: nor do the cracks exhibit indications of recent movement.'

There have been some minor works carried out, including the construction of a gas meter chamber in non-matching bricks, some plastic guttering, repointing and reglazing which do not match the original work; they stand out like a sore thumb, and should be put right. Some of the original cast-iron guttering is rusting badly. The slate roof is in good order, but the flat roofs, which are covered in asphalt, will soon need re-covering, and some of the RC work - notably the beam at the edge of the flat roof on the north side, and the concrete roof of the main entrance, is spalling and exposing the reinforcement. This needs specialist repair. As to the interior, the report notes:

'Walls. Redecoration is required to the narthex walls. In the west chapel there are damp markings on the west wall apparently due to damp penetration. Any open joints on the exterior in this area should be pointed and it is suggested the exterior might be silicone treated. ... There is a quite severe cracking to the concrete edge beam, in the west chapel. These cracks should be pointed up.'

The original underfloor heating system was abandoned in 1983.

Present use.

The church has a striking appearance, with strong and clearly defined shapes and volumes. The materials are of high quality, with textured blue engineering bricks for the walls and heavy slates for the roofs. The windows form an abstract geometrical pattern, with leaded lights, and are set in artificial stone frames.

The internal structure has dramatic portal laminated timber trusses with Y-column supports which in turn carry lattice timber purlins supporting the rafters. The general appearance recalls a medieval aisled hall, with the aisles narrowing or widening according to the floor plan. The use of laminated timber - unusual in Manchester diocese at this time - recalls the contemporary Oxford Road Station in Manchester for British Rail, of 1960, and predates, by a very few years, the work by David Nye in Guildford diocese.

Apart from the pews, which were brought from a nineteenth century church, the fittings, which were designed for the church, are of a very high standard of design and execution. The doors, and much of the internal woodwork, is in limed oak with hand-forged door furniture. The flooring of the sanctuary is in York stone, and the use of natural materials contributes to the striking character of the building.

The altar is of timber, and recalls a carpenter's bench; the sedilia are simply designed in York stone and oak; the font is of York stone, with an elaborate metal sculptured cover. With its tent-like shape, the church is light and welcoming,

and the specially designed fittings are a delight to the eye and spirit. It is unfortunate that the opportunity has not arisen to create seating more appropriate for the building, and of a more flexible nature.

As is clear from the Quinquennial reports, the building is not a hindrance to its congregation, but an asset. Its traditional materials have stood up well, and problems have only arisen from non-traditional features, e.g. the flat roofs, and from the RC beams, partly because of inadequate supervision during the construction. In general, the complex provides the right mix of accommodation. There is no hall, but meetings and small social functions can be held at the back of the church, and it would be possible to divide an area - say one bay - from the worshipping area as a semi-permanent arrangement. The church provides a prayerful atmosphere, and the main Sunday services - Holy Communion at 8 am and the Parish Communion, have about 77 communicants together.

St. Mark's, Chadderton, is one of very few church buildings of this period in the diocese which can be described as avant-garde. The curate-in-charge at the time exercised his right to appoint the architect by making a deliberately bold choice. The building is of very considerable architectural merit. The numbers of communicants are not dissimilar to those at All Saints Langley, but here the building does not appear to be an undue drain on the resources of the congregation. Both the building, and its furnishings, are of a very high quality of design and execution, and there have not appeared the problems of large-scale use of short-life materials, or major concrete failure, which has proved so difficult at Langley and Withington. The parish itself is largely late-nineteenth century in origin, and the present building replaced an earlier permanent church.

St. John's, Bury.

Revd. R.W. Lawrance, St. John's Vicarage, 270 Walmersley Road, Bury, BL9 0RW. 061 764 3412.

Population 8400; Seats 400; Electoral Roll 209.

Architect: F.H. Bradley.
1962-64.

Church dedicated: 8th June 1964.

Photographs and plans; see Vol.3, pp443/4.

History.

The present building replaced a mission church built in 1914. The first 'St. John's Church' was built as a Chapel of Ease to Bury Parish Church, on The Rock, close to Bury town centre, in 1770, to serve the needs of a growing industrial town. As the town grew, and the population extended to the north of the old town centre, a mission church was erected on a plot of land at Seedfield (i.e. the present site) in 1914. In effect, from 1914, the parish was served by two churches. The older one, on The Rock, became increasingly decayed, as did the mission church in its temporary building, and it was decided to build a single, new, church on the site of the Mission Church. The new church was therefore built in a well established residential area, with an established pattern of church attendance.

At the meeting of the Diocesan Church building Committee of 17 April 1959:

'The Revd. G.V.H. Elliott asked for the setting up of a joint building committee for a new permanent church for (St. John, Bury). A parochial building fund had reached £7,000 but was now flagging in the absence of a definite proposition to build. The parish was in touch with a Mr Bradley, an architect. ... The secretary confirmed that a new church for this parish was one of the specific objects of the Bishop's New Church Appeal; but the project did not enjoy a high priority.'

The committee decided that a joint building committee for St. John's should not be set up, but they were over-ruled by the Bishop by the time of the meeting of 26 June 1959.

At a meeting of the joint building committee for St. John, Bury, held on 9th March 1962, it was reported that the Bishop had agreed to provide £6,000 from the New Churches Appeal towards the cost of the new church. The parish already had established a New Branch Church Fund which was invested, and together with a separate building fund the parishes assets amounted to £14,244, with a further £3,226 expected to be available by the end of the year. With the contribution from the Bishop, £200 or thereabouts reclaimable from Bury Corporation in respect of paving charges, and a loan of £1,000 from the DCCB, the parish expected to have £24,470 available by the end of the year. F.H. Bradley was now selected as architect for the new church.

The new church was dedicated on 8th June 1964.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial Report was carried out in August 1989. A note to the Archdeacon of Bolton, dated 29 Jan. 1990, says of St. John's:

'The Architect does not itemise anything of an urgent nature, but suggests within the next eighteen months attention be given to rot in the window sill and also attention to a blocked gulley. Other works appear to be quite minor, and the total cost of the works is estimated at £1,700. The comment from the Architect is that the condition of the fabric is good and a considerable amount of work has been carried out during the quinquennial.'

The detailed report applies the comment 'generally sound' to most areas of the building, including brickwork and pointing, artificial stone surrounds to windows, slated roof (repaired since last inspection), gutters, glazing and casements, lightning conductor, paintwork, flooring, internal plasterwork, ceiling, roof timbers, fittings and furniture, and services. Work is recommended to a small area of rot in the West Window cill and to a blocked gulley, and to paving, steel gates and the boundary wall brickwork. The building is clearly within the capability of the parish to maintain, and appears to have no faults in design or construction which are likely to lead to any long term problem.

Use of the church.

St. John's is traditional in both materials and plan form, and does not appear to be held in particular esteem as a work of architecture. In plan it is a two cell building, of nave and chancel/sanctuary, and seems to have paid no regard to the then familiar pattern of Parish Communion and the liturgical movement. Equally, architecturally, the building is conventional, and is built of brick with a steeply pitched slated roof and reconstructed stone dressings to the windows. It is not noted as a building of architectural distinction.

In use - with the Parish Communion as the principal Sunday service - the attenuated form of the building makes for poor acoustics, and even though celebrating westward-facing, the celebrant is distant and separated from the congregation, particularly since the choir occupies the 'traditional' place in choir stalls in the chancel, between the celebrant and people. The attempt to overcome this by reading the first part of the service from the clergy stalls or in front of the choir is only partially successful.

Consideration has been given, at a very informal level, to a re-ordering of the church, separating the chancel from the nave, and using the space for two floors of accommodation for meetings, classes, etc., and turning the pews, or replacing them, through 90 degrees, with the altar against the north or south wall, with the congregation in seats ranged in shallow

arcs. I consider that this idea merits further consideration.

Conclusion.

Although the church can seat about twice the number of those on the Electoral Roll, it is clearly not too large for the abilities of the congregation to maintain, nor, with an average congregation, does it feel uncomfortably empty. The simple design and traditional construction appear to have brought clear advantages of relatively easy maintenance, and lack of inbuilt faults. Although designed to a pattern established as 'traditional' in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the building does not have so strong a character, nor so restricted internal space, that re-ordering, even of a radical nature, is ruled out. The congregation are clearly 'on top' of the general care and maintenance of the building, and it seems to serve its purpose reasonably well. The ancillary - hall - accommodation is in a temporary building, which is coming towards the end of its useful life, and there is scope for conversion of the church to provide more varied accommodation, under one roof.

All Saints, Wood Street, Langley, Middleton.

Revd. Ian Johnson, The Rectory, Wood Street, Langley, Middleton, Manchester M24 3GL. 061 643 5013.

Population 13,000; Seats 450; Electoral Roll 133.

Date: 1963/4. Architects: Leach, Rhodes and Walker.

Photographs, and other material; see Vol.3,p445ff.

Introductory comment

All Saints', Langley, is notorious within the diocese, and among the clergy, as a parish which exemplifies the problems which can be found in a parish on a Post-War, Outer Ring, local authority housing estate. It combines the major problems of a too-large, rigidly planned, and structurally defective complex of church buildings with the social problems of a large estate used, in effect, as a dump for problem families, and, apparently, was used as such - at least in part - from the beginning. I have consequently given more attention to this church than to many others in the diocese.

Early history.

Langley Estate, Middleton, is a very large local authority housing estate, built in the 1950s. A church, dedicated to St. Aidan, was constructed in the middle of the estate, as a small, concrete-block, building, seating about 150. This appears to have been to have been the temporary building. It was subsequently replaced by All Saints, and St. Aidan's was converted into a social centre.

According to the minutes of the Diocesan Committee for Church Building, by late 1959/early 1960 (by 8th April 1960?) it was decided, at St. Aidan, Langley, to set up a joint building committee, since the site for the (new) church was in the process of being acquired. The Minutes report that:

'The secretary said that this project was next on the priority list for attention... This conventional district contained 24,000 people. Construction of a permanent church was from that point of view much overdue. The Church of England should expand its activities as soon as possible.'

There was an element of competition here with the Roman Catholics, who were already in the process of erecting a large and imposing church on the estate.

1961, 5th December. At a meeting of the joint building committee, held in the dual-purpose building, in Millbeck Road, Langley, it was reported that the Bishop had agreed to provide £49,500 for the new church, on the understanding that 450 seats were provided, together with £12,500 for the hall annexe, and £8,000 (actually a maximum of £8,300) for the house. A certain amount of re-planning had been carried out,

since the local authority now required a 30' set-back, instead of the original 10', and there was also a need to economise on cost. As a result, the opportunity had been taken to modify the west end of the church and to re-plan the vestries. As to cost, it was estimated that the church proper could be built for £50,000, inclusive of chancel furniture, nave and choir seating, chapel furniture and seating, and fees, but excluding any organ, or tapestry or mural for the east end. The cost of the hall annexe was estimated at about £16,000, inclusive of fees, but exclusive of furniture. The house was estimated, originally, at £9,000, or a little more, and was being re-planned to reduce the cost. It was intended that the house should be ready for occupation by December 1962, with construction of the church and hall being begun in June 1962 and completed by the end of 1963.

The present building.

The present church is a large building, seating 400, built of brick, with concrete beams supporting a shallow in situ RC roof structure, clad with copper faced felt. In plan, as can be seen, the main building is shaped rather like a coffin, with a chapel and vestries projecting on the south side. At the west end is a very large window, framed in RC. The spacious sanctuary occupies the full width of the body of the church, with the organ to the north side and the choir housed in a quasi-chapel on the south. The seating is composed of pews in fixed rows across the nave. The east end is dominated by a massive sculpted cross by Geoffrey Clarke on the east wall, behind the altar. This is believed to have been designed for Coventry Cathedral, but was not accepted, and, when it became known that it was available Vic Whitsey, the incumbent at the time of the building, acquired it for Langley. This is a particularly large sculpture, and very dominating. Many in the parish find it intimidating and unwelcoming, and its scale and character is such that it is arguable that, while it does, physically, fit on the east wall, it is in fact too large and too powerful for a parish church. It is, of course, a work of art of considerable interest, but it is a constraint on the use of the present building, and should there be any major re-ordering, or of course demolition, it will be necessary to relocate this.

Langley Estate.

The Langley Estate is notorious as a 'problem estate', although it does not reach the headlines of the national papers as do Hulme and Moss Side. There are numerous reports, commissioned by the local authority. The character of the estate is described in a study by James Tucker, 'Honourable Estates', 1966, which I quote at length in Vol.3, pp445/6.

In the last few years £29 million has been spent out of central government funds on refurbishing the houses of the estate. The population is now about 20,000. There is a new

population coming in; largely single mothers, single men, unmarried couples, with children. There are now, in effect two communities; the old people, who see Langley as respectable, but declining, and newcomers, who bring drugs and violence. The community is now very fluid; for the church to be effective, it needs people to stay. In spite of the sense of insecurity, those who stay do get to feel reasonably secure. In theory, the local congregation is the Body of Christ in its locality; but the parishioners are themselves damaged people, sometimes severely damaged. The present congregation is largely composed of those who used to live on the estate, but have moved away, but come back out of a sense of loyalty; whether this is to the building, the club, or the people of Langley, is not clear.

In the view of the present incumbent, the pattern of ministry appropriate to the estate, is one which is people-centred, not building-centred. Rooms should be rented - in pubs, in schools - for the various functions, with a school room, or a school hall, being used for worship. However, in an estate like Langley, the churches are often the only buildings of any distinction, and the Langley cross the only work of art in the place. There is therefore already a tension here.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial Inspection was undertaken in April 1992. In the conclusions, the report says:

'Other recommendations.

It is strongly recommended that the church consider putting in hand the works recommended in the conclusion of the Feasibility Study undertaken on behalf of the church two years ago. The existing church building is very unsuitable for modern worship and for a small congregation represents an intolerable maintenance burden. Although the main building could be sub-divided to create a smaller worship space and other ancillary parish rooms it is our strong recommendation that consideration be given to converting the church hall, which is much more manageable in size, into a new multi-purpose worship space with the demolition of the remainder of the building with a possible view to sale of the balance of the site. The nature of the existing church building is such that the level of maintenance and repair required together with its associated costs probably renders the viability of retaining it doubtful.'

'Future of the fabric.

With substantial works the future of the building fabric could be maintained. However, given the reality of the situation faced by the Parish, the actual future of the building as it stands must be seriously called into question.'

'Comments on maintenance.

Only maintenance of an emergency stop-gap measure has been undertaken by the church during the last quinquennium.

The resources of the church are such that the required programmed maintenance to effectively deal with the level of defects associated with the building are (is) not possible.'

I include further details from the Report in Vol.3, pp446/8.

Feasibility study - 1990.

The deteriorating condition of the building, and changes in the parish, which have led to declining congregations and support, led to the carrying out of a feasibility study, in 1990, to determine what might be done with the complex of buildings. In the introduction to the report four problems are identified; these are (1) the failure of the roof covering, (2) the failure of concrete in the west window, (3) the building is too large for the current needs of the congregation and for any reasonable growth projections into the future, and (4) the maintenance burden of such a large complex is beyond the capability of the congregation to meet, and will increasingly occupy them, and prevent them undertaking the primary activities for which the church exists.

Four options were put forward.

Scheme I entailed demolition of the two-storey vestry block, the chapel and entrance foyer, probable demolition of the church hall, and consolidation of all uses within the present church building, of which the present roof would be removed and a new one constructed at a lower level. There would be a reduced worship area, seating about 200, which is more than is needed at present, but allows for some growth.

Schemes II and III proposed the partial demolition of the church, to produce a worship area seating about 150, and constructing a new, lower, roof. Scheme II retains the western end of the present building, Scheme III retains the eastern end.

Scheme IV proposes the demolition of the existing church building entirely, and the consolidation of existing uses within the existing church hall and ancillary spaces. This proposal echoes that for St. Christopher's, Withington.

The architects concluded the report by saying:

'Without in any way wishing to minimise the emotional cost of losing the existing building, the investigations and considerations which led to the development of the proposals clearly indicate, we believe, that the concentration of resources onto the existing church hall will, in the long run, be the only viable alternative. At this time, no investigations have been made as to the desirability and value of any land opened up for development use, but we feel that this is likely to be the only feasible way forward for the congregation.'

Present use.

The church seats 400, and the average congregation is at present about 100. The population of the parish is about 25,000, and although the congregation is small, as a percentage, there is a good deal of outreach work with organisations such as the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade.

When the parish was founded there was a great deal of support for the church. The diocese invested heavily in staff, and the incumbent was assisted by five or six curates. In the early days of the stewardship campaign there were 60 collectors, each with 40 calls, and confirmations had to take place in the cathedral - to cope with the numbers - and seven buses were hired to take confirmands, their families and friends, to the cathedral. It is arguable that with six or seven full-time staff, the congregation certainly should have reached this level.

The estate was looked upon by many of its early inhabitants as a way out and up from the slums of Collyhurst. It does seem that those with initiative 'got up and went' subsequently, leaving behind a more monochrome population.

The only Sunday service is Parish Communion, but the level of worship/devotion, according to the incumbent, is superficial.

Conclusion

Although the building appears to have worked for the first few years, when there was a large staff, the present congregation is now largely elderly or unemployed. It does not generate sufficient funds for maintenance, nor does the laity generate its own leaders, nor does it have a sense of mission to the community. The building is, as a consequence, far too large for present needs, and a drain on resources. IF the congregation were large enough and prosperous enough to fill and maintain the building, it could provide a striking setting for worship. However, in view of the demographic make-up of the population, it is necessary to ask: 1) What is the church's role here?, and 2) What does it need in the way of plant to carry out that function?

Initial impressions suggest that the answer to 2) is likely to be a) a compact worship area, and b) a hall, which could double as a larger worship area or as an extension to the compact worship area, and offices and meetings rooms for organisation and pastoral outreach. There is a small modern Roman Catholic church on the same estate, with these facilities, which is surplus to requirements, and would serve admirably as a replacement for All Saints. Unfortunately the present Roman Catholic bishop is unwilling to release it for use by the C/E!

The general layout of the church follows a 'traditional' pattern, i.e. a plan narrowing towards the east, with the font at the west end, the congregation in rigid rows, facing east.

The altar, albeit in a spacious sanctuary, and forward of the east wall to permit celebration facing the people, is all too obviously distant from the congregation, and a long way from the back rows of pews. In view of the likely options, any discussions as to the shortcomings of the building in liturgical/worship terms, and of any modest re-ordering, seems an unrealistic exercise.

Scheme IV of the Feasibility Study - demolition of the church, and conversion of the hall - appeared to be an attractive option, but since 1990 events have overtaken it. The hall roof has now deteriorated to such a degree that it requires virtual complete renewal. The main church roof continues to decay. £250,000 has been spent on the associated community/social centre. The chances of raising £80,000 to cope with the church roof seem as remote as those of raising £250,000 to carry out a more substantial scheme. In the view of the present incumbent - April 1994 - the problem is insoluble.

The parish is caught in an unenviable trap. The present church was built as a replacement for St. Aidan's, which was a simple concrete-block structure, seating about 150 and located in the middle of the estate. This has subsequently been refurbished and now serves as a social centre. All Saints was built to a much larger scale, with an element of competition with the RC church across the road. The building itself suffered as economies were made during the building process; in particular, copper faced felt, instead of copper, was used for the roof. There were, in addition, weaknesses in design, notably the use of downpipes concealed within the masonry of the walls, and of reinforced concrete for the framing of the large windows; these are not double-glazed and make heating difficult, and the framing is collapsing. Increasingly, as the population of the parish has declined in numbers and wealth, and the congregation has declined with it, it has been impossible to carry out even routine maintenance, as the comments on the need for re-painting make clear.

Pevsner (Buildings of England, Lancashire, 1969, Vol.1, P347/8) says of it;

'Red brick with jabbing roofs and a flèche. Inside, massive, nearly abstract cross Sculpture by Geoffrey Clarke. It is easy to be irritated by the use over and over again of the architectural cliches of the 1960s, but go across the street and look at Our Lady of the Assumption (RC), 1961-2, pale brick, still Romanesque, still with the campanile-like tower, and make your choice. Do you prefer the cliches of the day before yesterday or of today? The one is drained of all blood, the other is at least lustily alive.

All Saints and Martyrs, Langley, is not a building which is held in especial regard, in architectural terms, despite

Pevsner's comparison with the Roman Catholic church opposite; he does not address the question of the liturgical suitability of the building. Indeed his comments clearly illustrate his concern with 'architecture' separated from the question of use, and the wider social context.

The building suffers from a combination of weaknesses, characteristic of the period, including failure of the reinforced concrete, and failure of the roof cladding; this latter being the result of false economies in building in the first place, and inadequacy of funds to maintain, subsequently. Instead of the church being a resource to the benefit of the community, it is drawing resources from an already poorly-resourced community, and occupying the thoughts and efforts of the congregation to the exclusion of other things. The building itself lacks quality of materials, execution, and design, leading to inbuilt maintenance problems, and, with its size, is therefore such that the parish cannot maintain it. Exacerbated by the demographic changes in the estate, this is clearly a situation where the building no longer serves the Church, and hinders the parish in its true role.

St. Chad, Limeside, Oldham.

(Ch Army) Capt. C.P. Tyler, St. Chad's Vicarage, Higher Lime Road, Limeside, Oldham OL8 3NG. 061 624 0970.

Work started: late 1963.

Church consecrated: 30th January 1965.

Photographs; see Vol.3, p450.

Population 6000; Seats 180; Electoral Roll 40.

At the Diocesan Committee for Church Building on 13th October 1961 it was reported that the Bishop had agreed to provide funds for a house of 'minimum parsonage house size' at Limeside, and that, following the planning and construction of the new church at St. Hilda, Old Trafford, which was next in line, the new church at Limeside would follow St. Hilda's, although, due to shortage of funds, he took no decision at this time. By March, 1963, Paterson and Macauley, architects, had been appointed architects for St. Chad, Limeside, and their sketch plans had been approved by the DCCB, and the foundation stone had been laid. A contract had been let for the construction of the church, and St. Chad, Limeside, was consecrated on 30th January, 1965.

St. Chad's was built to serve a new housing estate on the edge of Oldham. It is a small building, seating no more than 200, and was built with enormous enthusiasm by the local people, who 'bought' bricks, etc. The worship space is hexagonal, with a pitched, slated, roof, and six steeply pitched gables clad in copper, housing tall triangular windows, lighting the body of the church; in the centre of the roof, and at the junction of the gabled windows, is a tall post, surmounted by a cross; attached is a Lady Chapel, oval in plan, and flat-roofed vestries. The exterior is faced in brick with recessed joints. Internally, the structural frame is in steel, with exposed steel posts, but the remainder, and the soffit of the roof, clad in timber boarding. The sanctuary is at one side of the hexagon, with the altar raised on shallow steps, and forward of the wall. The seating is in the form of chairs aligned in shallow arcs. The fittings are all original, with a black lacquer and silver Communion rail, font, reading desk etc., mahogany frontals and beech chairs.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial inspection was carried out in 1990. In the conclusions, the report comments:

'Vandalism is a problem and consideration should be given to fencing the site and then improving the planting. ... Future assured if concerted action now taken to resolve roof leaks. ... Church is well kept internally and with new incumbent now installed a planned campaign should be initiated on outstanding defects.'

The report discusses the roofs at some length; the flat areas are all felted; some areas have been poorly repaired, the

gutters need attention, including cleaning and removal of rubbish, and protective baskets need installing to the rainwater heads. The main roof has given rise to leaking since its construction; it seems likely that this arises from a poor junction, where the central post rises from the gables. This has been repaired, as a temporary measure, and the leak seems to have stopped. A permanent repair can therefore be carried out.

Present use.

The building is small in scale, but very distinctive in design. It resembles a crown, and is set in an area of greenery, in the middle of the estate, near to the shops. It is a most distinctive feature in the townscape. The main service is Parish Communion, with an average congregation of 20, but the building is small enough to accommodate such small numbers happily. The Lady Chapel is separated from the body of the church by a glazed screen, and can be entered separately from the foyer. The church still performs its function as the church of the locality, particularly for weddings and baptisms. Baptisms are held once a month, and the congregation on that occasion can fill the building. Its distinctive architectural form reflects its function and gives it a 'presence' in the locality. The former, temporary, church of 1952, built to the designs of Herbert Rhodes, and which survives, is a simple hall structure, which is now used as a Club building for the estate, and the rent from which subsidises the Church.

Although St. Chad's does not appear to be held in particular esteem for its architectural qualities, it works extremely well. Its small size gives it a friendly appearance, without over-shadowing the surrounding houses and shops. It has an architectural presence in the townscape, reflecting the work of the church in the locality, and it is well placed at the centre of the estate, with other facilities nearby. It is of a size commensurate with the support it receives, and can cope with the range of numbers attending. In layout, it is eminently appropriate for the Parish Communion, and even when full, no one need feel too far from the altar, and there is feeling of 'togetherness', supported by the seating layout. Given some assistance from central funds, the building is not beyond the capability of the local community to maintain, nor does it look likely that it will become a drain on manpower and finances, to an extent whereby it detracts from the outreach work of the parish. The fittings in general are of a good quality, and add to the prayerful atmosphere. The building has considerable merits, which are, at present, little recognised.

St. Hilda, Old Trafford.

Revd. D.G. Barnett, 255 Kings Road, Firswood, Manchester, M 16
OJD. 061 881 9332.

Population 5500; Seats 350; Electoral Roll 134.
Building work commenced: January 1964.
Church consecrated: 20th March 1965.
Photographs; see Vol.3, p451.

History.

The previous church, which stood at the corner of Humphrey Road and Northumberland Road, in what is now the parish of St. John Old Trafford, was damaged by enemy action in 1940. The church school was destroyed, and the church suffered blast damage. The opportunity was therefore taken to re-organize the parish boundaries, giving St. John's a larger area, and creating a new St. Hilda's in a growing residential area to the south.

At a meeting of the joint building committee for St. Hilda, Old Trafford, on 2nd March 1962, it was noted that the Bishop had made it known to the DCCB, on 13 October 1961, that St. Hilda was to be the next project financed by the New Churches Appeal; the JBC was set up on 1 December 1961. The war damage claim was expected to be in the region of £7,000. The site of the former church had been sold for £1,900, and the cost of the new site was £750. The sale and purchase were handled by the Church Commissioners, who used one sum to offset the other, and the balance was being retained, and invested by the Commissioners. The available balance was now £1,200. The New Churches Appeal would provide funds at £110 per sitting, including the choir, less the balance held as a result of sale and purchase, and the war damage claim, and the church council was to repay 25% of the provision from the appeal over a 20 year period. The church council expressed a wish for a 400 seat church, including choir, and this was accepted by the committee. Work started on the building of the new church in January 1964, and the church was consecrated on 20th March, 1965.

The church is aligned NNW/SSE, with the altar at the NNW. I use 'east', 'north' etc. according to the liturgical layout, not the geographical direction.

The building is constructed of loadbearing brick walls, and the main roof is of clay tiles on bolted timber trusses with laminated pillars and beams. The roofs of the vestries, etc., are of copper on 2" red cedar boarding. The building has cast iron eaves gutters and downspouts.

The church is built to a traditional layout, with a broad chancel, flanked by a Lady Chapel and Baptistry. The flooring is of wood blocks in the nave, and Westmoreland slate in the Chancel. The windows are of artificial stone, with vertical mullions and leaded lights, glazed with rough cast glass. The internal doors, generally, are of hardwood,

glazed and varnished. The nave ceiling is of woodwool slabs beneath the timber trusses, exposed and painted. There is a gallery at the west end, accommodating the choir and organ. The pulpit and lectern are of brick. The seating is in the form of pews, in hardwood. The seating for the clergy is in the same timber. The altar is of Westmoreland Green slate, in a simple modern design, and the font is in the same stone, with a hardwood cover.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial inspection was carried out in August 1990. The most common recurring phrase in the report is: 'In good condition', and the only general comment, made in respect of Maintenance is: 'Good'.

The report lists a number of items of work to be carried out, as follows:

'Items of utmost urgency. Miscellaneous repairs to brickwork, the pointing up of shrinkage cracks, and the fixing of a glass tell tale; Hardwood beads to east door; External re-decoration to low level windows; Extend rainwater pipes to gulley; Clean out all gullies and provide new grating; Fix new door-closer to Heating Chamber door, check fire rating of door and upgrade as necessary; Seal rainwater pipe into gulley in Boiler House; Close up the gap under the Heating Chamber external doors; Improvements to electrical installation.'

'Items which should be completed within the next 18 months. Re-build part of boundary wall, re-bed copings and point up other small areas; Treat tarmac surfacing of car park to obviate weed growth; Re-lay uneven flags; Complete the remainder of the external re-decoration; Repair sheet vinyl floor in gallery.'

The costs of these two groups of works are estimated at £1100, and £2450, respectively.

No items were noted as necessary during the remainder of the quinquennium, or were any items of work noted as desirable, but which could be postponed to a future quinquennium. The only other recommendation was that the thickness of insulation to the main roof void should be increased.

Present use.

The design of the building, and the choice of architect, lay to a large degree with the incumbent at the time. The building is architecturally uninspiring, and, like St. Martin's and St. Francis, is traditional in plan form and layout, although dressed in architectural clichés of the period. It has a massive tower at the west end, which gives a presence to the building in the townscape; the materials are good - timber for the seating, and Westmoreland slate for the altar - although the design of the furnishings is

uninspired. The zigzag lower roofs to the ancillary accommodation, the artificial stone window surrounds, and the use of timber cladding, in a geometrical pattern, on the east wall, are all typical of the period.

The 'feel' of the building strongly suggests that it was designed to replace what the Germans destroyed. The incumbent had been curate at St. John's, Old Trafford, which dates from the first decade of this century, and to a surprising degree the new church has the inflexibility of St. John's.

The general plan form of the church is a hall building, with a pitched roof, either slope of which covers half the nave and its aisle in a single slope. The aisles are defined by arcades, formed of timber columns and thin arches - sitting immediately beneath the roof, so that the aisles are almost the same height as the nave and, in effect, part of the same space. The sanctuary is shallow, and the same width as the nave; it is enclosed by brick walls, and lit by a tall window on the (liturgical) south, and the ambones, in brick, return the inflexible flank walls.

The main altar is fixed against the (liturgical) east wall and is immovable; it is constructed of concrete and faced with Westmoreland stone, with steps of Westmoreland stone, and with a fixed altar rail. It is raised above the nave floor on three steps; two at the entrance to the sanctuary, and a further step half way back. A temporary altar has been set up forward of the main altar, and forward of the altar rails, close to the edge of the second step of the dais. This arrangement is a solution which really does not work. The altar is too enclosed, and the structures are too well built to move. One has to ask whether in fact this is a situation where Eastward-facing celebration would not be preferable, and would follow the grain of the building.

The seating is in the form of fixed pews, in parallel ranks across the nave and aisles. The font is fixed in a recess, to the right of the sanctuary, and masked by the brick wall of the sanctuary. It is impossible to use it successfully for a Baptism in the Eucharist.

There is no separate side/weekday chapel, and nowhere quiet and enclosed for Offices or a weekday Holy Communion, although the altar from the temporary building, which served as the church after the old church was damaged in the war, has been placed at the (liturgical) east end of the north aisle to form a quasi-chapel. This altar is placed in a confined space, but for the congregation, sitting, in effect, at the side of the nave, there is no sense of enclosure; the altar faces onto a block of pews in the aisle, which are merely the end of ranks of pews running across the width of the church. The altar itself has the appearance of a sideboard, in the Gothic style, and is ill at ease in the building.

There are two small rooms which can be combined, but they are not large enough for parish gatherings. There is the

associated school, about a mile away, but the distance, and the need to fit in with the school schedule, make it an inconvenient place to meet. The church itself is singularly inflexible, at least without the expenditure of a considerable sum of money on major alterations; it would be possible to adapt it for dual-purpose use, except that it would be virtually impossible to screen off the sanctuary satisfactorily. The lack of a flexible, multi-use space, such as the hall at the neighbouring St. John's, seriously inhibits the role of engagement by the parish.

I asked the incumbent whether he shared my feeling that much of the work of a parish was a) maintaining the cult, and b) running a social club for those who like to go to church. 'It's like that here' he said. What has the congregation, as the Body of Christ in the locality, done for the locality in the last thirty years - nothing!

As the Quinquennial Inspection report shows, the parish are clearly "on top" of the care and maintenance of the church, and appear to cherish it; while the building appears to provide what at least some of the congregation want, one has to ask to what extent the congregation carries out its function as the Body of Christ in the locality, and to what extent the building helps, or hinders, in that task. The building works, but does it work because of the innate conservatism of the congregation, and lack of vision.

William Temple Memorial Church, Simonsway, Wythenshawe.

Revd. H.B. Eales, William Temple Vicarage, Robinswood Road, Woodhouse Park Manchester M22 6BU. 061 437 3194.

Population 13,5000; Seats 550; Electoral Roll 1110.

Date: 1964/5.

Architect: G.G. Pace. Photographs; see Vol.3, p451.

History.

The moving force behind the choice of architect for William Temple Church was the then curate-in-charge, the Revd. W.B. Wilkinson. The minutes of the DCCB for 1958, 10th October, record that the Revd. W.B. Wilkinson, had asked that a building committee be set up to make arrangements for the building of a permanent church. However, negotiations for a better site were proceeding with Manchester Corporation, and the church was, in any case, low down on the priority list. The Minutes note:

'It was decided to inform Mr Wilkinson that the committee felt that the time for setting up a building committee had not yet arrived. But he could be assured that the committee would assist him at the earliest practicable moment. The secretary should make it clear to Mr Wilkinson that appointment of architect would rest with the building committee when appointed.'

According to the minutes of the DCCB, by late 1959/early 1960 (certainly by 8th April 1960) it was decided to erect a church at Woodhouse Park, dedicated to William Temple, to seat 500, at a cost of £60,000, of which the New Churches Appeal would provide £50,000, the church council £5,000, and £5,000 - it was hoped - from extra-diocesan sources. In the meantime, the New Churches Appeal had agreed to underwrite the costs. George Pace was appointed architect, and Leach Rhodes and Walker, who had been commissioned to build the new parsonage house, were invited to withdraw - which they did.

At a meeting of the joint building committee for William Temple Church, Woodhouse Park, held on 10th March 1962, it was reported that George Pace had accepted the commission to design the new church, and had taken over the commission for the new house from Leach, Rhodes and Walker. Funding would be provided by £55,000 from the New Churches Appeal; on the usual basis of £110 per sitting, and £5,000 provided by the church council, in addition to the 25% it would repay on the money from the New Churches Appeal. The committee approved Pace's preliminary sketch plans, and it was hoped to submit sketch plans to the DAC and the DCCB in April.

Description of the building.

The church is square in plan, with two projecting porches on the side facing the access road; two, opposing, walls are low

- although of unequal height, the other two walls form large gable walls. At first sight they read like two aisle - north and south - walls, and east and west gable walls - but the building does not work like that. The walls are built with an RC frame, with the resulting panels filled with engineering brick, in a mixture of dark red and dark blue brick, and the roof consists of two slopes, clad in copper. The RC frame is only partially expressed externally, where it forms transoms to the fenestration of the gable walls. The large, plain, slopes are relieved by copper clad dormers and a bell tower, in brick, which forms the walls of the week-day chapel within the building, and rises above the copper roof. Internally, the roof is supported on a simple structure of steel girders.

The church is aligned, internally, on the diagonal; the altar is placed at one end of the diagonal, on a dais of three shallow steps, hexagonal on plan. The dais provides a very spacious, and generally uncluttered area, for the celebration of the Mysteries. The flooring around the altar is of stone, the two lower areas are floored in parquet, with stone steps. The altar itself is of timber, in a variant of the 'carpenter's bench' pattern. Behind it the seats for the ministers are also of timber, designed in the form of a large curved settle, masking the junction of the two walls behind. The seating is in the form of reclaimed pews, but placed in blocks aligned on the altar, at 90 degrees to each other. The font is placed in the centre of the building, with its location defined by a triangular structure in steel girders, and stands within a sunken hexagon, echoing, on a much smaller scale, the setting of the altar. At the other end of the diagonal is the week-day chapel, placed within the lower structure of the bell tower. The main altar is visible, across the font, from the altar of the chapel. The fittings and furniture are all as designed with the original church, in limed oak with pine pews which have been bleached and brought from another church.

Along one side of the church, offices and a small meeting room are housed.

The building is light and spacious, and exploits the freedom offered by the simple form of the building to provide an innovative and logical layout, tailored to the pattern of worship and use of the time.

Critical acclaim.

Pevsner, (Buildings of England, Lancashire, 1969, Vol.1, P343) says of this building:

'All praise to the clients who were willing to accept so daring a design. Much praise to the architect who had the daring to submit so uncompromising 1960s a design. And apologies from the author of this volume who cannot appreciate for worship so aggressive a building, as he cannot appreciate much recent abstract sculpture. This

must be said in advance. And now purely a description. The building is oblong, nearly square, but the internal axis runs across diagonally. The pitched roof has one long and one short pitch and moreover two funnel-shapes of La Tourette derivation. Also, in the E wall there is a narrow projection with a very steeply pitched extra roof. Two of the side walls have arbitrary slits with arbitrary concrete lintels, short or long, here or there. The entrance is in the wall opposite the projection, i.e. not on the road. Inside it seems all crowded girders and beams of standard rolled-steel section. That makes the high font canopy the centre of the attack. It is not really a canopy but three steel supports for the roof. Towards one corner from here is the altar, with pulpit and lectern l. and r. and a semicircular bench behind. Towards the opposite corner a service core of rude concrete and the organ. The materials are brick and concrete, and inside much wall facing with insulating blocks.'

Present condition.

The roof of the church has given considerable trouble. A letter from the architect to the Board of Finance, dated 24 July 1991, describes the last major work carried out. The writer says:

'The roof repairs were carried out in 1985 at a cost of about £18,000, this covered [the cost of] coating the whole copper roof with a similar coloured plastic paint (approximately £14,000), pointing, flashings and repair to the tower. This was against the cost of Copper £60,000, Metal Decking £40,000 and Felt £35,000. The Diocese gave a grant of £10,000 and the plastic coating was guaranteed for 10 years. After completion odd drips developed and the contractor, Martin of Bury, came back, the leaks persisted spasmodically or reappeared in a different place after treatment and Martin's have been coming back since without question, but perhaps slower in responding.'

This work of coating with a plastic paint is, inevitably, only a short-term solution. Given the lack of wealth within the congregation, it is difficult to be optimistic about what happens when the plastic coating fails.

The last Quinquennial Inspection took place in January 1991. The report concludes with the following comments:

'The church is a fine example of 1960s resurgence in modern church design by George G. Pace, and despite the unfortunate problem with the roof, a well designed and well kept place of worship.'

'General comment on the future of the fabric. Assuming the roof problems have been cured and the normal maintenance is continued the future of the fabric seems assured.'

Comments on maintenance. The church is well looked after and maintained regularly and to a good standard, despite the normal problems of lack of funds. The long standing roof problem has obviously been a worry, although the contractor comes back and carries out repairs when required without charge under the guarantee. There are still one or two areas which leak on occasions.'

The report continues with detailed comments as follows:

'Walls. External walls are brickwork with concrete trimming to window heads, copings and cills. ... Brickwork generally is sound, large areas require pointing, all mortar is soft mortar with recessed joint, which has eroded in some places up to 1/2"-3/4". ...'

'Door and window openings. Windows are metal, with leaded lights where opening and leaded lights fixed into jambs elsewhere. Doors are oak, left natural. The normal window detail is a vertical precast concrete strip with slate d.p.c. bridging the cavity and the leaded light set directly into the concrete, with a small stone cill and two course stone weathered cill. This detail has obviously given trouble in the past and many of the openings have been re-pointed and many of the stone cill pieces are corroding. The detail is not ideal and all windows should be checked and re-pointed where necessary and if necessary mastic introduced to prevent water entering at this point. ... Low level slit windows on the main road elevation are continually being vandalised.

Walls (internal). Walls are all exposed brickwork in a stock red brick with vertical piers and horizontal in situ concrete bands, corresponding to the cills external. ... The horizontal beams, of which there are three or four, are cast in situ and the expansion of different materials has caused cracking of the brickwork and concrete.

The report notes that the fittings and furniture are in "excellent order", but also notes that a number of items of domestic furniture have been brought in, and suggests that these should be replaced with simple modern pine or oak pieces.

Present use.

As is common with other, similar, areas in Manchester, the population is ageing, and is lower in numbers than when the church was built. The birthrate in Manchester fell in the decade 1964-1974, almost entirely because of the Pill. In addition, the parish suffers from the Transit Camp effect, whereby newcomers tend to stay for a short period only, and those with get-up-and-go have got-up-and-gone. The result is that young church members are not coming on stream, and many of the congregation are OAPs, many of whom live on the state pension, and jobs in the area are scarce.

When the church was built it was planned to have a hall adjacent; this was not built, but the original dual-purpose building, in Cornish Way about a mile away, still survives, and is in use as the hall. The hall is used regularly for Bingo and for a Good-as-new shop and tea/coffee bar, which serves social as well as economic purposes, and there is a Mums and Toddlers Drop-in at the church.

The building shows - typical of Pace's work - a very imaginative use of good, but not expensive - materials. The pews are reclaimed from an older church, and are of pitched pine, which was subsequently stripped, and they fit in well with the stripped oak which Pace used for doors etc.

The moving force behind this revolutionary approach was the curate-in-charge. When Pace was asked to design the church, he said; 'you will have to be patient while I think and pray'. A great deal of discussion took place between the PCC and Pace, and the PCC visited other churches by Pace. A great deal of thought went into the planning of the church, and the alignment of the chapel/font/main altar is brilliant.

Even when it was opened, the church was only filled for very special events. It is still far too large, the roof leaks, and the building is very difficult to adapt, but it works well for worship, and the parish - having got accustomed to the building - are extremely proud of it. It would be possible - physically - to sub-divide the church, but that would destroy the concept. The building demonstrates that quality and care in design, construction, and the use of materials do make a difference, but there is still considerable tension between the obvious quality of the building, and its effectiveness for worship, and the problems of excessive size and the leaky roof.

William Temple church is held in a very high regard generally for its architectural qualities. This applies not only to those engaged professionally in architecture, but but also to those who worship there. This is tempered by two elements. The first is the difficulty of maintaining the roof. The work carried out in 1985 swallowed up the parish's cash reserve to carry out repair, which is in any case temporary. The roof structure itself is sufficiently strong to carry only a lightweight cladding, and it seems unlikely that even a recladding in metal - estimated at £60,000 in 1985, and completely beyond the resources of the parish - would provide a long term solution. Any re-cladding in a more substantial material would require a total rebuilding of the roof structure, to carry a much more substantial load. The second reservation is that the building is now far too large for its congregation. It can seat some 500 people, but the average congregation is now between 80 and 100. The design of the building is such that any remodelling or conversion would be difficult, and would rob the building of much of its character. As to serving the community, it does appear that maintaining the present building, both in the narrow, technical, sense, and as an architectural statement of the presence of the Church in Woodhouse Park, absorbs a great deal

of time and energy which could be better expended in other things. For the present, the parish manage to keep the building going, but one has to question whether such devotion to a building is the right way forward for the Body of Christ in that locality.

St. John's, Irlam Road, Flixton.

Revd. John A. Dey, St. John's Vicarage, Irlam Road, Flixton, Manchester M31 3WA. Tel: 061 748 6754.

Population 7134 - Dio. Handbk (11,000 Parish history note); Seats 350; Electoral roll 341.

Date: Consecrated 30 March 1968.

Photographs, and a copy of the Historical Note, are included in Vol.3, pp452/4.

History.

An historical note, in typescript, prepared by H. Sheard, the verger and lay assistant, dated 18 Jan. 1988, and entitled St. John's Church, Flixton - Fulfilment of a Vision', describes how, in the 1920s, 'The then Rector of Flixton had, along with his PCC, a vision that this area would one day be developed'. In 1929 land was purchased and building of a mission church to the parish church, St. Michael's, begun, in anticipation of the development of the area. After a hiatus, caused by the war, the parish started to develop again in the late 50s and early 60s. In 1964, because of the rapid growth of the area, St. John's became a Conventional District, and the curate of St. Michael's, Revd. F.R. Cooke, was appointed Priest in Charge, and later Vicar.

Already a building study group had been formed, with the object, as the historical note describes;

'of completing the fulfilment of the vision by the building of a new church'.

The note continues:

'It seemed at first there could be no help expected from the church authorities and that the whole cost of building the church would have to be met by the people, but undaunted they pressed on, though later the diocese, who had followed the efforts made with sympathetic interest, stepped in with help, physically and financially. And so a brief was given to the third year architectural students of Manchester University, under the guidance of Dr. Wood-Jones, their Senior Lecturer and Diocesan Architect, to design the new church, which must cost under £20,000, a revolutionary idea. But on 26th March 1965 the plans were submitted to the PCC, plans that revealed a design that met every point of the brief in that it was contained within the very strict limits of economy, and was aesthetically pleasing.'

'It was also contained within the brief that the church should be clearly visible from the crossroads, and should be the dominant feature on the site. To achieve this, although it has an East-West orientation, it departs from tradition in that the altar is at the West end. It was also stipulated that it was to be the same width as length, so that the congregation can feel a sense of being gathered round the altar.'

St. John's is a lovely blend of the old and new, for the furnishings, the pews, the choir stalls and the pulpit are from the cathedral, and the Georgian Period font was a gift from St. George's Church, Bolton, and later we were given some lovely old stained glass windows, which have greatly enhanced the beauty of the church'.

The church was designed for the Parish Communion, and the brief required that the congregation should be able to gather around the altar, although a circular plan, or a central altar - like Liverpool Metropolitan cathedral, was rejected as looking too like a boxing ring. This, together with the low budget, resulted in the present square plan; this proved to be the cheapest method of covering the space - it seats 350, and it worked liturgically, with the altar set forward of one angle.

Although St. John's came so low on the list of priorities of churches to be funded by the Bishop's New Churches Appeal that the fund was exhausted long before St. John's came to the top, the diocese did agree to meet much of the cost, on the basis that the church could be a pilot study for the building of low-cost churches.

Description of the church.

The building is square on plan, with a low pyramidal roof, and with a porch/entrance area added to one side. There is a glazed corridor link to the former mission church, now the church hall. The structure of the building is a steel frame; the lower part is clad in brickwork, with patent glazing above, and glazing to the ground level at the nearest corner to the road, through which the font can be seen. Some panels of old stained glass have been re-used in the upper glazing. The altar is set at one corner of the building, with seating, in the form of pews, in parallel rows. The font is a fine eighteenth century example, restrained in design and elegant in proportions, and sits happily in one corner. It is set in a paved area, two steps down - as if walking down into the river - at the liturgical south side; it is easier for the congregation to participate in baptism, or for it to be incorporated into the main service, than if it were at the west end.

The original interior appeared far less cluttered than it does now. The pews were angled in two blocks, at right angles, giving a strong sense of 'gathering around the altar', although the pulpit and choir pews, which came from the cathedral - Dr. Wood-Jones was also architect to the cathedral - are part of the original fitting-out. Since then, the pews have been realigned into parallel ranks, facing east, the eagle lectern has been added, and the stained glass windows installed.

The original concept of the church was one of simplicity, even austerity, with flexibility to meet contemporary liturgical requirements. The interior now is cluttered, and does not

take advantage of the flexibility offered by the form of the building. The sanctuary area is small, and the re-used pews in straight ranks, the large, traditional - Gothic - pulpit to one side, and the large - albeit fine quality - choir stalls to the other, recreate the pattern of a late nineteenth century interior in a - potentially - liturgical movement church.

Present use.

The population of the parish comprises residents from both private and local authority housing; there is a strong evangelical tradition and a lively congregation for whom the church, in its present form, seems to work very well. There is a strong sense of fellowship, and the parish was among the earliest to start house groups, some thirty years ago. This is an extraordinary example of the way in which the use of the building is determined by the wishes of a determined congregation; the building is essentially a tool; how it is used depends on the capabilities and wishes of the congregation. It is undoubtedly successful; it is unfortunate, perhaps, that a building which was both economical to build and flexible in its layout, should be used so conservatively; but it does serve its congregation.

St. Stephen's, Astley, near Atherton.

Revd. C.A. Bracegirdle, 7 Holbeck, Astley, Tyldesley, Manchester, M29 7DU. 0942 883313.

Population 7200; Seats 400; Electoral Roll 285.

Date: Consecrated 26 October, 1968.

Photographs, and extracts from 'Bells and Pomegranates'; see Vol.3, p455ff.

The present building was erected to replace the previous church, which was destroyed by fire in June 1961. The history of the parish and its church has been recorded in a book, 'Bells and pomegranates', by the Revd William King, who was incumbent from 1947 to 1973.

The old church, dating from the eighteenth century, was damaged very severely as a result of arson, in June 1961. The original plan was to reconstruct the church, within the existing - surviving - walls. This came to naught when it proved impossible to save the surviving walls. The parish then turned its attention, with a great deal of thoroughness, to the question of how to design a new church for a new age, in an area the character of which was changing out of all recognition. I include extracts from 'Bells and Pomegranates' in Vol.3, pp455/7.

Description of the church.

The church is square in plan, with curved corners, with the altar set just forward of the east wall. The entrance is through a circular porch, rising to a tower, projecting from the west wall, with the font in the south west corner. The building is of brick, with a concrete roof structure. It is lit by tall windows in the walls, and by a large clerestorey window, which lights the sanctuary area. The seating is in the form of fixed hardwood pews. All the furnishings, including the altar and the pews, are portable, and the only fixtures are the communion rails and font. This latter may now be removed.

The church is built in a fine stock brick, and the internal walls are left in exposed brickwork, except for the east wall, with short returns. This is plastered and painted; it has recently been re-painted, and the result gives a light and clean appearance. The altar is designed in a variant of the 'carpenter's bench' pattern, with the frame formed of RSJs, and timber top and sides. The font consists of a stone bowl, supported on three supports, again formed from lengths of RSJ. There is a balcony at the west end, to house the organ console and choir; this is not found to be completely satisfactory, and may well be changed. The church has been enhanced with modern stained glass.

Present condition.

A letter to the Archdeacon of Bolton, dated 29th January says of St. Stephen's:

'The architect does not detail any areas of urgency, but asks for work to flashing, pointing and gulley tops to be undertaken within the next 18 months. During the quinquennium he suggests attention or replacement to the felt roof to the vestry. His total estimate of the works is in the region of £5,000, with the comment that the general condition of the fabric remains good.'

The report of the Quinquennial Inspection of 1984 notes, as a general comment, that:

'The site is attractive and the design both externally and internally is considered a good example of a recently built parish church. The stained glass windows by Hans Unger is an excellent example of the work of this artist.'

The Quinquennial Inspection report of 1989 notes:

'The leaded light window to the north side of the church is a notable recent addition.'

This report concludes by making no general comment on the future of the fabric, and remarks on maintenance that:

'The general condition of the fabric remains good.'

The report makes more detailed comments as follows:

'Walls. The brickwork and jointing is generally sound ... small areas of pointing and cleaning-off of moss etc. are required on all elevations of the inner leaf [of the parapet walls]. Doors and window openings. ... generally in good order ... Roof coverings. There has been repair work to the roof over the main nave. The asphalt roof [covered in chippings] is in good condition. ... The felt to the vestry roof is in reasonable condition ... may need replacing or upgrading during the quinquennium.'

The interior is described as generally in good order.

The report summarizes necessary work as follows:

- 1) Items of utmost urgency. None.
- 2) Items which should be completed within the next 18 months.
 - a) Work to flashings and roof coverings.
 - b) Pointing to parapets etc.
 - c) Gulley tops.
- 3) Repairs which should be carried out during the quinquennium. Attention/replacement of felt to vestry roof.

Present use.

The old parish had been riven, on more than one occasion, by controversies which had ended in the courts. In the 1960s the parish, and its church, underwent drastic changes. The old industry - coal mining - ceased, the village took on a new lease of life, with large numbers of newcomers moving to live in the parish, and the old church was burnt down. There was, in a very real sense, an occasion of death and re-birth. The incumbent at the time was a visionary, who saw he need to relocate the church to the new centre of population. The church now is extremely lively and well-attended, with a forward-looking PCC. The congregation includes a large proportion of young(ish) middle class families, with children, and, for the Manchester diocese, a high proportion of members in full time employment.

The building serves its purpose well; the spacious and uncluttered sanctuary gives space for the celebration of the Mysteries with dignity, and there is scope for flexibility since most furnishings are movable.

The present incumbent has proposed moving the font into the sanctuary area. This was discussed at the PCC meeting, and after five minutes or so discussion the reaction was - well, get on with it, and almost a suggestion, why did you bother to ask? The loss of the old building has enabled a new start to be made, and, by all appearances, a very fruitful one.

St. Stephen's, Astley, is held in some regard for its architectural qualities; the parish is clearly in control of the tasks of general maintenance, and the building appears to work well for its congregation.

Church of the Ascension, Hulme.

Revd. J.A.R. Methuen, The Ascension Rectory, Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5FQ. 061 226 5568.

Population 10,000; Seats 300; Electoral Roll 88.
Date: Consecrated: Ascension Day - 1970.
Photographs; see Vol.3, p460.

The church is described in the last Quinquennial report (June 1993) thus:

'The church is a fine modern building designed by Maguire and Murray as a complex of Church, Church Hall and Rectory, to fit into a high density urban environment. It has survived well architecturally and appears to be providing strong social as well as spiritual aid to the local community.'

The church was built at the time of the rebuilding of Hulme. This major and wholesale redevelopment made the old pattern of parish boundaries meaningless and the opportunity was taken to form new parishes, generally with new churches. Some churches were made redundant, but still survive, such as St. George's and St. Mary's, but many were demolished. The reorganisation of parishes, and building of the new church, was carried out in close co-operation with the City Council, continuing a tradition which went back at least into the pre-war period. A compensation scheme, involving the exchange of land, was worked out by Canon Fred Hoyle, who in his last appointment was Archdeacon of Bolton.

The Ascension replaces a number (up to 8) of older, nineteenth century, parishes and churches, and it represents a different approach to the planting of new churches.

The initiative for this innovative design came from the incumbent and from Canon Hetley Price. The PCC had a significant input, with frequent meetings with the architects, and they went to see the same architects' new church at Crewe.

Description of the building.

The church is built of concrete block, and the roof structure is of sawn roof boards, painted, resting on timber purlins which rest on three layers of concrete beams, set square on plan, each rotating through 45deg. The roof is clad in aluminium or zinc narrow strip sheets with standing seams, to a shallow pitch. The roof over the Worship area is formed of three boxes, each square on plane and successively rotated through 45 degrees. The design is said to be based on an Armenian Bath House which the architects had seen on their travels, and is designed to be looked down on from the flats around. From street level the building is severe, even undistinguished. The housing around is now being redeveloped, yet again, and one wonders whether the church

will remain surrounded by higher buildings, or whether the view from above will now be lost!

The church itself is square on plan, with the altar set towards one wall, and aligned with the wall. The seating, in the form of movable, dark stained, pews is aligned in two blocks; one faces the front of the altar, the other faces the side. The is formed as a low dais, one step above floor level, and there are three sections of altar rail, formed out of tubular steel and painted. The sanctuary is spacious and, apart from the altar, the disposition of elements is variable.

The fittings and furniture were designed with the church, in dark stained timber, and a Triptych was brought from the nearby St. Mary's. The Quinquennial report notes that 'there are some items of domestic or Victorian furniture which are not in character and detract from the modern design'.

Present condition.

The last Quinquennial inspection was carried out in June 1993. The report concludes:

'Comments on the future of the fabric. The future of the church, structurally, is assured if normal maintenance is carried out.'

'Comments on maintenance. The buildings are kept clean and tidy despite their obvious heavy usage and the fact that the buildings were not skimped on cost pays off and shows. Maintenance is obviously restricted by funds, but proceeds when possible. The items in E1 should be done as soon as possible, the problem of the window cills was mentioned in the last Quinquennial and will gradually worsen, it is no problem to devise a simple solution.'

In the detailed assessment of the condition the report notes some damp patches on the walls, where cills are missing, and some minor roof leaks, although this is generally sound. The gutters and pipes are in aluminium, and the galvanized steel bolts are beginning to rust and affect the aluminium. The window cills are formed to an unusual detail; i.e. instead of a timber cill with a soffit drip extending beyond the face of the wall, the timber cill finishes flush with the wall, with aluminium strip approximately 1"x1/8th set into it to form the drip. In some places this strip has come out and water is running down the wall, causing staining, and eventual dampness. There is some staining visible on the timber ceiling boards, and a smell of damp in the Worship area, but no obvious leaks.

The report notes:

'A security system is installed. The majority of the ground floor windows are plastic or wired glass. With the Rectory incorporated into the overall Church and Hall

building and Admin. staff in the offices there are people on site most of the time.'

The report also notes that the church is not listed.

Necessary works are noted thus:

'Items of utmost urgency (E1). Attend to roof leaks and check after heavy rain for possible leaks where roof boarding stained. Clean out gutters, refix rainwater pipe head baskets. Open up squashed RWP. Repair, or preferably improve, detail to window cills. Check dampness to Worship room heater duct. Fix loose tiles in entrance hall. Replace Fire Extinguishers.'

The report recommends that external decorating be carried out within the next 118 months, and internal decorating within the quinquennial.

Present use.

The parish is extremely lively, and the building itself works well for worship. The present congregation consists largely of West Indians, who came from an island with a tradition of Anglo-Catholic worship and practice. The present incumbent provides this, and there is the mixture of Catholic worship and engagement with the local community which characterised the Anglo-Catholic parishes of the East End of London in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The building is spacious, and works well for both large and small congregations. It is warm, dry and easy to clean and maintain. There have been some modifications since the church was opened; the gallery has been converted to provide a vestry, sacristy and meeting room and the altar - which is a plain concrete structure, and which had a cross on the wall behind, is now vested, and a reredos, in the form of a Triptych from St. Mary's, Hulme, has been placed behind it. The cross has been re-located, and the imagery of the imported Triptych provides a rich source of instruction! The liturgy was originally very plain, but this has now been elaborated and enriched in accordance with the Catholic tradition.

The church hall provides a flexible, and well-used, space for a variety of social activities, including crèche/playgroup, and the church office, and the building is kept open and accessible for most of the time. The building itself is extremely well-built, and stands up to use well.

Conclusion.

The Church of the Ascension was planned on a different basis from the parishes in the new housing areas, built in the previous decade. It is built in an inner-city area which was the subject of a comprehensive re-development and which, in its earlier guise, had been served by a number of parishes and parish churches, whose buildings were, it was now recognised,

far too large for the congregations they attracted, and far too expensive to maintain and repair for their supporters. The new church was designed as the centre of a group of buildings, designed to serve the neighbourhood with a range of facilities to serve social as well as spiritual needs. The comment about the quality of the building in general, and the refusal to skimp, seems to show that lessons had been learnt, although the most serious failure seems to have arisen from a quirk of detailing in the window cills.

It is arguable that the building works better as a parish church since it relates to a more coherent area than did its numerous predecessors.

St. Cuthbert's, Miles PLatting.

Canon A. Durrans, The Rectory, Church of the Apostles, Ridgway Street, Manchester M10 7FY. 061 205 1742.

Population 6000; Seats; Electoral Roll 74.

Dedicated: 1976.

This church is outside the strict date limits of this study, but its story does bear upon the problems of running a church in the inner-city.

Description of the church etc.

The complex consists of a church, hall and vicarage. The church itself is a segmental fan-shaped structure, with the altar just forward of the point formed by the intersection of the two straight walls. It sits in a quasi-apse and is lit by a high-level window to the west, throwing light onto the altar. The main structure is of reinforced concrete with brick walls - the concrete is exposed only on the interior - and the internal walls are exposed brickwork, except for the apse which is plastered and painted white. The floor is of polished woodblock, and the altar is raised by three steps above the main floor level. The altar is a stone table, with a plain panel of exposed brickwork behind, with a cross inset. The seating is in the form of chairs, angled around the altar in an arc of about 120 degrees.

Recent history.

An appeal was launched in 1992 for work to St. Cuthbert's. The Appeal document says:

'Although St. Cuthbert's was dedicated as recently as 1976, it has undergone so much vandalism that we are reluctantly having to launch an appeal to put the building right.'

'Our church is a coming together of five previous congregations, and, when opened, was thought to be a splendid piece of plant, containing both worshipping and social areas to see the Anglican community in Miles Platting well into the next century. Miles Platting had seen a period of housing renewal and the renewal of church building went hand-in-hand with it. Now many of the new dwellings have been refurbished because they had become unsatisfactory and the same process has to take place at St. Cuthbert's.'

'Our parish consists mainly of rented properties and has seen industrial decline. It is part of the Ardwick Deanery, which is the only totally Urban Priority Area deanery in this country outside London..'

'We need to put our buildings right for WORSHIPPING GOD. Our church itself is a good example of a modern place of worship, though it looks a bit of a mess at the moment. I

admire the loyalty to Our Lord of our congregation, who must have been very hurt by the onslaught on the House of God. We need to restore God's House to its former glory. SERVING THE COMMUNITY. Our hall can meet many local needs once it has been put right. At the moment it is used by our Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade but its use will be extended to meet the needs of young families and older people in particular. IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT. Our grounds are in a poor state and need to be transformed. Once the perimeter fence has gone up we shall landscape the area around the church.'

The Appeal had three phases.

Phase 1 was for fencing, landscaping, external painting, repair of external vandalism, and vandal prevention measures, which were estimated at a total of £29,000.

Phase 2 was for toilets for the disabled, a hearing loop system, kitchen furniture, internal decoration, hymn books and service books. This was estimated at a cost of £6,000.

It was intended that this should be raised over four years.

Phase 3 was adapting redundant space to create a new meeting room, and was estimated at £10,000.

The Appeal document noted that a grant of £10,000 was given from the Diocese; a message from the East Manchester Churches says:

"We are pleased that St. Cuthbert's is having this appeal to restore the buildings and their surroundings, for we know that the people there have had a very difficult time recently.. The churches in this part of Manchester do a great deal of work together. We are sure that our cooperation will be strengthened by the members of St. Cuthbert's being able to worship, witness and serve with renewed confidence."

A letter from the incumbent to the Board of Finance, dated 7th February 1992, says:

'As you know our Appeal was launched a fortnight ago and we were overwhelmed by the support we received. The church was packed and it was good for morale to know that others were with us, Over £1500 was given to the Appeal Fund at the service and we thank God for the generosity of so many people. The work on the perimeter fence started the very next day and is another visible sign that things are moving forward. A positive and encouraging start always helps new ventures but we know there is a long way to go.'

Present condition.

The Quinquennial Inspection carried out in April 1986 describes the building thus:

'St. Cuthbert's was erected to replace three other churches in the area and comprises the Church, Parish Hall and Rectory, designed and built as a single complex. The Church is so designed as to concentrate natural lighting onto the Sanctuary from the clerestorey windows. Five semi-circular stained glass windows from the apse of St. John the Baptist Church, which originally stood on the site, have been incorporated into the baptistry and side chapel. The organ was rebuilt by George Sixsmith from components taken from the organs of the three original churches.'

The report concludes:

'Future of the fabric and maintenance. It is essential that maintenance items should be attended to fairly speedily after they have become apparent. Delay often extends and aggravates the condition and causes additional expenditure. Vandalism has increased considerably.'

The report makes the following detailed comments:

'Walls. The walls are constructed in cavity brickwork with rustic facing brick outer leaf. Brickwork is generally in good condition but there is a crack at high level on the south east corner of the side chapel.'

'Doors and window openings. All appeared to be in good condition except the clerestorey windows. These had been re-pointed in mastic ... but [this] has proved to be ineffective.'

'Tower or spire. The flèche ... appeared to be in good condition.'

'Roof coverings. The roof weathering is a copper faced, glass fibre reinforced, bituminous composite system. The longitudinal edges are beginning to deteriorate slightly in places and should be dealt with as soon as possible.'

Gutters, downspouts and flashings. The low level p.v.c. gutter to the vestries is in reasonable condition, but the box fascia and soffit are missing and the downspouts from the gutter are also missing. It is suggested that some form of deterrent coating should be considered which could be applied to replacement downspouts. Again, a more vandal resistant material than p.v.c. should be considered.'

'Adjoining property. The Parish Hall is linked directly to the Church building via the narthex and has suffered to great extent from vandalism. The access to the complex from the Rectory has become unusable due to the increase in vandalism and security screens fixed across the door and screens. The footpath between the Church and the Rectory is used as a general thoroughfare by the local residents.'

'Paintwork. External decoration generally is in reasonable condition.'

'INTERIOR. Floors. ... generally in good condition ... Walls .. in good condition throughout ... Ceilings .. generally are in good condition ... Fittings and furniture ... All items are in good condition and well maintained.'

The last Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in May 1992. In an introductory note the report says:

'A Quinquennial inspection is not strictly relevant at the moment on this church.'

'The church has been badly vandalised, and the Rectory abandoned. The majority of windows are broken and boarded up; apart from the entrance, all other doors are protected and fixed shut. Most of the rainwater goods are missing. the copper felt roof covering has been vandalised and partly removed, from the hall. External light fittings are broken or missing, manhole covers are missing and the manholes filled with tyres, bricks etc., and the site is full of rubbish and was, until recently, open to the public.'

A programme of repair work was instigated in January 1992. So far the external fence has been erected and Probation Service Community Workers are engaged on landscaping and tidying up work. A figure has been agreed with the Insurance Company for the Vandal Damage and work will start shortly on remedial work. The opportunity will be taken at the same time to improve the security of the building so that, for example, some windows will be reduced in size, superfluous doors and windows bricked up and better quality rainwater goods, light fittings etc. will be fitted.'

Present use.

The work started in 1992 has now been completed. The vicarage has been converted into flats, one of which is occupied by a young community worker. The church is now back in use, as is the hall. On first sight, the complex is rather forbidding, since the buildings are surrounded by a high fence, with spikes built in. In fact, in an area like this, the existence of fencing shows that there is a building here which people care about and which is in use.

The hall is well used, and the parish operates on the principle that the church buildings should be available seven days a week. In the view of the incumbent, one of the tasks of the Church is Engagement in the local community; but this must be done at a level people can understand, offering support, help, friendship, where the people are; in this parish that includes bringing the elderly to the Tuesday lunch in the hall. Equally, one must not forget the Eucharist. It does seem that each generation has to learn the basics anew, and there is a generation now which does not know he

excitement which was generated by Basil Minchin et al in the 50s and 60s.

The church works well for worship, with the sole exception that the font is in the wrong place.

Community outreach.

As part of its work of outreach the parish has a Church and Community Development Worker. He is responsible to a local management committee but works on a day-to-day basis with the clergy in the parochial team. His responsibilities, as described in the job description, are: 1) forging links with and assessing the needs of local people by visiting homes, visiting and forging links with local organisations, and attending local community meetings; 2) Co-ordinating in conjunction with the parish team and others a practical response to the perceived spiritual and social needs of local people; 3) reporting back to the clergy and committee; 4) developing both the buildings of The Apostles and St. Cuthbert's to help provide accommodation for groups of local people whose needs are not being met elsewhere, and enabling Church people and others to be involved in this work; and, 5) 'The Worker will establish project structures and systems in line with the aims and objectives of the project. (!).

A questionnaire put out under the name of 'Community Project for Miles Platting and Ancoats' says:

'We are trying to find out: 1) What needs of local people are not currently being met, and how we might be able to do something about it, in partnership with other community groups, organisations, workers and volunteers.; 2) How we should develop our church premises to be of better service to community groups; 3) How to involve more local people in existing community groups and organisations.'

As a parish in an Urban Priority Area funds are available towards this from the Church Urban Fund.

Conclusion.

St. Cuthbert's is a quite extraordinary story. The present building was erected as part of a programme of church re-building and re-organisation, in conjunction with the City Corporation's own housing re-development programme. Three churches were demolished, and one - St. Cuthbert's - built in its place. As to architectural merit, the building was known, when it was first built, with some affection as "St. Concord's"! The building has suffered, as I have described above, from the most appalling degree of vandalism. A programme of reconstruction was put in hand by the present incumbent and is now - June 1994 - completed. In particular, a good deal of progress has been made by incorporating a Community Worker, funded from the Urban Church Fund, within the complex. This integration of worship and engagement, in meeting the needs of an inner city area with this degree of deprivation may well point the way forward for the Church in

the Inner City. As the incumbent, Canon Tony Durrans, points out, the use of church plant in this way - i.e. dual-purpose, and on a 7 day a week basis - is both economically and theologically sound. (cf. JG Davies - Secular use of Church Buildings).

Manchester Diocese - Conclusion

The programme of church building in Manchester diocese.

The programme of church building in the diocese in the post-war era was largely carried out under the auspices of the Bishop's New Churches Appeal, although others were built as replacements after war damage, or as part of a programme which had been in mind before the war, but had been interrupted. The Appeal was largely concerned with the planting of new churches in the new housing areas.

The pattern for this already existed. As I have shown, the same pattern and mechanism had been employed before the war; St. Nicholas Burnage and St Michael and All Angels, Wythenshawe, are examples. But the pattern had been in use much earlier. The story of St. John's, Old Trafford, illustrates this well.

The result of this established pattern was that, not only was the same mechanism used in promoting the building of a church, but the expectations of what the church should look like, and the way in which it should function, were much the same, even though the building itself might appear 'contemporary'.

The churches built in the 1930s which have been examined were all built as substantial structures, capable of holding large congregations, and as features in the townscape. Two were built fronting the new arterial roads, striking to the passer-by, and standing out above the roof-tops of the surrounding houses. Two were designed by Cachemaille-Day, an innovative architect, who was strongly influenced by Continental practice, both in architecture and liturgical practice. One was by Bernard Miller, an architect who practised in England, mainly in Liverpool, whose vision was allied to that of the architects who designed the new housing areas of the time for Manchester. St. Luke the Physician, Benchill, completed in 1939, was designed by Cecil Young.

Of these, St Christopher's, Withington, has proved to have a combination of problems too great for the congregation to accommodate, and is to be demolished. St. Luke's, benchill, may be demolished. St Nicholas, Burnage, has had similar problems, but on a smaller scale, and is being restored and used.

The new permanent parish churches built in the Diocese of Manchester in the period under review reflect a variety of formative elements. The system under which they were planned and built was inherited largely from inter-war and late nineteenth century practice in the Diocese, and was based on inherited presumptions about the best way to establish the Christian community in new housing areas, and the needs of that community once established.

The architecture of the buildings reflects the variety of architectural practice at the time. In particular, the use

of the latest - sometimes untried and experimental - materials, copper-faced felt for roof cladding, for example, or the placing of down-pipes within the wall structure, the placing of light fittings at high level, only accessible by a tower scaffolding, or, above all, the use of reinforced concrete flat slab roof construction, reflect contemporary practice which has given rise to major problems in churches and in other building types. Although some churches reflect continental influence and the influence of the Liturgical Movement - seen before the war in Cachemaille-Day's St Michael and All Angels, Lawton Moor, some, like St John's Bury, are traditional - i.e. nineteenth century in layout, and of brick with pitched slated roofs, others follow contemporary practice in the design of school halls and similar buildings and lack imagination in design or in use of materials.

Quality of design and materials does leave its mark; the design of St. Mark's, Chadderton, creates a distinctive, unforgettable, serviceable and prayerful building, with a strong image; the use of good quality materials, both there, and at St. John's Bury, and the avoidance of too many inbuilt maintenance problems, again brings its benefits.

What is noteworthy is the absence of information as to the briefs given to architects, or to the preliminary discussions at parish level as to what the parish wanted of a church building, and what impression or message the building should give to those around. It does appear that little, if any, radical examination was made as to what the Church should be doing in urban areas, in the mid-twentieth century. The experimentation in the pre-war era, by Cachemaille-Day, seems to have arisen from the architect's own vision and enthusiasm, based on his experience of churches in Europe; the initiative to employ him came from the Dean of Manchester. In the post-war era, the new approach to church design seems to have come from the individual priest, who knew of the work of the Birmingham Institute, the work of George Pace, and was prepared to be dogged in his pursuit of the right building for his parish.

The three solutions to the provision and design of new churches.

Three types of solution to the provision of church accommodation become clear in this study of the work of the diocese.

The first is the use of low-cost, dual-purpose buildings; some of these still survive as church halls, and, in the case of St. Francis Newall Green, the dual-purpose building looks as if it will outlast the permanent church; the use of these led to more permanent dual-purpose buildings, such as St. Mark's, White Moss, which has been extended, and works well; finally, they seem to have led to the pilot project at St. John's Flixton, where a low-cost, but skilfully designed and specified project, showed the way for useful and less

burdensome buildings. St Andrew's, Hillock, is a less well designed variant of this.

The second solution follows a traditional late nineteenth century layout; All Saints Stretford - although this has been re-ordered; St. Martin, Blackcarr Road, Wythenshawe; St. Hilda, Old Trafford; St. John's, Bury; and, to a large degree, St. Francis of Assisi and All Saints', Langley, follow this solution. Among the churches of the decade preceding the war, St. Ambrose Oldham, St. Nicholas Kingsway, St. Christopher Withington, and St. Luke, Benchill, all follow his pattern, although St. Nicholas has some adventurous elements in its design.

The third solution shows a strong influence of the liturgical movement, and of the Institute at Birmingham. George Pace's two churches, St. Mark's Chadderton, of 1962-3, and William Temple Church, of 1964-5, were followed by St. Chad, Limeside, also of 1964-5, St. Stephen, Astley, of 1968, which is based on St. George's, Rugby, and, in close succession, St. John's, Flixton, 1968, by Raymond Wood-Jones, St. Richard of Chichester, 1968-9, by Gordon Thorne, and the Ascension, Hulme, of 1970, the only church in the Manchester diocese by Maguire and Murray. Of the immediate pre-war churches, only St. Michael and All Angels can really be said to follow the ideas of the Liturgical Movement.

Peter Hammond, in his essay: 'A Radical Approach to Church Architecture', in the book of essays, 'Towards a Church Architecture', (Architectural Press, 1962,) p15, opens by saying:

'There are plenty of new churches: they have been going up in their hundreds during the last few years all over the world, from Finland to Australia. How many of these churches can really be called modern buildings is another matter altogether. The great majority are essentially backward looking; they merely take the formal concepts of the past and deck them out in a new and brightly coloured wrapper; they are like glossy paperback editions of minor nineteenth century classics, and they are frequently issued with extravagant blurbs.'

While this is too sweeping to apply as a comprehensive condemnation of the work of Manchester diocese, the analysis seems fair and accurate. Examination of post-war churches has tended to concentrate on the forward-looking and the innovative, generally the churches associated with the Liturgical Movement. However, of the eighteen churches built between the end of the war and 1970, six are of this traditional pattern.

Their layout follows the 'traditional' church format, that is to say, the format established during the second half of the nineteenth century, and they are often decked out with 'contemporary' features, including the zigzag copper clad roof, and the tower, making a statement in the townscape.

They provide the local church for a significant number of congregations and they comprise a substantial proportion of the 'plant' of the Church in the Manchester diocese. I consider that it is appropriate to ask of these, as well as of the better known, and 'revolutionary' buildings; how well do these buildings serve the Church?

Method of funding new church buildings.

The churches built under the aegis of the Bishop's New Churches Appeal were built relatively quickly, their size, in terms of seating capacity, was established early on, and the grant aid from the diocese was fixed on a 'price per seat' basis, with a further third provided by the parish - i.e. 5% from the diocese, 25% from the parish. This produced a gross figure which, all things being equal, provided the capital sum to build, and part furnish the church buildings, and pay professional fees. It did not allow for funds to be set aside and invested against future maintenance needs, nor for much by way of unexpected extra costs, and certainly not for any new developments in the work of the Church in outreach to the locality. The finances were essentially 'building-orientated', and more narrowly, 'seats per building' orientated.

When, as inevitably happens, prices for building works come in above the original estimate, the response was to reduce costs by using cheaper alternative materials, or omitting fittings or furnishings. The option of building a smaller church, but retaining a high quality of material and execution, seems not to have been considered; partly, because such an approach was hindered by the fixed contribution, based on the seating capacity. It would have been more prudent to have organised the finances of planning and building new churches in a manner whereby, although a per capita calculation was used as a general basis for the diocesan contribution, this should not have been a final determining factor in the financing. When a cost over-run was encountered, it would have been far more prudent to have omitted entirely some structures, or, if the over-run became apparent before building began, plan the buildings on a smaller scale, rather than economising on the quality of materials and execution, which has given rise to so many problems.

Should smaller churches have been built?

Although it is tempting to say that the churches should have been built smaller in any case, it is clear that, in their early days, some were extremely active and flourishing. Certainly, the experience at Langley, All Saints, where seven coaches were hired to take confirmands, their families and friends to the cathedral for a confirmation, or on the Rosewood estate at Stockton on Tees, where 150 youngsters, 50 adults, and family and friends amounting to 1000 in all, assembled for a confirmation, demonstrates that large numbers could be gathered. Michael Goulder, in the introductory essay in the book, 'Why Believe in God' (SCM 1983) tells of

introducing Direct Giving to St Christopher's, Withington, in the late 1950s. Seven hundred parishioners attended a dinner to start the campaign, and parish income was raised from £17 per week to £71. The register of communicants rose from about 50 to 200, but then dropped back into double figures. On a good year he presented 40 candidates for confirmation, as he says: 'to the chagrin and envy of my clerical neighbours: but only thirty of these might survive the year, twenty the second year, and ten the third.' (p20). The experience of Trevor Beeson at the Rosewood estate was that although large numbers might be confirmed, those who were not supported actively by their family were most unlikely to persevere, and this would be the majority. It is not clear to what extent all estates were like this. In cases where there was a mixture of inhabitants, including those who took houses there because that was the only place - in the late fifties - where any new housing was being constructed, there was a leavening of those with initiative and education, who were on the way 'up'. They often stayed only until it became possible to rent a better house in a better area, or buy, and while they lived on the estate, they supported the church well. When they left, there was no one to replace them. It is not clear to what extent Langley and Rosewood were typical; the anecdotal evidence is that most estates were tough and disheartening. Their inhabitants had been uprooted from their old community and never regained the sense of community in the new place; the clergy were dispirited and ground down - even when heroic efforts brought sometimes spectacular results - and there was a fairly fast turn-over of staff.

With hindsight, it might well have been better to have continued with the 'temporary' churches for a good deal longer, while the pattern of ministry and Christian life in the parish was established, and then to have concentrated on producing a better quality building, appropriate in size to the needs, and financial resources, of the parish as it developed. In the short term, it would have been possible to meet in a house, or several houses, or in a school hall. An experiment on these lines was tried in Croyden, with the intention of not building a church, or spending valuable resources on bricks and mortar, but expending manpower and funds on outreach work. After five years the experiment failed, and a church was built, at the insistence of the local people. At least by that time, the parishioners had made a clear decision about what they wanted.

The planting of new churches in the new housing areas proceeded on the basis of forming new parishes, on the pattern of those already existing, to encourage the growth of traditional parish organisations. It may be questioned as to whether such a system is, in fact, appropriate in that situation.

The effectiveness of a church building and the rôle of the church building in the life of the parish:- What makes the parish tick.

The effectiveness of a particular parish church for its parish is dependent upon, and affected by, a range of factors.

First, there is the matter of the make-up and size of the population, which may change over a period of thirty years. There are the demographic changes on a large council estate, which was initially an artificially created environment, and changes as the original population move out, grow old, and are replaced by people 'moved in' by the housing authority. There are the demographic changes caused by the wholesale - and largely voluntary - replacement of one group by another, from a different country of origin, and of a different religious persuasion. There are the demographic changes brought about by the wide-spread unemployment now common to many large industrial cities. There are the demographic changes brought about by wholesale redevelopment of an area - Hulme and Moss Side are extreme examples. Less noticeably disruptive, but equally a major change, is the demographic change brought about by the development and growth of an area as a dormitory suburb, providing pleasant homes, near good communications, for those who work in the major conurbations; Astley is a good example of this.

Second, there is the effect of changes in the pattern of worship. Since the early 1960s Parish Communion has increasingly become the principal Sunday service; Matins is now rare, and Evensong rarer still. However, in spite of the enthusiasm with which the Parish Communion has been welcomed, by what used to be thought of as High, Middle and Low Church, there is frequent use of a Family Service, as a principal Sunday service, often alternating with Parish Communion. Choirs are becoming less common, and more difficult to maintain. The 8am Holy Communion is also becoming relatively rare. The pattern of worship, which became established as the norm during the latter part of the last century, and was accepted practice during the first half of this, with 8am early service, Matins at about 11, or Sung Mass, and Evensong at 6.30 pm, is now very rarely found indeed. The comments made by the clergy about those churches, built in Manchester in the post-war era, which followed the layout of this established pattern, show that they are only too aware of the shortcomings of a rigid layout to allow for experiment in contemporary liturgical practice.

Third, there is the effect of the use of experimental building techniques, coupled, in Manchester, with the economies which often had to be accommodated, as a result of the financial method used by the diocese to fund new churches.

Finally, it is perhaps commonplace to say so, but no two parishes are the same, and no two parishes use their buildings in the same way. Indeed, it is surprising to what extent a parish will manage with what it has, partly, one suspects,

because of habit, and partly because of the effort in planning, and raising money to fund, the sort of substantial alterations needed to accommodate a re-ordering, or a re-building scheme. The personalities at any one time can also affect the effectiveness of the parish and its use of its church buildings.

Demographic change.

The effect of demographic changes is seen most dramatically, and consistently, in the large metropolitan council estates. Langley Estate, the complex of estates which make up Wythenshawe, and, on a smaller scale, Withington, have all suffered from a similar pattern of change; initially providing housing for young families, with some older members, some families stayed only a few years, until they could move into their own home elsewhere, the young with get-up-and-go have got-up-and-gone, the once young parents are now old and retired often on State pension - and the newcomers are single parents, single men, a transient population, often bringing drugs, and a fair measure of violence.

Moreover, these areas of predominantly local authority housing were created to be satellite towns, but in fact never had the infra-structure of shops, community buildings, etc, which could provide a focus for social activity, and to a large degree they were areas with a narrow social mix, which were unlikely to throw up local leadership in the church.

The older inhabitants remember the area when it was 'respectable', and try hard, against the odds, to keep it so. Even though the building of the churches in the first place generated great enthusiasm, and the ministrations of four, five or six clergy, produced large numbers of Planned Givers, and confirmands, there was not the long-term stable population, on which one could build.

When this population change is associated with a building which is too large for the congregation to feel comfortable in, too rigidly planned to be readily adapted to produce a smaller worship area, with useful subsidiary accommodation, too large for them to afford to maintain, and was built with weaknesses of design or execution, which could only have been held at bay by constant and careful repair and maintenance, the building becomes a drain on the resources of the parish, instead of being a resource for the benefit and strengthening of the parish. All Saints Langley, St Christopher's Withington, St. Luke Benchill, St. Francis of Assisi, all fall into this category.

A different type of problem for a parish church arises in areas where a substantial influx of immigrants from Asia, either Moslem or Hindu, has reduced the indigenous population very severely, and while there is a role for the Christian Church in such a setting, it is very rarely likely to require a church building with a seating capacity for 300/400.

Churches with fatal building problems.

Some churches have disappeared already. Although not the result of architectural weakness, but a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, St. Saviour Chorlton-on-Medlock, 1963/4, by Dennis Sherwood, was demolished for a road scheme. If, of course, St. Saviour's had been a building of international architectural importance, then either it, or the road, might have been moved. St. Saviour, Denton Lane, Chadderton, 1960/2 by Taylor and Roberts, was converted to offices when problems with the roof became too great for the parish to manage, and a new, smaller church, rather like a school hall, was built elsewhere in the parish as a replacement. The Church of the Resurrection, Bradford, Manchester, 1974, was built with a deep valley running the length of the roof; this failed, the costs of solving the problem was quite beyond the capacity of the parish, and the church was demolished in 1991, but the vicarage and hall remain.

Churches with near-fatal building problems.

A number of churches, although still in existence, have building problems of so severe a nature that there is reasonable expectation that they will not survive for many years.

St Christopher's Withington has a combination of problems with the roof and failing foundations which is almost certain to lead to demolition. St Luke Benchill, St. Francis of Assisi, and All Saints Langley all have major roof problems, compounded at Langley by major failure of reinforced concrete elements, which seem very likely to lead to demolition. St. Nicholas, Burnage, and William Temple Church have both had expensive programmes of repair - in the case of William Temple, it is still not solved - but both churches are highly thought of by their congregations, who see the merits of the two buildings as justifying their efforts to maintain them. St. Nicholas has received substantial support from English Heritage. All these churches are too large for the needs of their present congregations.

St. Ambrose, Oldham, at present appears to be in terminal decline, brought about by a total lack of proper maintenance, throughout the present, long, incumbency. St. Cuthbert's, Miles Platting, was nearly destroyed by vandalism - the vicarage was burnt out - but has been restored as the result of the visionary work of the present incumbent.

If sufficient funds are available then most difficulties in respect of a building can be overcome. The congregation of St Helen's Church, Bishopsgate, in the City of London, has raised more than a million pounds towards the cost of a major repair, refurbishment and re-ordering scheme, and expects to raise the remainder needed, some hundreds of thousands of pounds, within a reasonable period of time. This results from a congregation, often numbering 600, drawn largely from those working in the City, with an admixture of students.

In the case of St. Christopher's, Withington, as I have noted, I asked the incumbent if he would have any problem with the building if he had a congregation of 300 evangelical yuppies. The answer was 'No'. Indeed, for a congregation like that, the building would provide a magnificent setting for worship, and the problem of raising £300,000 would be readily solved. This is not, of course, an option since, even if the congregation numbered 300, there is not the wealth in the population to generate the funds necessary.

In Manchester, substantial sums have been raised in Didsbury for a major scheme of re-ordering. However, the fate of church buildings in the diocese is affected, as one would expect, by demographic and economic factors which affect the metropolitan area as a whole.

Variety and coincidence.

Although the Parish Communion became the norm as the principal Sunday Service, many churches were ill-designed for such a pattern of worship. St. Luke Benchill, St. Martin Blackcarr Road, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John's Bury, All Saints Langley, and St. Hilda Old Trafford, all have so rigid a layout that any thought of creating a worshipping area, in which the congregation are gathered around the altar, would require very major building works. But this does not necessarily mean that they cannot serve the needs of their congregation.

The Liturgical Movement held out a vision of the life of the church, in reaction to the stereotypes of the latter part of the nineteenth century, expressed both in worship and in action, and which, in architectural terms, led to new patterns of church design. The legacy of this, in terms of worship, has been the predominance of the Parish Communion as the principal Sunday service, in a great majority of churches. However, this has not led to the uniformity of worshipping practice which anyone unfamiliar with the Church of England might have expected. The services in any particular church are still the result of a response to the perceived needs and wishes of the congregation, and this can lead to some strange situations.

When the congregation are happy enough with what they have, in terms of the pattern of worship, their sense of mission, and the buildings they use, albeit with a restricted vision, the most unlikely buildings can 'work'.

St. John's, Flixton, was built as a flexible, low-cost, building, eminently suited to experiment and adaptation by the congregation as it explored new ways of expressing its faith. In the event, the layout and decoration of the building has seen a return to a traditional layout, with pews rigidly aligned towards the east end, a large pulpit and a brass eagle lectern flanking the sanctuary, and the insertion of stained glass windows rescued from demolished churches.

One of the most surprising patterns has emerged in areas with a large West Indian population, notably Hulme and Old Trafford. The best known aspect of West Indian churchgoing is the tradition of Gospel singing, which is found particularly in non-conformist churches, many of West Indian origin. Less well known is the anglo-catholic tradition of some of the islands - resulting from the activities of a particular missionary society. The West Indian element in the population of the parish of St. John's, Old Trafford, has grown steadily in the last 25 years, and most came from churches with an anglo-catholic tradition. The clergy of St. John's recognised this, and adapted the worship to meet the desires of the congregation. The building itself is a Gothic building of 1908, built in a hard red brick, with nave, two aisles, raised choir, and sanctuary, and with rigid ranks of fixed pews. It is a singularly intractable and unattractive building, harsh and unyielding in appearance. However, it serves its present purpose well, in providing the setting for a principal service of Parish Communion, with vestments, a small choir, and an MC who was trained 'back home', but sounds as good as if he came from St. Alban's, Holborn. The conservative form of the building coincides with the mood of the congregation. The present curate - acting rector during an interregnum - can see the merits of attempting a reordering, but this would be a major exercise, and there seems little enthusiasm among the congregation.

St. John's, Old Trafford, illustrates well the effect of the happy coincidence of personalities in the functioning of the parish. Not only has the arrival of a large population of West Indians affected the pattern of worship of the parish, but the presence of clergy who are responsive to that has enhanced the work. There is a strong Roman Catholic element in the population - with its own church close by - and there is increasingly the incidence of 'mixed' families - in religious terms. The response by the clergy, and particularly by the present curate, has been one of co-operation, with the clergy of the two churches sharing in weddings and funerals, and in helping at times of emergency - violent robberies in the local shops are not unusual.

A cleric friend commented to me that, in one parish, every thing can go swimmingly, because the personalities 'gel', but the same person, in another parish, can find that everything falls apart. By its very nature, the effect of personalities on the functioning of the parish and its church, is anecdotal, and does not lend itself to statistical analysis. At St. John's, by coincidence, the form of the church building works well, the presence of a solidly built church hall is an asset, and both enhance the life of the parish.

'Engagement'.

The other aspect of the Liturgical Movement is the question of 'engagement' with the world. The movement was not just about creating a new pattern for the service of Holy Communion, or just about creating a new layout for the church building. It was about a new understanding of the Eucharist, with political

implications. This is set out as effectively as anywhere by J.T.T. Robinson, in his book 'Liturgy coming to Life' (A.R. Mowbray, 1960), the record of experiments in Liturgy when he was chaplain to Clare College, Cambridge. Of the Offertory, for example, he says (pp33/34):

'We have an Offertory procession because the Offertory cannot start in the Chancel - or if it does it has lost all its roots in life. The Offertory starts where the bread and wine start, where our lives are rooted, in the everyday world of everyday relationships, of family and society, work and leisure. ...For the Eucharist cannot get going, there is nothing for it to work on, until the world in which the laity live and work is brought into Church and laid upon the altar.

Robinson continues (p37):

'What we do with matter here (in Church) has tremendous implications for what we do with matter everywhere. "When we come together to break bread", said a seventeenth century writer, "we must break it to the hungry, to God himself in his poor members." We cannot without judgement share bread here and acquiesce in a world food distribution that brings plenty to some but malnutrition and starvation to millions more. We cannot without judgement share bread here with men of every race and tolerate a colour bar in restaurants and hotels.'

Those were the concerns which sprang most readily to mind in the 1950s and 1960s; it is not difficult to think of other concerns, just as pressing, in the 1990s. The working out of this rôle of 'engagement' in the world is more difficult, and more painful, than reordering services and buildings; increasingly, engagement is seen as a major, and proper, rôle for the church today, and buildings which have additional flexible space can assist a parish in promoting this rôle. Amongst the most pressing in Manchester are drop-in centres for the unemployed. Congregations whose churches do not have this type of accommodation increasingly see themselves at a disadvantage in carrying out their work as part of the Church.

At the Ascension Hulme, again with a large West Indian population, from a traditional Anglo Catholic background, the church offers Parish Communion, adapted and enriched from an Anglo-Catholic tradition - in contrast to the severe and austere pattern which existed at the time of the founding of the church, together with a very active programme of engagement, fully in line with the Anglo-Catholic - East End - tradition from which the present incumbent comes.

Churches that 'work'.

Quality is a good thing. Both churches by Cachemaille-Day in Manchester have caught the enthusiasm of the parishioners. St. Nicholas, although the subject of very great expense, is a building of which the parish are proud. Equally, St. Michael

and All Angels, the 'Star' church, is a rare architectural experience, even though it does not 'look like a church' - unless, of course, you are familiar with pre-war work on the Continent. When the present incumbent was asked to take the parish, he says his first question was; 'Can I pray in this church'; the answer was a resounding 'Yes'.

Among the Liturgical Movement churches, both churches by Pace, even though William Temple leaks and is far too big, are the pride of their congregations. St. Chad, Limeside, is small enough to maintain, small enough for its congregation, but has a clear architectural presence in its estate, and - for all its unconventional appearance - attracts the parishioners for weddings and christenings, as well as a small but regular weekly congregation. It uses the former dual-purpose building as a social club for the whole estate; thus serving a useful social purpose, and generating rent to support the other activities. St. John's, Flixton, works well, even if the present liturgical layout and practice has gone backwards! The Ascension, Hulme, is well used, and provides a very well arranged setting for the Parish Communion, and St. Stephen's, Astley, appears wildly successful; well used and well liked, and the setting for a good deal of outward looking Christian practice.

Among the conservatively designed churches, All Saints, Stretford, and St. John's, Bury, are well looked after, and have congregations which can afford to maintain them. St. John's may become the subject of a reordering scheme in due course.

Conclusion.

For a church building to be effective, and serve its function, it has to be in the right place, to provide the right accommodation for the particular task, and it has to be used by sufficient people, with sufficient funds, to enable the building to function and to be maintained.

An essential problem about building a church is that it can only be designed for the contemporary situation as it presents itself; but that situation can change, and this is nowhere more apparent than in a conurbation like Manchester. This element of uncertainty as to the future shape of the population of the parish can, perhaps, be countered to some degree by building into the design a facility for flexibility in the use of the building, and avoiding inflexibility and over ambition which lead to the situation where the building is the master, not the servant, of the parish.

A pattern of church planting had been developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and was continued into the middle of this century. Even though the churches of the 1930s that have been examined were to some degree 'modern' in architectural terms, with a liturgical input by Cachemaille-Day - e.g. a proposed - but not achieved, central altar at St. Michael and All Angels, and a choir positioned at the west at St. Nicholas Burnage, the general pattern of church life was the well-established parish organisation. Whether questions were ever asked as to whether there was a more appropriate way of establishing a Christian community in these areas is not clear; if questions were asked, they do not appear to have deflected the Diocese from its established pattern. The curate-in-charge at St. Francis, Newall Green, lived in a council house when he first moved to the parish, but there is no suggestion that he should stay there, or that living alongside the community had merits in pastoral or missionary terms. Permanent churches, and church houses, were built over a relatively short time-span, and there is no evidence [so far] that this was considered anything other than a good thing to do.

A most striking feature of the Manchester churches is the speed with which the building of permanent churches heavily subsidised from the centre - followed on the building of the temporary buildings. No one seems to have stood back, and said, 'Let's wait and see how the life of the parish develops, and then we shall know what we want.' A grant of 75% of the cost of the permanent church, with the balance repayable over 20 years, must have seemed too great a temptation to miss, - manna from heaven, but was it?

The future.

In a society, and a Church, in a constant state of change, any conclusions reached this year as to whether the Church's buildings serve the Church are likely to be in need of modification in a year's time. If the conclusions are to

generate any useful guidance for the Church, it seems appropriate that the question should be asked: What pattern of ministry is likely to evolve in the next few years, and how will the present building stock serve that pattern?

Certainly, some form of building is needed in which people can assemble for worship, and the building will say something about the activity and aims of those who meet there. It is in some sense a symbol, an image, a sacrament, of God, or the People of God, in that locality; in some sense the House of God (incumbent of St. Mark's Chadderton). The shape of St. Mark's, Chadderton, recalls the image of the tent, whereas All Saints, Langley, has the plan of a coffin!

The central act of worship is likely to be the Parish Communion, which started as an experiment, became the service, but can take a generation of experience and teaching to 'work' (incumbent of St Mark's Chadderton).

The Parish system.

Serious questions have been raised, for many years, as to whether the present parish system is appropriate.

The Church of England is unique among Christian churches in England in that it operates a parochial system, whereby the entire country is divided into parishes, most with their own church and pastor - even if he is shared, and everyone, resident in the parish and not affiliated to another church, is entitled to seek the aid of the parish church for weddings and funerals, and times of need.

This system was inherited from the pre-reformation Church, when, of course, there was one Church only in England, and was reinforced by the Establishment of the post-reformation church. Although there are calls for disestablishment, there is no doubt that this system provides the church with a recognized place in society, and unique opportunities for Christian outreach. The parish, with its church and pastor, provides a focus for each local worshipping community, although the phenomenon of eclectic congregations is growing. The parish provides an opportunity for groups to gather together, of a size large enough to provide a pool of human resource, and of a size which permits relationships to develop and, for the clergy, a group that is not so large that relationships become impossible.

The inclusive nature of the ministry of the parish priest to all the parishioners has from time to time been under attack. The exercise of a strict baptismal policy, and an emphasis on fellowship - whether in an evangelical setting, or as the result of the emphasis on the fellowship around the Lord's Table - to which only the confirmed are admitted, can lead to exclusivity. This is one aspect of the Liturgical Movement which has given rise to concern, and has led to the adoption of the Family Service as a principal act of Sunday worship in many parishes.

The work of David Wasdell on church growth, carried out in the early 1970s, in the paper 'Let My People Grow - Wprkpaper No. 1', carried out under the Urban Church Project, and presented to the General Synod in November 1974, demonstrates all too clearly the difficulties for the clergy in relating to over-large congregations, and the failure of the merging of parishes to maintain membership levels.

Critiques of this system have been seen in the work, for example, of Eric Saxon, one-time Rector of St. Anne's Manchester, in his article in Theology (February 1944), and in the work of Robin Gill, in his 'Myth of the Empty Church' (SPCK, 1993). This leads to the questions, how many and what sort of church buildings does the C/E need in a conurbation like Manchester

Are there too many churches?

This comes to the question; are there too many churches? The answer, in absolute terms, is likely to be No!; but quite a lot are in the wrong place.

There are areas where there are too many churches. This has been demonstrated all too clearly by Robin Gill in his work, 'The Myth of the Empty Church', where he discusses the church building campaigns of the latter part of the nineteenth century, which continued into this century, when churches were built in the newly developing industrial areas, not to house congregations which were too large for the old churches, but to stimulate church attendance, usually unsuccessfully. The legacy of this is an over-supply of churches in inner-city areas, where populations have declined radically, or where indigenous populations have been replaced by non-christian immigrants, and where the present buildings are grossly inappropriate for the present needs of the church.

Even a town like Bournemouth, in which one would expect a large proportion of churchgoers among the population, there is an excess of capacity among the town's churches, although the buildings in question generally date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The church members are present, but, because of the demographic make-up of the town, live in retirement homes, and are too infirm to attend the parish churches. Instead, the ministry goes to them!

Nonetheless, there are large churches - the principal parish church of an old settlement, often an old foundation, in a town which grew significantly in size during the nineteenth century - Oldham and Bury come to mind - where the church plays a role in the civic life of the town, with civic services - Mayoral Sunday, Remembrance Day, Scout and Guide services, confirmations - where the size is an advantage, and contributes to the ability of the Church to meet its commitments in the local society. There are occasions in Manchester when it is difficult to find a church large enough to house a confirmation service for a group of local parishes. Some large churches are needed, but not too many!

St. Christopher's, Withington, St. Nicholas Burnage, St. Martin, Wythenshawe, and William Temple Church, are all large enough to be town centre churches; unfortunately they were not built in a town centre, but in residential areas, and in areas which were largely, though not entirely, local authority housing. There are other churches, built in the mid twentieth century local authority housing estates, where populations have fallen in number, have declined radically in wealth, and which in some cases have developed problems either in the structure, or as a result of poor maintenance, which totally outstrip the resources of the parish.

As Gill demonstrates, in the past buildings and manpower have been subsidised from central funds; it is surely right that the work of the church among the poor and the needy should be subsidised by other parts of the church, but one has to ask to what extent money should be spent subsidising a building which does not serve its purpose.

Again, I turn to Gill's work, and the aims he sets out as a programme for the future. He proposes that the principal administrative unit should be a group of churches, of the size of a present rural deanery, but - in urban areas - 'wedge-shaped'; that is, shaped like the segment of an orange, so that each group can include a range of parishes, including both inner-city, and outer suburban parishes. This group should have control over its own budget, with responsibility for the disposition of manpower, and the use of buildings.

This would have the effect of drawing together a range of parishes with different needs and resources, and leading them to look at 'their' area as a whole, and with responsibility for each other. It would have the advantage of allowing decisions to be made by those directly involved, and with intimate knowledge of the needs of the different parishes, at the present time. Decision-making could take account of the fact that no two parishes, and no two churches, are exactly alike, and the solution for one is rarely the solution for any other. In the use of buildings, it would encourage the use of the most appropriate building - the largest perhaps - as a group centre, appropriate for civic and united religious services - e.g. confirmations, united services, youth rallies, etc - and it would permit a hard look at other buildings to see how effective they are. It should be able to encourage small groups - i.e. small individual parishes such as St Christopher's Withington or All Saints and Martyrs, Langley - and tailor the buildings to their needs.

Such a scheme would enable the clergy, both stipendiary and non-stipendiary, to be deployed more effectively, with scope for the employment of specialist skills, and a good deal more mutual support than obtains at present. To succeed, such a scheme depends on the creation of a sense of loyalty to the group of parishes, and a new approach to the powers of the individual parish and the legal requirements at present laid upon it. It also requires that congregations should sit more lightly to their buildings than is often the case.

Useful principles in planning and building a church.

- 1) Before you commit yourself to a permanent building experiment with patterns of ministry and worship, using whatever buildings are to hand, and without committing yourself to the expense of a permanent building. During this time the congregation can determine what it means to be the Body of Christ in their area.
- 2) Design the complex of buildings to provide flexibility, both in the programme of building, and in the subsequent pattern of use.
- 3) Go for quality; quality of design, in that the buildings should reflect the function of the parts, and the role of the church in the area; quality of materials so that the building lasts; and quality in design in respect of maintenance, which encourages a steady routine of maintenance, without inducing over costly work in replacing short-life materials, or needing scaffolding to change a light-bulb.
- 4) Be cautious about using experimental techniques or materials, because the parish will not wish, and may not be able, to make good major problems, when things fail. The roof of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool is a good example of what happens when materials and techniques fail.