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A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

The Question of Church Growth

I

CHURCH growth is news. It is an idea whose time has come. We can rejoice in what this signifies, the change of mood that now makes it possible to assume that it is possible and should be more and more the normal experience of the Church in this country. After decades of assuming that decline and retrenchment is the order of the day we can look forward with hope, expecting to find a thrusting outward and forward. God seems to be giving his people a new lease of life.

Like any idea whose time has come it is not easy to pin down. Church growth, simple as it may seem, is in fact a diffuse and varied concept. It can mean different things to different people. It can be expressed in very different ways and be found in many different forms. For some the meaning is clear and obvious, containing within it a known package of theological and ecclesiological assumptions. "Church growth" becomes a rallying call to fall in behind a particular movement with its esoteric vocabulary and mode of working. For others interest is more eclectic and general, a willingness to draw upon any or all who seem to be able to illuminate the present situation, who can provide ways and means in a task.

Nevertheless, there are some things that can be said as to why this interest is so widespread. It seems to me that it is part of a wider sea change in the life of the churches in this country, which itself is connected with parallel changes across the world.

First there is the recovery of evangelism at the centre of mission. This in itself is a complex issue too prone to simplistic generalisations. Even so it is not too unfair to say that the 70s has seen the re-assertion of proclamation and the call to faith as central to mission in some contrast to the concerns for social and economic and cultural affairs such as racism, world justice, civil rights, the urban poor, or an interest in dialogue or Christian presence. We must be careful not to allow a real change to be misused as a stick to beat others with or a banner to unfurl. The contrast is not that stark, as a look at the evidence will show. Evangelism is very much part and a growing part of the concern of the Department of World Mission and Evangelism leading to Nairobi 1975.¹ And one of the remarkable changes among evangelicals in recent years, illustrated for instance in the Lausanne 1974 documents, has been a growing concern for social and political issues and a recognition of the link between proclamation and cultural context.²

Second, nearer home, interest in Church growth is a recognition of

the changed mood of society. Again this is complex but it is clear that the generalisations concerning the secularisation of society are no longer applicable. Society, the world, is changing rapidly but there is a real need for spirituality and faith. It is not surprising that the churches have often lagged behind the more esoteric expressions of the new quest for God. They have needed to adjust more and more to become accepted anew and to recover self-confidence. We must not forget that the Charismatic developments in the Church are also part of and formative of this renewal. Also the shaking of the foundations of the past decades has at several levels both destroyed much that hindered, thus releasing the Church for new tasks, and forced the Church back onto fundamentals, to seek strength from her inner life.

Thirdly, therefore, we see a new interest in the local congregation. The sixties saw much interest, sometimes against a background of defeatism, in new forms of ministry and other experiments. These are now more firmly established. At the same time it is again recognised that Christian witness depends on the gathering of the faithful, the widening of the fellowship and the mutual ministry of the Body of Christ. The danger here is that it can be seen merely as a return to the old and tried paths. But in fact the new vitality is possible because of the new flexibility found in the churches, an ability for change which it also causes.³

Something of this historical perspective can be illustrated by reference to some of the sources which I would consider contributing to the interest in Church growth, which also shows something of the variety that has to be taken into account.

The phrase "Church growth" comes from and immediately refers to the work done at the school of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminar, Pasadena, California under the direction of Donald McGavran, Professor of Mission and Church Growth. This explains why in any discussion of this kind, as will be seen below, most attention must be given to his work. Donald McGavran came to his interest in how and why churches grow from his involvement in missionary work in India and elsewhere. He started to understand why it was that some churches grow rapidly and others seemed to remain static even in very similar circumstances. Out of this grew his study of the social context of mission which has developed, with growing assistance at Fuller and across the world, into an expanding documentation of Church life from all parts of the world. But it began many years ago, back in the mid 50s. Now it is recognised as a major contribution to missiology which is relevant to planning mission strategy. Note too how his interest is in the external factors that influence growth, the place of the Church in the cultural milieu in which witness has to be carried out. Also, as has happened so often, it is the experience of the younger Churches that is of crucial importance for the older established Churches of the West. We have to catch up with the rest of the world.⁴

A second example comes out of a very different background but is remarkably parallel in many ways. The World Council of Churches study on the Missionary Structure of the Congregation was set up at New Delhi (1961) and reported to the Uppsala Assembly in 1968. This was stimulated by the recognition that the congregations and parishes of the established Churches of the West had to discover how to meet the rapidly changing society of the developed world. It too had to wrestle with the social context of mission and what this means for the daily witness of the Christian fellowship, its use of resources and how to release them for fresh tasks. It is true that this very valuable study done in Europe and North America did not have the immediate impact it was hoped, for reasons which have much to do with the other preoccupations of the time. Nevertheless, much was achieved and it is interesting that there are reported signs of renewal of interest in that material. Certainly, we should note that here is a resource that should be drawn upon and would urge that much more use should be made of it now, not least because of the very real theological insights and questions about the nature of the Church and its relation to the world that were raised in it.⁵

This leads on to the third element that is known to me in this question of Church growth. One discerns a revival in the worth of the congregation. It is very noticeable in the United States that a great deal of interest and attention is being given to the dynamics of the congregation and its ministry. This centres less on the context of mission and more on the inner workings of the church fellowship, its organisation and resources and how these can be used for growth instead of decline, outreach rather than maintenance. In this country a notable pioneering job is being done by David Wasdell at St. Matthias, Poplar, in assessing barriers to growth in congregations and alternatives for growth. Once more, however, this is not a new interest. It has always been present. There have been a number like Loren Mead at St. Alban's Institute, Washington, who has been working at this problem since 1969 arising from a need found in ministry in the parish. Others have, like George Lovell, looked at community development techniques. And there have been the cells, communes and other experimental forms of congregation. Now some of these seeds can begin to take root in the friendlier climate.⁶

II

An issue that is raised by all these approaches is that of the relation between the social sciences and mission. What is needed is to discover, for instance, how the inherited structures, which have risen historically, can be modified to meet new conditions. So it can be argued that the Anglican parish emerged as an adequate instrument for mission in rural Mediaeval Britain or the gathered congregation came out of the peculiar circumstances of the seventeenth century, but neither are able to meet the circumstances of the modern world. New demands need new approaches. So various sociological insights such as group

dynamics or the nature of the urban zone are laid under contribution to enable a strategy to be devised to overcome the difficulties. This may sound reasonable enough and it is good that such tools are indeed available and used. But it is not always that simple. First the tools and the methods used to come to the conclusions on which they are based are not necessarily value free. Nor, therefore, are the deductions drawn from the analysis automatically appropriate. For instance, Wasdell suggests that the way to break through the inevitable limitations of single person pastorates and centralised congregations, which seem to peak at about a congregation of two hundred, is to move into multi-cellular structures of many such groups.⁷ This may be so, but as he points out this means a new style of ministry of a more managerial and remote kind. But the question may also need to be asked whether this actually destroys something real and valuable that the older structure embodied more adequately. Is a form which may be appropriate for a comprehensive school really right for the Church? Or, a slightly different question, is the obvious answer to the loss of manpower and money necessarily the right one? It may be right that the form of the Church should be dictated by the form of the world, as the W.C.C.'s study insisted in taking the "human zone" seriously.⁸ There are some strong theological reasons in a religion of incarnation for assuming that this may be so. But there are other theological reasons for suggesting that the job of the Church is to provide alternatives over against the world, signs of the newness of the Kingdom.⁹ One suspects that the truth is that both are needed and that wisdom is required to tell which is right in any given situation.

The converse is that the pragmatic interest of those concerned with mission can distort the nature of the sociological resources available. It is important to accept that the discoveries of the social sciences may have far wider critical implications than the person who is looking for a tool of analysis or action may imagine. This is why many sociologists, for instance, want to make a distinction between the sociology of religion and religious sociology. The former is the study of the nature and place of religion in society. The latter is the use of sociological data and techniques in the service of religion. If interest is confined to the latter then it may well be done on the basis of an inadequate and uncritical view of the nature and dynamic of religion. While one would agree that these two approaches are not altogether distinct since the theoretical and pragmatic cannot be held consistently apart, and that there is a real place for religious sociology, it would be untrue to the best Christian humanistic tradition to ignore the deeper and more searching questions that sociological theory asks of theology.¹⁰ It would be like saying that the opinion poll is the only sociological contribution to an understanding of politics.

A further comment that should be made here, which comes interestingly from a very different angle, is that of the question of "means". One of the major theological shifts in Protestantism was made when, as part of the emergence of pietistic evangelicalism, it was decided

that all means were proper in the use of evangelism. It was Charles Finney who first propounded the doctrine. Revival "is a purely philosophical result of the right use of constituted means".¹¹ In the 1830's the means was the newly emerging psychology and the powers of persuasion it offered. In the twentieth century, having absorbed the impact of Marx and Weber, it is the sociological sciences, though not excluding psychology. A new means is offered that can be a tool in the promotion of mission. It is not unimportant that Donald McGavran, himself part of that pietistic-evangelical tradition that included Finney, should actively advocate the absorption of the social sciences, notably anthropology, into the missionary's tool kit. "The Christian missionary who believes that in Jesus Christ God has revealed a way of life rewarding for all men, also uses anthropology for directed change. . . . Like other practitioners of applied anthropology, he is opposed to sacrificing the welfare of any people in order to keep it as a museum piece. . . . The Christian then turns to anthropology with a good conscience."¹²

With such a conception McGavran is open to all the criticisms that have been laid on programmed evangelism from Finney to Billy Graham. It is too easy for means to dominate the scene and to distort ends. It is also too easy for ends to justify the use of any means. Theologically there needs to be a firm integration of both ends and means in a doctrine of the Kingdom. And both ends and means need to be judged by the knowledge of the Kingdom. An interesting example of this is offered by some of the criticism of McGavran from the reformed evangelical tradition. The fundamental objection is that there is no systematic theological basis for "Church growth" methodology, notably expressed in weak doctrines of sin and of the Spirit. Too much credit is given to man and his powers of choice and wisdom—a criticism often heard of some "liberal" theologies and attitudes.¹³

Having suggested that there are some issues in the relation between sciences and faith that could well be explored much further, it is not thereby implied either that the various approaches to Church growth are wrong in drawing on the social sciences or that they are not conscious of the issues involved. The W.C.C. study in particular drew attention to these matters though recognised that it had not made much progress.¹⁴ Indeed all human wisdom is not only subject to the critique of the Gospel but is available for the Gospel, part of God's gift to us to use in his service.

III

A similar comment can be made in regard to the next issue. Interest and enthusiasm for "Church growth" implies that the number of Christians ought to multiply. No one wants to deny that it is a proper central concern of the Church that the Gospel should be proclaimed so that men and women can respond and enter into the life of discipleship. Our task is to proclaim that Christ is Lord and to invite all to confess him by faith and find life in his name. Yet it is not as simple as that,

as many "Church growth" advocates would agree. The trouble is that a passionate concern for what may well have been neglected elsewhere can cause a simplification of issues that polarises a choice when none is needed. So it may be as well to introduce a few notes of caution.

Lesslie Newbigin challenges McGavran's assumption that growth is a primary concern of the New Testament and of all mission. "I cannot find" he says, "that McGavran is right in his insistence upon numerical growth as the criterion of success in mission or in the way discipleship and perfecting are related in his writings".¹⁵ This conclusion is arrived at on a number of grounds, and while they may be addressed specifically to McGavran, they are pertinent at all times.

Some years ago Hans-Reudi Weber drew attention to "God's arithmetic".¹⁶ He pointed out that the proclamation of the Gospel may result in reduction of numbers rather than growth. For the Gospel is judgment as well as mercy. The call is to suffering servanthood, not to ease and refreshment except as gifts for renewed warfare. Clearly, it is vital equally not to hide behind a false satisfaction with small success, to make a virtue out of failure. McGavran rightly has severe strictures for such an attitude.¹⁷ It is true that the Gospel is good news and power and we tend to underestimate human thirst for grace. The truth is that it is faithful proclamation that is essential—whether they will hear or not, whether it adds to the Lord or brings judgment to the house of God.

Nevertheless there is an element in much contemporary enthusiasm of various kinds of what some have called "triumphalism".¹⁸ The term was coined to contrast the Church based on the strength of establishment to the need for the Church to accept a servant role in post-Christian western society. But it also points to a fundamental attitude towards the world: conquest rather than service, power rather than love, strength rather than brokenness. Once again there can be a false polarisation. Central to the Gospel is the conquering power of God and the renewal of the Spirit in the name of the risen Christ. But there is also salvation in and through the cross, a life into which we are called as servants of the Word for the world. As Daniel Jenkins has shown, the strength of the Christian in the world is related not to the place of the Church, of numbers or success, but to the transforming power of Christ that gives both power and humility.¹⁹

It is frequently stressed that time and effort should be given to areas of growth rather than to those areas where the reward is slow in coming.²⁰ There is much to be said for this principle in the use of limited resources. There is indeed a responsibility to meet the needs of those who are asking to hear the Gospel. Yet care must be taken not to turn this into an inflexible rule. Due recognition must be given to the equal responsibility to ensure that witness to the Gospel is found at every level of human experience and in all places. It is too easy to shake the dust off the feet and to withdraw from the unresponsive. In our own society it has been a widely noted phenomenon that the Church is middle class and finds its areas of strength in the

suburbs.²¹ This has left, for example, large areas of the inner city bereft of Church life. Is it not right that encouragement should be given to those who in various ways are called to devote themselves to the often unrewarding and difficult task of trying to create and sustain a living Christian presence in such areas? Is it not possible that the Churches will become, almost by accident and because it is easier, sectional in interest and cut off irrevocably from large parts of society? Without the hard graft and sacrifice of those, whether from within those communities or who have become identified with them, the Gospel would never have broken through so many barriers to become established in new milieux.

This links in with the distinction McGavran makes between "discipling" and "perfecting", a distinction which can be found in other terms elsewhere.²² What is being asserted is that the making of new Christians is the primary task which is preliminary to the need to grow into the full implications of the Gospel way. Again there is much truth here. There has to be a beginning, an entering into discipleship. It is only on the way that what this means can be worked out for the individual or the community. But it can so easily mean that the desire to make disciples can distort the reality of the Gospel demand so that conversion is made easy. To use Bonhoeffer's terms, the Gospel is made "cheap grace", offered on the basis of an easy acceptance. It is well known that religion can act as a means of sanctifying the human reality, giving it an authority which cannot then be challenged. We all do this so that our form of the faith is seen to be "the faith" and we do not recognise how this means giving sanction to our peculiar customs, prejudices, cultural patterns. Middle class Christianity tends to reinforce middle class *mores*. If then the Gospel is proclaimed to suit those circumstances the danger is that it appears merely to satisfy that kind of situation. It is all very well, even if true, to say that the Christians will also find that it challenges their assumptions and changes their way of life. But it may be that this is not really possible if the "pass has been sold" from the beginning. Rather the Christian presence should be both relevant but also an irritant wherever it is found in human society.

Parallel to this is a somewhat cavalier attitude to be found in McGavran and elsewhere to the existing churches and the ecumenical imperative.²³ In effect it is said the process of evangelism should not wait upon the readiness of the Church; division is not necessarily bad since this brings new stimuli and challenge. Again there is important truth here. Consensus ecumenism has in this country dragged the impetus of church life down. Consensus mission often means nothing happens. Without the missionary societies would anything much have been done over the last two hundred years? God does use all manner of instruments and he has frequently to recall the Church to mission. But that does not mean that the churches as they exist can be dismissed as irrelevant or renewal merely seen as an accidental spin-off. A real part of mission is the quality of the life of the Church. It is a matter

of careful wisdom to be able to hold in tension the proper claims of those who move ahead and the fellowship of the whole people of God. Moreover the impetuous action that forges ahead in a vital spirit of mission can often be blind not only to the problems being caused but to the needs of the new church life that is being formed. In the next stage, the next generation, there will be the same problems of slow development and maturity. Ecumenism, properly understood, is not an optional extra or an excuse for delay and inaction. It is rather an expression of the fact of the Gospel, that mission, unity, fellowship, service are all intertwined.

Such a critique is interestingly expressed also from the end of the "new evangelicals". Unity and evangelism are connected. J. T. Chao at the Lausanne congress, stressing the needs of the newer churches, states: "The Church as the People of God and as a whole was (in the New Testament) to carry out the evangelistic mandate of Christ".²⁴ And this is especially important for those at the receiving end. It is too easy for missions and missionaries to by-pass the Christians already present, however weak may be their witness. "Both the sending Church and the receiving Church are members of the body of Christ".²⁵ There is a real recognition, with the New Delhi statement of the W.C.C., that mission includes the unity of "all in each place".²⁶ The debate has continued and in subsequent "Lausanne literature" the point was reiterated by H. A. Snyder: "I would suggest that the evangelistic missionary mandate summons the Church today . . . towards some form of visible unity of the Church itself".²⁷ Once again the basis of ecumenism in mission is being discovered, a salutary reminder to those whose ecumenism has lost its living roots.

Nor is this entirely a matter confined to the traditional missionary context. There is always a tendency for new enthusiasms to produce their own forms and structures. Yet this can be very destructive of already existing ways and means. Often it means needless duplication and a mode of exclusivism that harms everyone involved. Moreover, it is not necessary for the wheel constantly to be reinvented. Past experience and tradition is a resource to draw upon as well as to challenge. Too frequently we see local ecumenical structures ignored or undermined and needless tension in corporate witness. One had hoped that the National Initiative in Evangelism would be a means to a fresh understanding of the fulness of Christian witness. Unfortunately, there are signs that the sensitivity and maturity needed to grow through such proper diversities is not always present. Surely, the Anglican evangelicals were right when at the Keele conference in 1968 they affirmed both their distinctive witness and their determination to stay firmly in the wider tradition of which they are a part which is a pledge to the Church universal.

IV

This raises the need to look at McGavran's key thesis, and perhaps his special contribution; "Men like to become Christians without

crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers".²⁸ He points out that the Great Commission commands that disciples be made from among "all peoples". And this is understood to mean "families of mankind—tribes, castes, and lineages of men".²⁹ McGavran accepts that the cultural variety of the human race is God-given. It is not the job of the Church to smash these differences but to work in them, through them and within them. "The true goal is to multiply *in every piece of the magnificent mosaic, truly Christian churches which fit that piece*, are closely adapted to *its* culture and recognised by *its* non-Christians as 'our kind of show'".³⁰

Lesslie Newbigin has at length discussed this thesis in relation to world mission. While recognising the proper need to take culture seriously, he finds McGavran's concept as too rigid and in fact untrue both to world history and to the actuality of mission. "They are given, but not changeless and absolute".³¹

Here, however, we are more concerned with our own British situation. It is interesting to see how McGavran's general thesis is paralleled elsewhere. We cannot avoid the fact that our society is divided and segmented in many ways. One, the class barriers, have already been noted and these are reflected not only in the shape of our cities but in industrial structures and education. But there are other kinds of division. The professional and technological barriers are as real; separating people into different professions, crafts, specialisms, each of which has its own language, work ethic, structures of power and so on. Then there are other role structures so that all of us usually find ourselves operating differently in different circumstances. We have our domestic lives, our work lives, our interest groups, all of which claim their own autonomy.

It was this phenomenon that concerned much of the study of the Missionary Structure of the Congregation. Its leaders were anxious that the churches should develop structures that related to the various sectors of society. Indeed something of this kind has grown up in various ways, notably in the traditional areas of education and medicine and more recently in industrial and urban chaplaincies. What caused concern was that the churches did not normally see these as all fitting together in a homogeneous pattern of ministry and mission. The growth of regional councils of churches with full time staff has begun to meet this challenge.³² All this is a form of "contextualisation", the desire to find forms of church life appropriate to the structures of society. This is one of the concerns to which the phrase "the world sets the agenda" was intended to point. Nevertheless, sector ministries must not lead to sectional interests. It is as true here as for the wider canvas on which McGavran was working, that over and above the agenda is the Lord who is present and active in every place and would "fold heaven and earth into a single peace". One of the imperatives of our time is for the pluriformity of our society and therefore of mission to be more adequately recognised and for the different styles and aims of different groups to be seen as complementary in the total witness to Christ.³³

V

Something, finally, must be said about the theological basis behind much "Church growth". McGavran distinguishes between a theology of search and a theology of harvest. In the process he usefully criticises a number of contemporary missiological fashions often hiding under such ideas as "dialogue" and "presence" which can be distortions of valid and proper aspects of Christian witness but which inhibit proclamation. John Stott has also provided a penetrating and coherent critique of much modern mission theology.³⁴ McGavran wants to keep the valuable and vital realities of all mission activity while desiring to reestablish the priority of evangelism. He is not wanting to deny the theology of search, only to insist that it is not enough. "Theology of mission, remembering that God is One, must look equally to the God who Searches and the God who Finds".³⁵

This comprehensive understanding of mission should surely commend itself. If we understand God as the one who cares for his whole creation and wills the fulness of all reality, then there is bound to be a multifaceted expression of that in the work of the Spirit and in our calling to mission. Emphases and differences there will be because the particular calling of people and churches will vary from place to place and time to time. But they should be seen as partial but proper in the whole providence of God. Correctives there will need to be as we distort the calling or as we need to be renewed and changed within it.

For this reason I suspect any suggestion of either-or which so easily creeps in. The Missionary Structure of the Congregation study wanted to challenge the tradition of the Church. It usefully suggested that we should see the Church's relation to God and his mission not in terms of God sending the Church into the world, but in terms of God, active in the world, being witnessed to by the Church.³⁶ But this does not mean that the God-Church-world model should be opposed to God-world-Church, but that both, and other models, are useful in describing aspects of mission. Similarly, the emphasis on Church growth or evangelism should not be seen as antagonistic to other expressions of Christian witness but as complementary and mutually corrective. The trouble often is that in the proper desire to concentrate on a real need or calling we make our theology provide an absolute and simplistic justification of our action and denigrate as partial or unfaithful those we find acting differently or who question what we hold precious. An overriding concern for Church growth can, and it is not alone in this, be supported by a logical simplicity that borders on the inadequate.

All that has been possible in a short compass has been to take up, and select a few critical issues raised by the interest in "Church growth". This should not, however, be taken to mean that the renewed vitality in certain directions which this represents is not to be welcomed. It is important too that the critique and challenge that it brings must be listened to with great seriousness. As an idea whose

time appears to have come we must recognise that God is calling us to rediscover in our time something which is central to the life of the Church. We can rejoice in all advances of the Gospel. But just as this corrects the faults of the past, so we must also remember that what has been important previously was itself part of God's renewing and correcting activity of its own past. So too we must remember that we today must be open to judgment. So a critical discussion, while it may obscure some points, is offered in the hope that, as part of a dialogue in the continuous pilgrimage in which we are all engaged, it can be a small contribution to broadening and deepening understanding which is complementary to positive and purposeful action.

NOTES

¹ Cf. Lesslie Newbigin: *The Open Secret* (S.P.C.K., 1979), p. 10; Paul H. Ballard: "Theology of Mission, a survey 1952-77", *Fraternal*, Jan. 1979, pp 3-12; Harvey T. Hoekstra; *Evangelism in Eclipse* (Paternoster 1979) chapter 7; *Meeting in Bangkok* (report of the C.W.M.G. world conference, 1973), *International Review of Mission* LXII, 246, April 1973, especially Section III pp. 216-223; "Confessing Christ Today" (report of Section I, W.C.C. Assembly in Nairobi, 1975) in D. Paton (editor) *Breaking Barriers* (S.P.C.K., 1976).

² Lausanne report: J. D. Douglas: *Let the Earth hear His Voice* (World Wide Publications, 1975). Also C. René Padilla: *The New Face of Evangelism* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1979); Richard Quebedeaux: *The Young Evangelicals* (Harper & Row, 1974).

³ It is proper to mention here the work of people like David Watson: *I Believe in Evangelism* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1978); Michael Harper: *Let my People Grow* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1977); it is interesting to note how many ideas put forward were being vigorously discussed in the 1950's.

⁴ There is an immense literature published by William Carey Library, Pasadena. The most recent book by Donald McGavran: *Understanding Church Growth* (Erdmans, 1970) provides a summary of his views and is the basis for much of this discussion; also *How Churches Grow* (World Dominion, 1959). Cf. Eddie Gibbs; *Urban Church Growth* (Grove Booklet 55, 1977); also review of McGavran *op. cit.* James A. Scherer: *International Review of Missions* LX-235, Jan. 1971.

⁵ Walter J. Hollenweger (editor): *The Church for Others* (W.C.C., 1967); Thomas Wieser: *Planning for Mission* (Epworth, 1966); and a special study done on the Swansea zone, Vivian Jones (editor): *Church in a Mobile Society* (Christopher Davies, 1969).

⁶ From the U.S.A. see the work of people like Earl Ezra Jones, Lyle E. Schaller and Carl S. Dudley. Loren B. Mead: *New Hope for Congregations* (Seabury, 1972); Elisa L. Des Portes: *Congregations in Change* (Seabury, 1973). In Britain David Wasdell: *Growth in Context* (Urban Church Project, 1979, from St. Matthias Vicarage, Poplar High Street, London, E14 0AE) and other papers. Also: George Lovell: *The Church and Community Development* (Grail, 1972) and G. Lovell & C. Widdicombe: *Churches & Communities* (Search, 1978); F. Milson: *An Introduction to Community Work* (R & KP, 1974).

⁷ *Long Range Planning and the Church*: reprinted from *Long Range Planning* (Dec. 1979).

⁸ *Church for Others*, pp 30-33.

⁹ See e.g. D. Clark: *Basic Communities* (S.P.C.K., 1977) or Andrew Lockley: *Christian Communes* (S.C.M., 1976).

¹⁰ For a discussion of the relation between religious sociology and the sociology of religion, see, e.g. Robin Gill: *Social Context of Theology* (Mowbray, 1975) chap. 2; Michael Hill: *A Sociology of Religion* (Heinemann, 1973) chap. 1.

¹¹ C. G. Finney: *Lectures on Revivals* (New York, 1833) p. 167.

¹² *Understanding Church Growth*, p. 107.

¹³ E.g. in some contributions to H. M. Conn (editor): *Theological Perspectives on Church Growth* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publications, 1976).

¹⁴ Cf. *Planning for Mission*, pp 131-133.

¹⁵ *op. cit.*: p. 157.

¹⁶ *Frontier* (6-IV, Winter 1963), pp. 298-301.

¹⁷ *op. cit.* pp. 34-37.

¹⁸ For a brief discussion of "triumphalism" see: Max Warren: *I believe in the Great Commission* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1976) chaps. 4 and 5.

¹⁹ *Christian Maturity and the Theology of Success* (S.C.M., 1976).

²⁰ E.g. in McGavran *op. cit.* chap. 3.

²¹ For a critique of this principle on world mission level see Newbigin *op. cit.* pp. 139-147. Concerning the suburban Church and the city cf. Gibson Winter: *The Suburban Captivity of the Church* (Doubleday, 1961); David Sheppard: *Built as a City* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1974).

²² McGavran *op. cit.* p. 359.

²³ E.g. McGavran *op. cit.* pp. 13 ff. cf. also the more radical distinction Ralph Winter appears to make between mission and the Church which would seem to be perpetuate and endorse the tradition that missions are a special and separate activity as a result of the need for evangelism: cf. *Let the Earth hear His Voice*, pp. 226-241, and *International Review of Mission* LX-237, Jan. 1971.

²⁴ *Let the Earth hear his Voice*, p. 1107.

²⁵ *ibid.* p. 1109 where he is criticising J. R. McQuilkin & C. Peter Wagner.

²⁶ New Delhi statement on "the unity we seek" in *New Delhi Speaks* (S.C.M.,) 1962) p. 55.

²⁷ In *The New Face of Evangelicalism* p. 157 (his italics).

²⁸ *op. cit.* p. 198.

²⁹ *op. cit.* p. 62.

³⁰ In *Let the Earth hear his Voice* p. 101. (his italics).

³¹ *Op. cit.* p. 160, cf. his wider critique including "contextualisation" pp. 157-180.

³² *The Church for Others*, pp. 20-23.

³³ Cf. *For God's Sake Say Something* (Britain Today and Tomorrow 3, B.C.C., 1978). Also note the great interest in "contextualisation" in recent theology (e.g. South American "theologies of liberation" or "Black Theology") and in the area of theological education.

³⁴ *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Falcon, 1975).

³⁵ *Op. cit.* p. 47, cf. the whole of chap. 2.

³⁶ *The Church for Others*, pp. 15-18.

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