

PART FOUR

A PARISH IN MISSION

CHAPTER 14

ST. PAUL'S, GINNINDERRA

By

Rev. Dr Brian Carter circa 1989

The contents of this dissertation so far have been expressed deliberately in terms of the general principles of suburban missiology. This has been done in order to provide the reader with an introduction to some of the theoretical factors which empower parishes in their local mission, whoever and wherever those parishes may be. It remains now to contextualize the principles in the actual experience of the particular Australian Anglican suburban parish of which the author is the rector in order to sum up and draw together the material that has been presented, and to offer a concrete example of how the missionary principles presented are being applied. Here follows an account of the life of the Anglican parish of St. Paul's, Ginninderra and the author's personal involvement in it.

The Suburban Context

St. Paul's, Ginninderra is an Anglican parish in suburban Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. Canberra is located on the southern highlands of New South Wales, and was founded in 1932 as the national capital. It is 300 kilometres south of Sydney and 650 kilometres north of Melbourne. It is home to educated and affluent commonwealth public servants and the service industries (building, transport, retail, wholesale, education and medical) which support them. Most Canberrans have moved in from Sydney, Melbourne or the surrounding hinterland. There is a large week-end exodus to the nearby mountains, coast and Sydney.

From the late 1950s there has been a massive growth in the Commonwealth Public Service based in Canberra as government departments transferred their staff from Sydney and Melbourne. To accommodate this rapid increase in population a government statutory body, the National Capital Development Commission, designed and build satellite townships. These were the subject of careful town planning, and are based on the concept of a central town centre containing major retail and service industries and smaller suburbs of about 3,000 to 4,000 people which focus upon a government primary school and local shops. The satellite town of Belconnen was commenced in 1966. It now contains a large retail shopping mall, service industries, a hospital, a university, a College of Technical and Further Education and the Australian Institute of Sport. The area is serviced by high quality arterial drives, with streets, crescents and places giving access to houses within the suburbs. There are adequate outdoor recreational facilities.

Belconnen now has a population of over 80,000 and contains twenty two suburbs. Of these, Melba, Evatt, Spence, McKellar and Florey (in order of construction) have been grouped together by the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn to form what is now referred to as the Parish of St. Paul, Ginninderra. Each suburb has a cluster of neighbourhood shops. Within these five suburbs there are five primary schools with adjacent pre-schools, one high school for secondary school years 7 to 10 and a junior college (Copland College) with 700 students in years 11 and 12. The Melba and Florey Medical Centres provide a range of medical services, and doctors in private practice are located throughout the area. The community profile is revealed by the Australian Bureau of Census and

Statistics figures for Melba, the oldest suburb in the area, and based on the 1986 Census: 47% were below the age of twenty nine years; 75% were Australian born; and over 50% of the workforce was employed by the Australian government.

Thus the parish area (total population 19,000) consists of young, dormitory suburbs. There is no central focus of the local community to which the church can relate. Although there is a high rate of Christian profession (1986 National Census for Melba indicated 71.4% of the population professed a Christian denomination - 21% Anglican) there is high resistance to the gospel and church membership. Combined average weekly church attendance for all churches in the area covered by this parish is not greater than 10% of the population. A feature of suburban Canberra, with its proximity to the coastal beaches, mountain resorts, Sydney and the country towns (where many of its inhabitants still have family) is the weekend exodus of people to visit recreational resorts or relatives. Of most significance is the mobility of the population, confirmed by the fact that Melba Primary School has a 25% annual turnover. The growth and decline of the church is affected by this constant movement in and out of Canberra as people are transferred throughout the Public Service and the defence forces. This transience inhibits church growth because it results in a lack of loyalty to the local community (such as it is) and to the local church. Transients have shallow roots, and the churches' ability to assimilate incoming transfers is under heavy demand. There is also a high degree of family instability. More than 30% of children at Melba Primary School do not have both parents still living together.

A History of the Parish

When the new housing area of Belconnen began in 1966 a program of cooperation was drawn up by what was then five denominations; Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Church of Christ. The plan was to develop the local churches of this new housing area on a cooperative basis. Each parish was to be established with two congregations from these denominations working together under the Covenant of the Belconnen Cooperating Churches. Two foundation stones of this covenant were the 'Common Purse' whereby monies from the congregations in a parish were pooled, and the 'Group Council', comprised of an equal number of members from the respective congregations, which functioned as the parish council. As new suburbs were built and settled so new cooperating parishes were established. Of these, what is now St. Paul's, Ginninderra was the fourth.

In 1972 the first houses were built and settled in Melba, and the first Anglican church service was held in the Assembly Hall of the new Melba Primary School in March, 1973. The author was appointed as the first full time priest in February, 1974 when there was an average Sunday attendance of 25 communicants. From 1974 to 1978 both the Anglican and Uniting (Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational) congregations continued to develop in close cooperation in the one parish known as the "The Cooperating Churches of North Belconnen" and covering the suburbs of Melba, Evatt, Spence, Charnwood, Flynn and Fraser. A common purse pooled all finance; mutual fellowship was maintained by totally combined activities such as the Sunday School, youth ministry, social events, fetes, study groups and weekend camps. Regular monthly combined services were held and the two clergy ministered to some extent across the denominations represented. During this time the Methodist and Congregational Church and some Presbyterians throughout Australia came together to form the Uniting Church of Australia and the Uniting Church congregation thus gained a stronger sense of identity. In 1978, because of some difficulties in another cooperating parish, the Anglican denominational authorities dissolved the common purse arrangement and the 'Group Council' method of local church government. From that time on other factors developed which eventually led to the dissolution of formal cooperation in North Belconnen.

In 1979 four significant factors combined which considerably strengthened the local Anglican church. Firstly, there was the dissolution of cooperation (allowing a greater focus upon a specifically Anglican agenda). Secondly, a parish roll was organized which required an annual formal commitment to the life of the parish (moving the concept of membership in the direction of a sodality). [1] Thirdly, an 8.00am congregation was started at Melba, increasing the options for style of worship. Fourthly, a new congregation was started at the Fraser Primary School, increasing the options for geographical proximity to people's homes. These factors produced an annual growth rate in 1979 of 75% (from 120 to 215 members)! In 1980 the suburbs of Flynn, Fraser and Charnwood were divided off from Melba, Evatt and Spence to form the Special District of North-West Belconnen focused upon the new congregation at Fraser. The author continued as the priest for the two districts until February, 1981 when a priest for the new area was appointed.

He was then able to give his undivided attention to what was by then the parish of St. Paul's, Ginninderra, meeting for Sunday worship in Melba Primary School, covering the area of Melba, Evatt and Spence and having a newly constructed building consisting of a rectory, study/parish office and meeting room.

Towards the end of 1981 and in early 1982 the 9.30am congregation outgrew the venue for Sunday services in the Melba Primary School and in May, 1982 both congregations moved to a much larger and convenient venue in Copland College, a secondary school college adjacent to the rectory and meeting room building. This move required abandoning the combined Sunday School that had been maintained with the Uniting Church at Melba School and the setting up of an Anglican Sunday School. It also required a significant increase in expenditure in the hiring of accommodation at Copland College. This meant the final and complete dissolution of formal cooperation with the Uniting Church and represented the coming of age of St. Paul's as an independent and self-contained parish.

The routine of parish life continued steadily throughout 1982-1986. A part-time stipendiary parish assistant for pastoral work (later to be ordained deacon) came to the parish in 1984 and a part-time youth worker and a part-time parish secretary were added to the staff in 1986. The population of the area continued to grow with the development of two new suburbs, McKellar and Florey. During this period there was consistent E-0-B evangelism (particularly to families enquiring about baptism for their children), a growing lay ministry, effective pastoral ministry provided by the part-time deacon, an effective children's ministry by competent Sunday School teachers, a growing youth ministry, life related Bible teaching in sermons and study groups and a clearly defined philosophy of ministry based on the slogan "More and Better Christians". From 155 communicant members in 1982 the parish grew to 240 members in 1986, a decadal growth rate of 287%.

During this period St. Paul's functioned as a "pastoral church". As growth continued it became apparent that the parish structures and the rector were working at their maximum capacity for growth and missionary outreach. The rector continued to retain the expectation upon himself that he would know and personally minister to every member of the parish, and parish council was giving attention to almost every detail of parish life. The rector became increasingly aware of the limitations of the parish structures and the difficulty of sustaining parish growth. The parish was up against the "200 barrier". In May, 1986 the rector attended a meeting in Canberra at which Dr. Eddie Gibbs introduced the concepts of the skill level of the pastor having direct bearing upon the capacity of a parish to grow beyond a certain size, the fact of the "200 barrier", the missiology of the church growth movement and the possibility of the rector engaging in the Fuller Doctor of Ministry program. A way ahead began to open! The Parish Council and the bishop encouraged the rector to embark upon the Doctor of Ministry program with the expectation that he would be equipped to help the parish in its future mission and continued growth. The rector attended the Fuller Doctor of Ministry seminar, "Church Growth I" in August of that year.

By 1986 the 9.30am congregation at Copland had grown to fill the available accommodation to the point where further expansion growth there was unlikely. The decision was made to make yet another attempt at extension growth. In September of that year several families moved off from Copland to found another congregation at Spence Primary School. In 1987 the Spence congregation gave active missionary outreach to its own suburb and set up its own worship style independent of the rector's direct leadership, while the Copland 9.30am congregation struggled to recover from the loss of some of its key leaders to Spence and from other transfer loss out of Canberra. It was in this context that the rector experienced anxious tension and burn-out over the welfare of the 9.30 Copland congregations and his relationship to what was by then the semi-autonomous Spence congregation. In August, 1987 he attended the Fuller Doctor of Ministry Seminar CN705 conducted by Dr. Arch Hart, "The Minister's Personal Growth and Skill Development." The contents of chapter 8, "Durability - Leadership Survival", reflect much of what he had both experienced and learned in 1987.

In allegiance to the parish's missionary purpose, in response to active interest in the possibility for some kind of multi-purpose building, and faced with the settlement of the new suburb of Florey, the Parish Council executive developed a growth strategy which was presented to and adopted by a general meeting of the parish in April, 1988. This growth strategy, which aimed at a medium term growth goal of 450 communicant members, contained the following elements:

- a. Achieve a much greater level of lay-ministry.
- b. Pay off the loan on the rectory building, which would release over \$10,000 per year to help pay for extra

staff.

- c. Start another congregation at Florey in 1989 and then other congregations as venues and ministry become available.
- d. Ask the bishop to appoint an assistant full-time priest in 1989 to help bring in more members, assist the proposed congregation at Florey and co-ordinate youth activities. [2]

Since then lay ministry has continued to develop; over \$20,000 was raised and the rectory loan eliminated by early 1989; a congregation under lay leadership has been established in Florey; a full-time assistant priest was appointed in March, 1989; and another congregation specifically catering for youth has been established in the parish meeting room on Sunday evenings, again under lay leadership. Progress towards the medium term growth goal of 450 members has proceeded and the communicant membership of the parish roll has grown from 215 members in 1985 to 290 members in 1989 (a decadal growth rate of 237%). At the time of writing consideration is being given to the addition of a third full-time staff member in 1990 to work amongst youth and young families. [3] A committee to explore all aspects of a building program is to be set up in 1990.

An analysis of Baptist and Anglican churches in England revealed that churches are most likely to grow in two bands of membership size, "101 - 150" and "301 and over". [4] If this is valid for Australia then 1990 should see the further growth of St. Paul's as it moves into the band of "301 and over" size.

A Biblical Theology

The foundation of mission is the loving purpose of God to redeem in Jesus Christ a people for his own possession, and the parish in mission must be loyal to those same principles which directed Jesus in his earthly ministry. Jesus Christ is THE missionary, THE apostle: "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 3:14). As St. Paul's, Ginninderra proclaims of itself each week at the Greeting of Peace in the Holy Communion, "We are the body of Christ. His Spirit is with us", so it must understand and obey the missionary principles of Christ for this self-designation to be accurate. As it commemorates Jesus' words about the purpose of his death, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you, and for many", so it must continually raise the horizons of its awareness to embrace "the many" who surround it in the suburbs of Melba, Evatt, Spence, McKellar and Florey for whom Christ died and whom he would redeem.

Therefore, because mission is central to the ontology of a Christian parish, the Biblical theology of mission must continually be taught and expressed in the life of the parish. The rector's own preaching and teaching within the parish, both in public and in private, by sermons, study notes, position papers, annual reports and personal conversations, have deliberately and repeatedly stressed the biblical foundations for suburban mission. The members of the church have come from a wide range of ecclesiastical experience and background. The biblical understanding and theology of mission within Anglicanism, and within this Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, has not been strong. There has been ignorance or even denial of the essentials of the gospel (usually expressed as "justification by works", a denial of the assurance of salvation and the admission of spiritual defeat in the personal lives of church members). So an adequate and accurate content of the gospel as kerygma, as the power of the kingdom of God, as expressed in the mission and ministry of Jesus, and as displayed in the quality of life of Christian discipleship has needed to be taught and retaught. Sometimes there has been both a cold and unloving "biblicism" and "traditionalism" on the one hand and on the other a charismatic enthusiasm dependent upon an emotional euphoria devoid of or suspicious of any cognitive appreciation of a Biblical theology of the Holy Spirit. So there has needed to be a constant exposition of the principles of both Word and Spirit in order to establish and retain in the parish an understanding of the purpose and motive of mission.

The members of St. Paul's, Ginninderra need to know the direction of their mission - down in humility to sit alongside those estranged or defeated by sin; up in the victory of forgiveness and hope by the power of the ascended Christ, out to those in the surrounding suburbs and in to union with Christ. Their ministry is to be empowered by the reliable and consistent love of God, expressed through charity and put into effect in the context of intercessory prayer. To survive and triumph in mission they will need to understand spiritual warfare. They will need confidence in God's sovereignty on the one hand and the readiness to accept their own human responsibility on the other.

The quality of life enjoined upon the members of parish, in both their individual and corporate lives, is expressed in the New Testament's presentation of the life of the Holy Spirit. The growth of the spiritual quality of the parish and the temporal fulfilment of its mission will be demonstrated to the extent that parish members confidently rejoice in the availability of the Spirit, are open to the awareness he brings, live in the experience of regenerate children of the Father, attend to his word in spiritual alertness, call upon him in dependent prayer, show forth the fruit of his Spirit in their lives, look forward in hope to the completion of what they know the Spirit has begun in them, and respond in awareness to the call for the decision to offer the sacrifice of costly service in the Spirit's outward thrust of mission.

This dissertation upon the empowering of a parish in mission has presented a biblical theology of mission as the key factor. Ultimately, it is the Word of God and the Spirit of God together who have the right, competence and power to direct and control the church of God. There are other factors in missionary effectiveness, and of these leadership and some parish structures are presented. But the foundation stone is the missionary purpose of God expressed in Scripture by the Spirit. So the parish in mission must understand the theology of mission. Ecclesiastical success is not necessarily the same as loyalty or faithfulness to God's purpose for the accurate and effective mission of his church.

Leadership

Missionary leadership within St. Paul's, Ginninderra has been primarily the transformation of the goals and aspirations of the members by the application of a biblical theology of mission. It has been the rector's personal and long held conviction that the people of Christ called together in a parish should embrace and persevere in the mission of Christ to their own local and contemporary community, and if it is the conviction of the leader that gives him the power to convince, then the rector has sought to maintain and express his conviction whenever possible.

However, there are three areas of resistance to this transforming leadership which have been encountered at St. Paul's, and these are most likely to be present in all Australian Anglican parishes.

The first of these areas of resistance comes from the strength of Australian egalitarianism. Except in the field of sport, Australians do not respond well to "heroes"; they "cut down tall poppies" and hold that "Jack is as good as his master". In what is proud to be a classless society, and contrary to the American capacity to elevate ecclesiastical celebrities, the Australian church leader can rarely expect a personal following and in the Anglican ethos would eschew such expectation should it ever arise. Security and allegiance to Australian culture is found in remaining "one of the boys", and to move away from that is regarded as a betrayal. Both the leaders and the members of the parish are faced with the dilemma of the expectations of the rector (and others in leadership roles) to be both a humble servant and also an effective leader. [5]

The second area of resistance is expressed as "No prophet is accepted in his home town" (Luke 4:24). Although there are strengths in the long tenure of the rector, such as a sense of parish stability, there is nevertheless the truth that if familiarity does not breed contempt it may well foster complacency. After a current tenure of sixteen years, the present rector's ongoing call to mission could be falling on ears that have become deaf to his voice and jaded to what may have become his clichés.

Thirdly, and as has been expounded in general terms in Chapter 7 as the facts and factors of maintenance, resistance to missionary leadership comes from the innate tendency of Anglicans to pull back from missionary growth and settle within the comfort zone of their own maintenance. This finds expression in such publically expressed phrases as, "For the next few years parish council must be into the business of consolidation rather than more and more growth", "I attended a parish function recently and was distressed to find present many people whom I had never met before" and "Why must we be divided into these various congregations? Why cannot we meet all together as one family." Such sentiments reflect the very typical experience of many Anglicans who were nurtured in small churches and who are reluctant to invest in the discomfort, cost and change required for a parish to grow.

There has been in St. Paul's a twofold response to these three areas of resistance to missionary leadership.

Firstly, and in the ethos of Anglicanism, in the Australian culture and particularly in the Canberra context of a well educated and competent parish membership, leadership is only possible as it is shared and by consensus. By diocesan ordinance the parish council shares with the rector the function of leadership, and all projects and decisions affecting the general life of the parish are made by the parish council and the rector together. Major parish decisions are made or at least formalised in the setting of general meetings of the whole parish in which all members have the opportunity to express their mind and to be heard, and this has been the case in all the major decisions referred to above in the outline of St. Paul's history. In Gailbraith's terminology and in the absence of and rejection of any condign or compensatory power, the rector's own leadership style has been intentionally the application of conditioned power - the attempt to convince people in such a way that they have acted out of a sense of what they have believed to be the right thing to do (see chapter six, page 114). It has been a case of, "In the light of these factors let us together decide what is the right thing to do" rather than "I have decided what the parish should do, and you should support me". This shared leadership has also meant for the rector the deliberate delegation to other leaders in the parish and the intention to encourage and support them. The clearest example of this has been the starting of the congregations of Spence and Florey, both of which have functioned under lay leadership.

The second response to leadership resistance has been to persevere in the application of Biblical theology in the conviction that the people of God are able to discern and desire the will of God as expressed in scripture. The principle here is that missionary leadership does not emerge from the personality of the leader, but from the word of God which he proclaims and teaches. So in sermons, papers and contributions to the parish council agenda the rector has continually pointed to the call from scripture for a missionary endeavour. It is not necessary that parishioners follow the rector personally, but that they follow the word of God which the rector and others may proclaim. The transforming leader thus points away from himself to the missionary principles which he himself is constrained to follow.

The transactional leadership of St. Paul's has been applied as the rector and other members of the parish have provided resources and practical advice on various missionary structures and projects. Two simple examples, contained within this dissertation and which will serve to contextualize the principles involved, are chapter 13 on starting a new church and chapter 12 on new member ministry.

Throughout 1988 the plans and preparations were made for the starting of a new congregation in the new Florey Primary School to open in 1989. The leader and the nucleus gathering around him looked for guidance and support in a specific missionary venture to a new suburb which was geographically isolated from existing congregations in the parish and which was beyond the capacity of existing parish structures for evangelism and pastoral care. The contents of Chapter 13, was supplied to them as a paper early in 1989 and has contributed to the basis for their operations.

In the context of a highly mobile community and with the intention of church growth, a ministry of welcome to and assimilation of new members is vital. In the years when the parish functioned as a "pastoral church", and when the rector was present at every service, the assimilation of new members was monitored directly and mostly supplied by himself. However, now that the parish is functioning deliberately as a "program parish", each congregation needs to have an intentional program in place for this ministry, especially since it is now possible for people to join the parish without receiving any direct ministry from the rector. The contents of Chapter 12 has been given in the form of a paper to all congregational leaders, lay readers and the pastoral care team as a model for their own ministry to new members. It will be necessary for the rector to monitor, guide and direct this ministry, and as other parish leaders share with him the goal of parish growth and new members finding a spiritual home here, so they will need to receive the technical guidance on how to achieve these goals.

Chapter 8, "Durability - Leadership Survival", has particular relevance to St. Paul's, and to the rector, for two reasons. Firstly, in recent years some suburban parishes have suffered the destruction of their rectors' ministry through loss of faith, marriage breakup or power struggles within the leadership circle. This destruction, and the damage to the church caused by it, has been observed as a sober and timely warning. Secondly, the contents of chapter 8, although expressed in general terms, is largely an account of the rector's own personal response to the issues raised. Leadership tensions, depression, burnout, the tension between anxiety and anguish, anger, handling the expectations of others, and self-care are all elements of leadership with which the rector has had to come to

terms in his own life and in his ministry of encouraging and enabling others. For him the most vivid of these was the burnout experience of 1987 when he was faced with a demoralised and depleted 9.30 Copland congregation and the emotional exhaustion at the thought of having to re-apply to it the efforts of former years.

Parish Structures for Mission

As well as the ministry to new members and the starting of new congregations, referred to briefly above, three other missionary structures have been central to the mission of St. Paul's. These are lay ministry, management and evangelism.

Lay Ministry

As early as the days of full cooperation with the Uniting Church the parish has fostered the concept of small groups meeting under lay leadership. These were known as "Neighbourhood Groups" and gave the many people new to the parish the opportunity to meet others, either Anglican or Uniting Church, in their own suburbs. Apart from traditional forms of lay ministry such as leading part of the Sunday worship services, Sunday School teaching and leadership through parish council, the Neighbourhood Group Leaders carried much of the routine pastoral care and the welcoming of new members. After cooperation was dissolved St. Paul's developed both the concept of "Parish Representatives", people assigned to care for several families in parish membership, and the formation of small groups for bible study, prayer and mutual encouragement.

Lay ministry received its strongest boost with the introduction of what was known as "The Co-Worker Course" in 1981. This was a course of study which aimed to give those involved an introduction to the background and theology of the Old and New Testaments, some understanding of the spiritual principles of ministry and mission, and some practical skills in pastoral care, evangelism, counselling and the nurturing of new Christians. For the next several years a significant number of parish members participated in this course, and they went on to have expectations of their own involvement in ministry. In 1989 this course was revived and revised under the program title, "Moving into Ministry". "MIM", as it is now known, is conducted as a series of studies and group meetings over a twelve week period twice per year. It has the essential objectives of strengthening the spiritual life of the participants and the confidence of their status under the gospel. It aims to encourage them in the life of discipleship, to teach them the concept of being God's co-worker, to introduce them to some of the spiritual principles of mission and ministry, and to help them discover, develop and use their spiritual gifts. Chapter 9, "Lay Ministry", is largely a statement on the contents of the Moving Into Ministry program. Along with the conducting of these courses there has come from the rector the expectation that all Christians have a ministry, and he has thus deliberately encouraged and made room for such ministry. The future of the parish will see the clergy and parish staff move further away from doing the work of ministry and more to leading, enabling and supporting lay people in their ministry. The clearest example of this is that the new congregations of Spence and Florey are almost entirely an expression of lay ministry.

Management

Since the new sense of identity and independence for St. Paul's was established in 1982 there has been greater freedom to develop a style of management in close accord with the parish's own sense of purpose. The biblical theology received from some visiting speakers, other parish leaders and the rector over the years has established a strong philosophy of ministry based on the concepts that the parish exist for the God-ward purpose of pleasing him, and that this purpose is fulfilled by reaching out to the world with his mission and nurturing to maturity in Christ his people within the parish membership. The parish has been encouraged to believe that God has a plan for it, and that the plan will be discovered in unity and accord. Each year the newly elected Parish Council comes together for an all-day planning meeting in which the goals and programs for the coming year are formulated. It was at one of these planning days that there emerged the slogan which expresses the philosophy of ministry, "More and Better Christians." The strategic planning has been to work towards that objective, responding both to the internal developments of the parish and to the demands and opportunities presented from the surrounding community. Examples of this have been the establishment of the new congregations, the development of lay ministry and the addition of staff.

Because of an influx of new people, especially in the new congregations, there is now a significant proportion of the parish's membership who do not know and who have not shared its past history. St. Paul's now faces the classic problems of the developing program parish, namely disunity and communication breakdown. For this reason, and in order to achieve a greater parish unity and goal ownership in the face of a growing diversity, it is essential that it engages yet again in the process of developing a mission statement that is congruent both with its biblical theology and suburban context. Chapter 12, "Managing the Missionary Parish", sets out the steps for this, points towards the need to attend to marketing and establishes the principles by which St. Paul's is to identify and reaffirm its preferred future as a growing and effective parish set in a large suburban mission field. A faith projection looks to a communicant membership of 450 during 1991.

Evangelism

Based on the principles outlined in Chapter 11, "Evangelism", there has developed in St. Paul's the concept of "Home Evangelists". These are people who desired to share their faith and are prepared to be trained in an apprenticeship of visiting people's homes to share a gospel outline. Over the years a number of people have become home evangelists, and their primary work has been to visit the homes of families enquiring about infant baptism. St. Paul's has not had a great capacity for outreach to those who have been culturally or ecclesiastically distant. However, in terms of E-0-C and E-1-A, there are some thousands of nominal Anglicans living in the parish area, and these people represent the parish's most open evangelistic opportunity. In recent times, with the maturing of the suburban population, the number of infant baptism enquiries has greatly declined. However, in accord with the principle of receptivity outlined in Chapter 11, St. Paul's has developed a contact list of hundreds of families who have identified themselves as Anglican. It is faced with a growing number of aged and infirm people and a coming generation of young people (the 1986 census indicated 55% of the population of the parish area as under 29 years of age). The immediate evangelistic strategy is to strengthen the contact with those hundreds of nominal families who have links with the parish, to maintain a pastoral and helping ministry to the aged and infirm and to strengthen ministry to young people. Current planning is for a 1990 staff of rector, senior assistant priest for a general pastoral and caring ministry, and a full-time lay assistant to strengthen ministry to youth and young families.

The Growth Goals and Missionary Loyalty

The rector made a faith projection of parish growth in 1986 as part of the Fuller Doctor of Ministry Church Growth I seminar. It looks to a membership of 450 communicants on the parish roll by Easter, 1991. Current membership is 290. The goal of another 160 members - more and better Christians - stands before St. Paul's. As the Lord spoke to St. Paul about Corinth, "I have many people in this city" (Acts 16:10), the suburbs of Melba, Evatt, Spence, McKellar and Florey already contain the people who are this growth potential as fields ripe for harvest, as sheep without a shepherd, and as the lost for whom our Saviour Christ came to seek and to save. As the parish continues to grow in its understanding of the biblical theology of mission, as its leadership further develops the ability to guide and care for a program parish, as the structures of lay ministry, missionary management, evangelism, ministry to new members and the starting of new congregations mature and strengthen, there are good reasons to believe that this growth goal, under God's protection, enabling and blessing, can be achieved.

The growth goals and missionary outreach of St. Paul's, Ginninderra do not and ought not reflect the unworthy motives of ecclesiastical or professional pride. Rather, they are to be part of the purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ, who burns with zeal for Zion (Zechariah 8:2), who is consumed with zeal for God's house (Psalm 69:9, John 2:17). The life of St. Paul's, Ginninderra, and every Australian Anglican suburban parish in its local mission and in the honest ambition of church growth, is to be a partnership in the apostolic purpose, redemptive intention, compassionate service, sacrificial anguish, resurrected and ascended victory and final glory of its Saviour and King.

NOTES

1. Dean M. Kelly, Why Conservative Churches are Growing, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 122.
2. This goal of 450 represented the upper limit of the next bracket of membership size according to Eddie Gibb's classification of church size and pastor's skill level. Eddie Gibbs, I Believe in Church Growth, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), 274-279. It is also a responded to Yonggi Cho's encouragement to set significant and realistic goals for growth. Yonggi Cho, More Than Numbers, (Gwent, UK: Bridge, 1983), 120.
3. The capacity and skill level required to function at this level will require a thorough understanding of the principles set out in Lyle E. Schaller, The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church (Nashville:Abingdon Press, 1980).
4. Paul Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson, Turning the Tide: An Assessment of Baptist Church Growth in England, (London: Bible Society, 1981), 28-29.
5. C. Peter Wagner, Leading Your Church to Growth, (Ventura: Regal, 1984), 80.