MISSION-WITH
IN INNER-SOUTH MANCHESTER

AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF PRESENCE-AMONG AND PROJECT-PRAXIS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY AS A MODEL OF URBAN MISSION, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE COMMUNITY GROUP *CARISMA*.

by

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ABSTRACT

This research into methods of securing viable Christian mission in an inner-city area investigates a model emerging from praxis as a long-term Christian incomer to inner-south Manchester. 'Mission-with' is positioned alongside more direct paradigms, 'mission-to' and 'mission-for', not to replace, but complement, earning the right, especially in sensitive multi-cultural contexts.

Two stages are examined through, respectively, auto-ethnographic reflection on my experience, and exploration of four case-studies (including 'Carisma', a major community response to gang violence). 1. Incarnational 'presence-among' in a particular context, and ensuing personal praxis with missional potential through ordinary daily life lived among and observed by other local residents. 2. 'Project-praxis': activity and projects undertaken in equal partnership with other residents from shared concern to remedy local issues. The actions of all involved are seen as *shalom*-building and therefore missional.

The basis is mission as *missio Dei* and an assumption that each Christian is called by God to service, defined by answering the question "where". Neglect of this in discipleship has weakened Christian presence in the inner-city. Incarnation, following and 'fascination' are investigated as a response. Other contemporary stratagems of mission are surveyed and compared. 'Mission-with' strengths and weaknesses are assessed, and application, significance and implications considered.

for Daniel

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CONTENTS

MAPS

PHOTOGRAPHS

Chapter One

An Urban Mission Practitioner Examining Mission

True incarnation is when I go out and get involved in a local project where I don't run the show and I don't pull all the strings.[1]

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[1] Steve Chalke. Quote from "Faith in Politics," Christian Socialist Movement Conference 2001.

1.1 Introduction
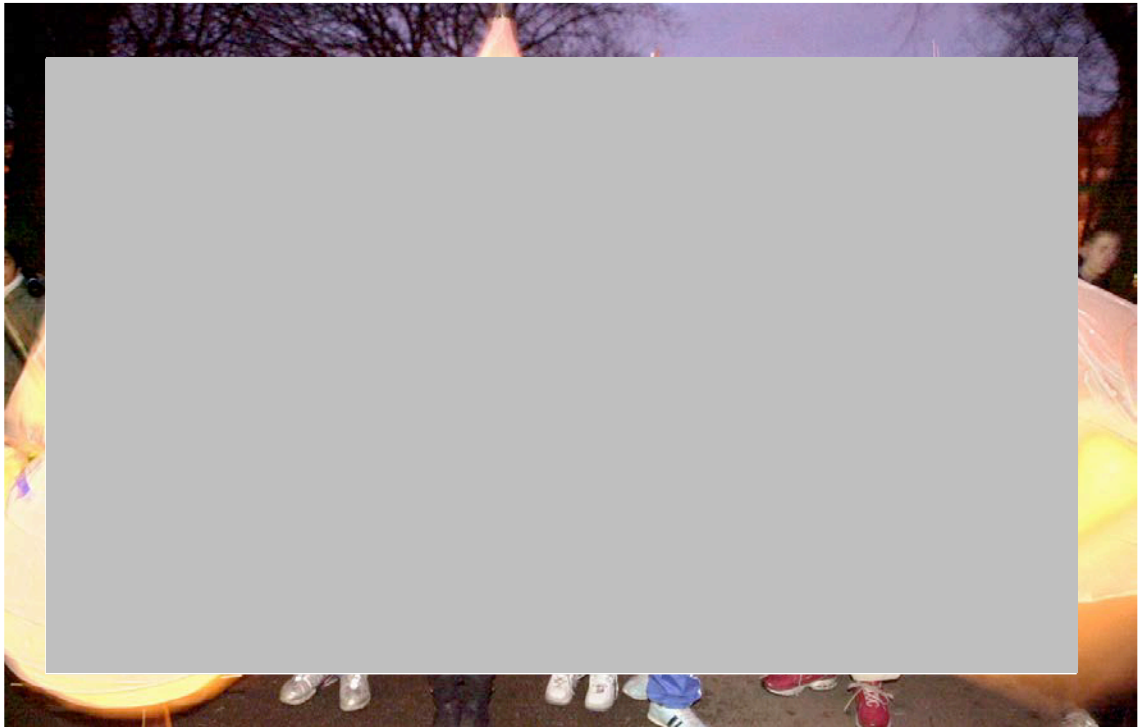
Photograph 1: PeaceWeek Lantern Parade 2005.

I was born in Northern Ireland in 1957 and grew up in a middle/upper working class family in a suburb of Belfast, going to school in Belfast, before completing a degree in Theology at its Queen's University. The decision to study theology was one of a number of outcomes of a decision made in June 1972 to become a follower of Jesus – a 'committed Christian'.[2] I was not entirely sure of what I was getting into at the time, and in many ways I am still finding out.

Following a sense of call to work with people, I applied for training to be a Probation Officer, and was accepted on a one-year foundation course in Manchester. I arrived in 1978, thinking it would just be for that year. However, during

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[2] By "Christian" in this research I mean those who have actively made or come to a clear Christian commitment and/or are part of a local church, self-identifying as committed Christians. I would not include passive categories such as a social default 'C-of-E' setting, or being white British, or not clearly of another faith – Muslim, Hindu, atheist etc.

that time a significant change in direction – the result, I believe, of a developing of that sense of call – led to my settling, in 1980, in an inner-city part of inner-south Manchester as a resident and a member of a local church, Christ Church, Brunswick.

I also changed direction work-wise to spend a number of years travelling and working as a musician and schools-worker for the youth organisation British Youth for Christ, before deciding I should concentrate more on Manchester and its inner-city areas. This led in 1996 to my co-founding 'Urban Presence', a Christian charity committed to advocating for and resourcing Christian presence, mission and ministry in the inner-city.[3] Through my work with Urban Presence I have been involved with a number of projects, initiatives, churches and organisations working in the inner-city. I am supported financially in this work by a number of individuals, churches and organisations. It should be noted that I am not paid to live in my community – Urban Presence came about sixteen years after I moved here.

During my time living in inner-south Manchester I have been involved as a local resident, alongside others, in a number of activities responding to various issues. One of these in particular has been quite significant and the starting point for my research interest came about during an event eight years ago.

I was standing with a Christian friend in a local park. It was dusk on a clear spring day and we were watching a Family Lantern Parade for Peace led by a

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[3] <http://www.urbanpresence.org.uk>

samba band approaching the park's Peace Garden by the lake, having just passed a local BBC News camera crew. With us were the Mayor of Manchester and the local Member of Parliament who were waiting to unveil several mosaics made by local school children. Local children had also made the lanterns that were illuminating the marchers and reflecting in the water, and had recorded the peace-themed songs playing on a small sound system behind us. The young people were excited and, justifiably, proud of their handiwork (see photograph 1). This was the climax of the 2005 'PeaceWeek', eight days of events and activities organised by 'Carisma', a community group I had worked with others to form as a grassroots response to the 'guns and gangs' issue that had dominated our area for some years. My friend turned to me and said: "This is mission *with* the community."

Her comment began a 'theological back-fill'[4] reflecting on my involvement in setting up Carisma in 2002 and work with it since. That reflection identified a model of mission praxis, which I called 'mission-with'. It in turn led on to this research which asks if 'mission-with' can be regarded as an effective way of working that can be described as missional and recommended as a model for others.

This thesis, in the field of Practical Missiology, describes and examines 'mission-with' as an appropriate model of mission that encompasses my personal experience as a mission-practitioner, not just with Carisma but also with other

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[4] A term I came up with at the time to describe a process of reflection *after* praxis – rather than before or during – asking what was happening here theologically. I subsequently became aware of the parallel to the Liberation Theology concept of theology as the 'second act.' See note 8.

projects and through ordinary life in the context. The thesis compares 'mission-with' to other mission models, asks if it can be seen as a legitimate expression of mission, and assesses its potential effectiveness as a model of mission praxis for use in the wider church alongside other, usual, expressions of mission which I have characterised below as 'mission-to' and 'mission-for'.[5]

1.2 Structure

After a brief outline of the rest of the thesis, this chapter will continue with some definitions of mission, an initial understanding of 'mission-with', a summary of my methodology, and a brief description of the area of inner-south Manchester where I live.

Chapters Two and Three will explore two fields of research as outlined below.

1. My move into this part of Manchester pre-dates and provides the background for the praxis with others referred to above. *Being* with those others has been a prerequisite for such praxis and therefore an essential foundation for 'mission-with'. The first field of research is an auto-ethnographical account of how my wife and I came to live here and see ourselves as being what I have called a 'presence-among' – with ordinary actions of everyday life seen as personal mission praxis. This part of the research will describe the reasons and theology behind the decision to re-locate and how it relates to and undergirds a 'mission-with' model. It will examine my being in this community as a 'Christian incomer' and as an expression of what has become known as 'incarnational ministry'.

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[5] 1.4.1

This is a model bound up with seeking to identify with a community or people group in the practical sense of living among them, in as far as possible as a member of that group, emulating with them the identification of Jesus with all of humankind, who sends his followers "as the Father sent me."[6] My re-location was also a response and counter to what I observed of a 'drift to the suburbs' by Christians in inner-city churches, with a consequent detrimental effect on mission in such places through seepage of the churches' main resource – people. So there will also be a critical look at the factors that weaken the wider Christian presence in the inner-city, and an exploration of a way to view Christian discipleship that would counter their effect.

2. The second field of research examines four case studies of what I have called 'project-praxis' arising out of this 'presence-among' and personal praxis, where I have acted as a participant alongside other local people on issues of shared concern. The main case study is Carisma and its annual PeaceWeek, with reflections on my involvement, and that of local churches. I will also look at three other local projects which have taken place in my immediate neighbourhood where I have worked alongside other local residents and used some methods of Community Organising. The method here is one of participant observation and, as much of the participation pre-dates the research, is necessarily a mix of reflecting back on previous praxis, with more deliberate reflection on more recent and current praxis.

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[6] John 20:21 (New Century Version). Linking it directly with incarnation, the "decisive gift" of Christianity, Vincent defines an incomer as: "someone who comes in to share the life of the disadvantaged, to live alongside them, and then slowly to discover what ways they might work with those already there." John Vincent, Hope from the City (Peterborough: Epworth, 2000), 127.

The fourth chapter will briefly survey a number of other models of mission which could be said to have elements in common with 'mission-with', making comparisons with my experience. The final chapter will review the research, assess strengths and weaknesses of 'mission-with', look at its application, and consider its significance and implications for individual discipleship, Christian mission and the Church. As that is where my experience has been, this will be in particular relation to the inner-city context.

1.3 Towards an Understanding of Mission

1.3.1 Bosch: *missio Dei*

David Bosch indicates how difficult it is to define mission and maintains that the early Church made no conscious attempts to do so in any explicit way. New Testament writers such as Matthew, Luke and Paul were "defining and redefining what the church was called to do in the world of their day"[7] as part of a formulation of theology 'on the hoof'. They "were not scholars who had the leisure to research the evidence before they put pen to paper. Rather, they wrote in the context of an 'emergency situation', of a church which, because of its missionary encounter with the world, was *forced* to theologise."[8] Definitions of mission are a far more recent phenomenon, particularly since the upsurge of mission and missions in the nineteenth century,[9] and have consistently strug-

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[7] David Bosch, <u>Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission</u> (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 511.

[8] Bosch, <u>Transforming Mission</u>, 16. This echoes the Liberation Theology's theology as the "second act," and also resonates with my "theological backfill" concept of reflection on praxis (e.g. forming Carisma) at the time undertaken instinctively.

[9] Pietism's rediscovery of personal faith re-introduced mission within Europe, and Enlightenment expansionism and the advent of world-wide trade, added a global

gled to give full expression to something which is "a multi-faceted ministry in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualisation, and much more."[10]

Bosch roots mission in the concept of the *missio Dei* – God as a missionary God, constantly looking to deepen relationship with his creation – involving "God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate."[11] As such it pre-dates, is far more than, and is not limited to the praxis of the church.

> … mission is *missio Dei*, which seeks to subsume into itself the *missiones ecclesiae*, the missionary programs of the church. It is not the church which "undertakes" mission; it is the *missio Dei* which constitutes the church. … Looked at from this perspective, mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus.[12]

Moltmann sees the *missio Dei* as flowing from the relational nature of the Trinity, reaching out to embrace creation, and as:

> movement from God in which the church has its origin and arrives at its own movement, but which goes beyond the church, finding its goal in the consummation of all creation in God. It follows from this that the church understands its world-wide mission in the trinitarian history of God's dealings with the world.[13]

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dimension. Together these broke the Church out of the "confines of 'Christian society', which continually reproduces itself through infant baptism." Jürgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology (London: SCM Press, 1977), 9.

[10] Bosch, Transforming Mission, 512.

[11] Bosch, Transforming Mission, 10.

[12] Bosch, Transforming Mission, 519.

[13] Moltmann, Church in the Power of the Spirit, 11. This Trinitarian slant is echoed by Steffen and McKinney as "the idea of God's nature and expression extended to and stamped upon the world. God the Father sends God the Son who sends God the Holy Spirit; all three send the church." Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney Douglas, Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 32.

In short, mission is what the Church was founded to do. This is why it is here. In thinking about defining mission further however, Bosch's words of caution need to be taken into account:

> Ultimately, mission remains undefinable; it should never be incarcerated in the narrow confines of our own predelictions. The most we can hope for is to formulate some *approximations* of what mission is all about.[14]

In reaching towards "approximations," can some criteria be set for the limits of mission or is it appropriate to ask, with Bosch, when is the praxis of a Christian *not* mission in some sense?[15] If that is getting dangerously close to saying, "if everything is mission, nothing is mission,"[16] it may be more helpful to think of the Church's mission – given that this is its *raison d'être* – as a lens through which all activities can be seen and validated.[17]

From this it can be deduced that everything a church does has or could have a missional aspect or bearing, even if indirectly. Mission could be said by extension to include everything an individual Christian does (and therefore mission is far more than a mode to switch in and out of, a programme to run or an event to stage). Neither the Church nor the individual Christian are operating in a social vacuum, and every action, attitude and statement has potential missional implications. Moltmann states that:

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[14] Bosch, <u>Transforming Mission</u>, 9.

[15] "We do need a more radical and comprehensive hermeneutic of mission. In attempting to do this we may perhaps move close to viewing everything as mission, but this is a risk we will have to take." Bosch, <u>Transforming Mission</u>, 512.

[16] Stephen Neill's adage, quoted by Bosch, <u>Transforming Mission</u>, 511. Stephen Neill, <u>Creative Tension</u> (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1959), 81.

[17] For instance: Will this Lent course enhance the lives of those attending such that they will be more aware of their Christian faith and themselves as bearers of the Kingdom of God as they go about their daily lives tomorrow?

> Mission embraces all activities that serve to liberate man from his slavery in the presence of the coming God, slavery which extends from economic necessity to Godforsakenness. Evangelization is mission, but mission is not merely evangelization. In the missionary church the widow who does charitable works belongs to the same mission as the bishop who leads the church, or the preacher of the gospel.[18]

1.3.2 Ferdinando: A Conservative Approach

In contrast, Ferdinando argues for the need for a tighter definition of mission, reserved for specific activity by, and exclusive to, the church. He identifies four approaches to mission as concentric circles, moving from broad and inclusive to increasingly narrow definitions. The outermost is *missio Dei* and he is concerned that the notion "as used by some … not only loses a word but also the very distinctiveness of God's work in Christ" as "identifying mission as everything God wills to do in the world." As this thereby potentially includes the action of non-Christians, whether consciously or not, it "entails a potential marginalisation of the role of the church which is not the unique human vehicle of the *missio Dei*."[19] His second and third categories narrow mission further. "The Cultural Mandate," referencing Genesis 1:26-28, is " … the *church's* action in the world, rather than all that *God* does in the world."[20] "Social Action … refers to the alleviation of human suffering and the elimination of injustice, exploitation and deprivation. It is thus specifically remedial and transformative, in a way not necessarily true of all that Christians do to glorify God in his world."[21] Finally, in what he describes as the "innermost of the four concentric circles," comes "Making Disciples of All Nations … the essential, exclusive content of mission."

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[18] Moltmann, <u>Church in the Power of the Spirit</u>, 10-11.

[19] Keith Ferdinando, "Mission: A Problem of Definition," <u>Themelios</u> 33.1 (2008): 49, 50.

[20] Ferdinando, "Mission," 50.

[21] Ferdinando, "Mission," 52.

While he does not "deny the importance of Christian social commitment," Ferdinando wants to "reserve the word mission for the discipling of the peoples,"[22] or, failing that, to invent a new term, such as "apostolic mission."

Matching Ferdinando's two inner-most circles, Reformed theologian J.I. Packer defined mission as a task which is "two-fold":

> First and fundamentally, it is the work of worldwide witness, disciple-making, and church-planting … Jesus Christ is to be proclaimed everywhere as God incarnate, Lord, and Savior; and God's authoritative invitation to find life through turning to Christ in repentance and faith … is to be delivered to all mankind. …
>
> Second, all Christians, and therefore every congregation of the church on earth, are called to practice deeds of mercy and compassion, a thoroughgoing neighbor-love that responds unstintingly to all forms of human need as they present themselves …[23]

While deciding what does and does not count as 'mission' is, in part, an exercise in terminology, the danger with seeing mission solely as the exclusive action of the Church, rather than the Church's part in the action of God, lies in what is left out and thereby marginalised.

1.3.3 Broad and Narrow Definitions

The appeal of holding to a narrower definition of mission is clear. It is much easier to identify what is and is not 'mission' and certain activities are valued above others accordingly, the extreme being overtly spiritual outreach activity addressed to a person's soul ranking above any social action or service to the body or mind. There is a safety in certainty, but I would argue that life – and the

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[22] Ferdinando, "Mission," 55.

[23] J.I. Packer, Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 223-224.

life of faith – are by nature messy and imprecise. Further, is there a correlation between a narrow view of mission, which compartmentalises certain activities as 'spiritual', and a dualistic non-consideration of lifestyle and cultural influences? As well as limiting mission to an episodic activity, this raises the question of Christian discipleship being reduced to being a "devotional add-on to our 'real lives'"[24] made up from pre-determined life-choices, which will be considered critically below.[25]

In this thesis I will be exploring a particular notion of 'mission-with' which has arisen out of a specific practical context and a particular community engagement. This requires a sufficiently wide and inclusive definition of mission to encompass such things as the missional implications or content of actions taken. These would include, as part of a 'mission-with' model, both ordinary actions in daily living in the locality, and actions alongside others in community engagement. But it runs the risk of being untidy and blurred at the edges as it becomes harder to define just what the missional aspect of some actions could be. Crucially, for praxis shared with others that could be said to be building *shalom*, this wide definition recognises that many of the facets of mission praxis in Bosch's list above – such as, service, justice, reconciliation – could be carried out by anyone of good will, and are not the exclusive preserve of Christians.

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[24] Tom Sine, "Making it Real." <u>Sojourners Magazine</u>, January 2008. <<u>http://sojo.net/magazine/2008/01/making-it-real</u>> Accessed 20/5/2013.

[25] 2.14.2

1.3.4 Mission as Building *Shalom*

Taken from the Hebrew term occurring over 250 times in the Old Testament,[26] and far richer than the direct translation of "peace," *shalom* can be defined as a "pervasive sense of well-being in personal, social, economic and political spheres."[27]

> *Shalom* in the scriptures refers to God's creational intention. It includes peace, soundness, wholeness, security and fullness of life, in which our relationships with God, each other and the wider creation are thriving.[28]

Shalom is bound up in the Kingdom of God as announced by Christ.

> This kingdom consists of the full reign of God in the world, a reign that restores right relationship among God, humanity, and the creation. Shalom finds its expression. A new order, divinely initiated, breaks into history. And in all this, the initial promises of covenant with creation and humanity become manifest in the life of the kingdom of God.[29]

Christine Sine describes the ministry of Jesus as: "giving breathtaking glimpses of that hoped for eternal shalom world where all will be healed, fed and pro-vided for."[30]

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[26] שלם "Throughout the Heb. OT, *šãlôm* covers well-being in the widest sense of the word." Colin Brown ed., <u>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Vol 2</u> (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1986), 777. The New Testament equivalent, occurring 91 times is εἰρήνη (*eirēnē)*, also used to translate *šãlôm* in the Septuagint. "Both in form and content it stands firmly in the LXX and Heb." Brown, 780. "Such heavy usage is a clear indication of how important a word it was – that it was a concept that permeated both Hebrew and early Christian society." Robert C. Linthicum, <u>Building A People of Power: Equipping Churches to transform their communities </u>(Washington DC: Authentic, 2005), 4.

[27] Donald B. Kraybill, <u>The Upside Down Kingdom</u> (2nd edn. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1990), 200.

[28] Marijke Hoek, "Yeasting the Public Debate with Good News," in Marijke Hoek, Jonathan Ingleby, Andy Kingston-Smith, Carol Kingston-Smith eds., <u>Carnival Kingdom: Biblical Justice for Global Communities</u> (Gloucester: Wide Margin, 2013), 209.

[29] Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, "Covenant and Creation," in Charles Birch, William Eaken and Jay B. McDaniel eds., <u>Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches in Ecological Theology</u> (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990). Republished on Religion Online. <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2318> Accessed 27/5/2013.

[30] Christine Sine, "Living Into God's Shalom World," <u>Bible in TransMission</u> (Swindon: Bible Society, Spring 2008), 1.

Aspects of this ideal seem to be wired into the human psyche and aspiration to find or provide peace, healing and wellbeing turns up in all sorts of places. Manchester City Council regularly uses measures of 'wellbeing' in its policies and reports, defined as people "satisfied with their lives."[31]

Having described mission in broad terms as taking part in the *missio Dei* and building *shalom*, and therefore not restricted to the Church, it is important to recognise Ferdinando's concerns and agree that there are aspects which require Christian faith, such as verbal sharing of the gospel message and making disciples.[32] In the next section I will argue that these 'mission-to' aspects, and those of 'mission-for', can be best and most effectively shared with integrity when building on a relational foundation of mission praxis in another, less overt, form – 'mission-with'. They can therefore be reliant on this form, which should be valued equally as a part of the mission process.

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[31] For example: The Manchester Partnership, <u>Manchester's State of The Wards Report, 2010-11</u> (Manchester City Council, Issue 5, Sept. 2011), 2.5.4 Wellbeing, 21. A 2006 Whitehall Wellbeing Working Group "statement of common understanding of wellbeing for policy makers" has a lot in common with definitions of *shalom*. "Wellbeing is a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It arises not only from the action of individuals, but from a host of collective goods and relationships with other people. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, involvement in empowered communities, good health, financial security, rewarding employment, and a healthy and attractive environment..." In Nicola Steuer and Nic Marks, <u>Local Wellbeing: Can we measure it?</u> (London: The Young Foundation, 2008), 8.

[32] Balancing this with retaining humility in entering a context as a Christian incomer will be discussed in 2.13.1 below.

1.4 Developing a Practical Understanding of 'Mission-With'

1.4.1 'Mission-To' and 'Mission-For'

Before initially setting out 'mission-with' as a form of praxis which I believe should be counted as being missional in itself, I want to look at two other expressions of mission to compare and contrast it with, which I have dubbed 'mission-to' and 'mission-for'. These can be seen as corresponding to the "two tasks" of Packer's definition of mission described above.[33] 'Mission-to' is to do with taking something 'to' people, primarily overt sharing of the gospel message in evangelism and making disciples, though it could also apply to services and resources from a social action programme. 'Mission-for' is about doing something 'for' people. Here, the thought is primarily of providing for people's needs through social action, though it could also apply to providing for their spiritual needs. In both cases the missioner is the actor or giver and the people are the passive recipients, with the transaction being mostly in one direction. Both are about activity – projects and events which can be started and stopped. Goods, services and messages can be dispensed from a distance and completely at the discretion of the giver, who remains in charge of the process. Of course, this is in practice benign and well-meaning, but a sense of being 'done to' or of Christians as superior or judge-mental "do-gooders" – however mistaken – can result, as can issues of inferiority, dependency and passivity on the part of those on the receiving end.

In my experience and observation, this is how most mission praxis is done, and much good and positive work results. I am not advocating replacing 'mission-to'

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[33] 1.3.2

or 'mission-for'. However, triggered by my experience with Carisma and through reflection on my years living in the inner-city, I have begun to ask if there is a further expression of mission beyond 'to' and 'for'. This would go alongside, complement, and could be a preparation for, 'mission-to and 'mission-for' praxis, which can benefit from an integrity earned through relationship based on identification, honesty and equality.

Seeing mission in terms of the *missio Dei*, as participating in God's action, rather than mission just being the Church's action, gives scope for a form of mission which is about fulfilling the *missio Dei*, particularly in building *shalom*, through action by Christians *with* others. To pick up Ferdinando's concentric circles, this is the outer circle, beyond the safe ground of the well-defined 'to' and 'for', but nonetheless also valid as mission and, while remaining of value in itself, a route into 'mission-to' and 'mission-for' praxis. The 'with' implies being alongside, identifying and in equal relationship, things that cannot be turned on and off, and so notions of mission praxis as episodic and being controlled by a provider have to be left behind.

1.4.2 Stage One: 'Presence-Among'

In the model of mission this thesis explores, 'mission-with' can be defined as 'project-praxis' arising out of 'presence-among'. 'Presence-among', and the personal praxis that accompanies it, can be regarded as the first stage of 'mission-with'.[34] A prerequisite of being involved 'with' people in the sense understood here and which will be developed below, of partnering, sharing, giving

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[34] This will be explored and analysed in Chapter 2.

and receiving and not only doing 'to' or 'for', is to be present among them in such a way that "whatever happens to them, happens to me."[35] In my own case this involved a re-location to a specific place through a sense of missional calling.

Personal praxis in daily life and interaction with other fellow residents in the neighbourhood follows as a consequence of being there – ordinary life in the context, but with a Christian distinctive. By 'distinctive' I mean an element of Kingdom values present within the normal living of normal life – 'saltiness'[36] – changing the taste, preserving the good, making a difference – and not in the sense of separateness. As one gets to know and become known by the other residents, and particularly as that knowledge comes to include one's being a committed Christian, then every action, attitude, response has potential as a missional act as it subtly refines, challenges or reinforces the other's view of what a Christian is and believes. This is the case with any relationship.

1.4.3 Stage Two: 'Project-Praxis'

A second stage of 'mission-with', 'project-praxis', builds on the first as further action which arises in time as the specific, intentional response of a Christian to local issues, coming out of a concern shared with others and a desire to do something.[37] It is deeper than a concern arising from reading or hearing about

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[35] Sheffield incomer Jane Grinonneau, quoted by Vincent, Hope from the City,131.

[36] From Jesus' teaching in several contexts: Matt 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34. Picked up by Paul: "Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Col 4:6 (New International Version).

[37] This will be explored and analysed through case-studies in Chapter 3.

an issue – it comes from being personally affected by it through living in the place where that issue is happening, where it is having an effect on people's lives, and you are one of those people. If the problem is the black ash coming from a nearby hospital incinerator chimney, then the concerned are those who live in the affected area and have the sooty deposit to contend with.[38] In many ways the actions generated will be similar to what anyone else would do and with the same end: seeking to remedy the situation. Differences could lie in motivation, and in bringing Christian self-awareness. A general positive ethos, and desire to benefit the community, work for the common good and individual well-being, is one that a Christian can support and influence, as it can be seen as building *shalom*, both individually and corporately. Whether taking the initiative oneself or joining in with what others may have started should make no difference. The important values here are that everyone's praxis and contribution is equally valid, working and achieving together in partnership creates shared ownership and empowering, and the Christian can be one of those equal participants without having to be in control.

1.5 Methodology

Being a study involving human behaviour, there is inevitably a degree of blurring and overlap, but my overall methodology is one of participant observation, making this qualitative rather than quantitative research, with some variation for both fields of research. Bryman sees a similarity with ethnography as both have "similar if not identical approaches to data collection in which the researcher is

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[38] This was an issue for our street back in the late 1990s.

immersed in a social setting for some time in order to observe and listen with a view to gaining an appreciation of the culture of a social group."[39]

The whole field of researching an *ethnos* comes across in the literature as one with numerous overlapping theories and categories as practitioners struggle to pin down and define accurately reliable methods of studying their fellow humans. Bryman notes the "unease among some writers concerning the specification of the nature of qualitative research."[40] Kemmis and McTaggart refer to "paradigm wars" that have "bedevilled social research over much of the past century."[41] The early ideal of scientific objectivity, or a "value-neutral position" is now seen as unreachable[42] and a degree of subjectivity (and added variables) is now expected and to be accounted for. My involvement in and closeness to the phenomena I am investigating brings with it a strong element of subjectivity, which I hope to allow for and balance through various means detailed below. Given also that researching a situation will effect it,[43] I also need to admit to a hope that any change my research causes will be a beneficial one.

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[39] Alan Bryman, <u>Social Research Methods</u> (2nd edn. Oxford: University Press, 2004), 267.

[40] Bryman, <u>Social Research Methods</u>, 501.

[41] Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart, "Participatory Action Research," in Denzil and Lincoln eds., <u>Handbook of Qualitative Research</u> (2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 573.

[42] "Objectively, social scientists should recognise that research is seldom, if ever, really value neutral. After all, the selection of a research topic typically derives from some researcher-oriented position." Bruce L. Berg, <u>Qualitative Methods for the Research Sciences</u> (7th edn. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2009), 200.

[43] The "unavoidable bias" caused when people are aware they are being observed has become known as Hawthorne Effect, "the process where human subjects of an experiment change their behaviour, simply because they are being studied." <<u>http://explorable.com/hawthorne-effect.html</u>> Accessed 13/12/2012. Swinton and Mowat recommend a "hermeneutic of suspicion regarding the possibility of discovering shared truth." John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, <u>Practical Theology and Qualitative Research</u> (London: SCM, 2006), 170.

1.5.1 Auto-ethnography

In seeking to write biographically in Chapter Two about my own experience as an 'incomer', the category of auto-ethnography seemed to be the closest fit. Defined as "an analytical/objective personal account about the self/writer as part of a group or culture,"[44] my account is about myself as a member of the group 'Christian incomers.' It is also, to some extent, about the context and culture I entered and in which I wished to settle and become a part. Even within auto-ethnography there are distinctions between emotive, critical and analytical genres, and a recognition that "autoethnography, native ethnography, self-ethnography, memoir, biography, even fiction, have become blurred genres."[45]

As my re-location pre-dates the decision to write about it by many years, for the most part this is a looking back and reflecting on the process and experience. Memory can be selective and interpretation even more so, but where possible I have cross-checked with sources such as a regular newsletter to friends and supporters and monthly reports to the Urban Presence trustees. I have also checked stories with others, most importantly my wife who has been with me throughout this time. I have tried to ask of each decision or event narrated, "theologically, what did I think I was doing at the time?" and reflect honestly, trying not to read back into it some later well thought out position. I have also

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[44] Susan Bennett <http://www.humboldt.edu/~tdd2/Autoethnography.htm> Accessed 25/9/2010.

[45] Cathryn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject," in Denzil and Lincoln eds., Handbook of Qualitative Research, 742. They have an even longer list of over thirty other terms that could be grouped under auto-ethnography on page 739.

added reflective sections looking back from the point of the present study on the theological significance of what I was doing then – and am still doing now.

1.5.2 Participant-Observer or 'Observing Participant'

Chapter Three looks at some specific examples of 'project-praxis' arising out of the 'presence-among' described in Chapter Two, and the research takes the form of observation of and reflection on my participation in various activities and projects which I have selected as illustrative of 'project-praxis'. Again, most of this praxis pre-dates the research, and this is not a case of an involvement being set up in order to study a situation. In the case of Carisma and Peace-Week I have been involved since their beginnings and so have been, and will continue to be, a long-term participant. My 'participant observation' is therefore a mix of a close, conscious observing and logging of PeaceWeeks occurring during this research and reflection on PeaceWeek in the past, cross-checked extensively with contemporary documents and records, and corroborated through conversational interviews with other participants. In format these would be 'non-structured interviews' as defined by Walliman.[46] The content could be seen as 'oral history', where "the subject is asked to reflect upon specific events or periods in the past."[47]

In a sense as I have added 'observer' to 'participant' for the duration of the research, rather than joined in for that time, 'Observing Participant' might be a more accurate description. This lowers the profile of the research I am under-

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[46] "… if you need to explore a situation and wish to get information which you cannot predict." Nicholas Walliman, <u>Your Research Project</u> (London: Sage, 2001), 238.

[47] Bryman, <u>Social Research Methods</u>, 323. This history forms part of Chapter Three.

taking, because I am not a new person at the table in the planning meeting with a notebook. I told the group about this research, and interviewed several of them informally, as stated above. But otherwise I remained a member of the group, behaving as before. Hopefully, this meant the others behaved naturally without going, consciously or subconsciously, into any sort of performance mode, as happened noticably a couple of years ago when a television crew filmed a PeaceWeek planning meeting.[48]

However, it is true to say that during my time of being an observer as well as a participant I had a dual role, with part of my mind on the observation process (with notes made after meetings).

> While most members are concerned only with participating in setting activities, the autoethnographer (like all participant observers) must also record events and conversations … the ethnographic researcher differs from the rest of those in the group or subculture under study since she or he is also a member and a participant in the social science community.[49]

Being an observer who is already a member of the group constitutes an important distinction which some do not seem to allow for.[50] Hughes assumes the participant observer to be an outsider coming into a situation for the purposes of researching it, and even warns of the danger of losing detachment and 'going

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[48] As an ongoing participant I hoped to minimise the 'Hawthorne Effect' (note 43).

[49] Leon Anderson "Analytic Autoethnography," Journal of Contemporary Ethnography (2006), 9. <http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/35/4/373> Accessed 25/6/2010. This is actually an article on autoethnography, but the author sees it as a branch of participant observation – another indicator of the blurring of genres.

[50] "… while the participant observer seeks to study a group undisturbed as an ongoing process in its natural setting, few natural settings allow for the role of an observer, and his coming may be regarded as an intrusion. So, while gaining an entry to a group may or may not be easy, it is uncertain to what degree an observer will by his presence 'distort' the normal and routine interaction." John A. Hughes, Sociological Analysis: methods of discovery (London: Thomas Nelson, 1976), 118-9.

native'. He does not seem to have a category of participant observer (or observer participant) who is 'already native' to the extent of being a member of the group before researching it, and very probably continuing as such after the completion of the research. For Hughes this would cause issues around detachment, which I acknowledge. My selection of particular case-studies reflects a view that these are worthy of study as examples of 'project-praxis'.[51]

As with auto-ethnography, there are a number of overlapping participant observer models and variations, and some blurring with auto-ethnography itself. The category of 'Participatory Research' assumes that "the best people to research a given topic are those who have the most experience of it."[52] This is defined as research:

> … carried out with and *by* local people rather than *on* them. Local knowledge and perspectives are not only acknowledged but form the basis for research and planning. … The key difference between participatory and conventional methodologies lies in the location of power in the research process.[53]

This is perhaps a better fit to my local situation of adding observation to participation, being research done by a member of a local group, overlapping with auto-ethnography. Therefore my approach is as an Observing Participant.

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[51] 1.2

[52] Swinton and Mowat, <u>Practical Theology and Qualitative Research</u>, 227.

[53] Swinton and Mowat, <u>Practical Theology and Qualitative Research</u>, 227-8. Quoting A. Cornwall and R. Jewkes, 1995 "What is Participatory Research?" <u>Social Science and Medicine</u> 41 (1995): 1667-76. This notion of wanting to empower the researched is noted by Kemmis and McTaggart: "... participatory research and collaborative action research emerged more or less deliberately as forms of resistance to conventional research practices that were perceived by particular kinds of participants as acts of colonisation – that is, as a means of normalising or domesticating people to research and policy agendas imposed on a local group or community from central agencies far removed from local concerns and interests." Kemmis and McTaggart, "Participatory Action Research," 572.

1.6 Context

The praxis that will be examined in chapters two and three below – namely my re-locating, 'presence-among' and personal praxis-with, and then the case-studies illustrating 'project-praxis' – is located in a specific area called inner-south Manchester. This is the area I moved to in 1980 and it therefore provides the context for this research.
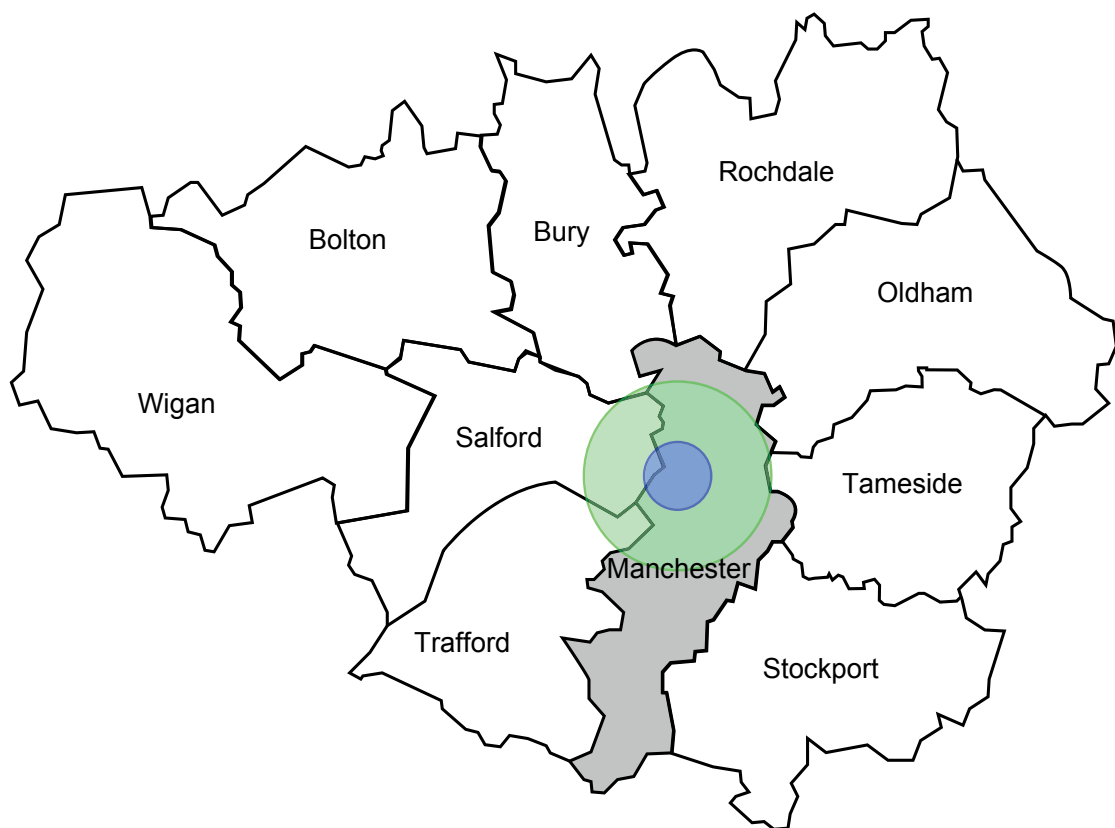
Map 1: Greater Manchester's ten boroughs, showing the city-centre and the inner-city ring.

1.6.1 Manchester

Manchester is one of ten boroughs that make up Greater Manchester, the largest conurbation in the United Kingdom outside of London with a population of nearly 2.7m, according to the 2011 Census. The Borough of Manchester has

a population of just over half a million,[54] most of whom live in the inner-city areas (see map 1). Population density across the borough is the highest in England.[55]

1.6.2 Inner-South Manchester

Manchester's inner-city "poverty belt"[56] dates back to the rapid industrial expansion of early Victorian times, stubbornly persisting to the present day.[57] A part of that belt, the 'inner-south' is the designation of Manchester City Council and includes seven of the thirty-two electoral wards: Moss Side, Hulme, Longsight, Ardwick, Rusholme and North and South Gorton (see maps 2 and 3). It contains large amounts of housing – mostly social and private rented with some owner-occupied – local amenities such as shops and schools, recreation areas in the form of several city parks, and a small amount of light industry. It is intersected by a strip along one of the main arterial roads containing, going from north to south, part of the Manchester Metropolitan University campus, the main campus of Manchester University, the largest in the United Kingdom, a recently rebuilt hospital complex which is now the largest in Europe, and 'Curry Mile', an area with a high concentration of Asian restaurants, food shops and other businesses

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[54] 502,100 (Greater Manchester: 2,682,500). <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/population-and-household-estimates-for-england-and-wales/rft-p07.xls> Accessed 5/12/2012.

[55] "Population density in the city is now much less than it used to be and stood at 34.9 persons/1ha in 1991, but is still the highest figure in the country." J. Lever and C. Young, "Demographic and Social Patterns in Manchester," in Stanislaw Liszewski and Craig Young eds , A Comparative Study of Lodz and Manchester: Geographies of European Cities in Transition. (Lodz: University of Lodz, 1997), 135.

[56] Alan Kidd, Manchester (4th edn. Lancaster: Carnegie, 2006), 247. The western part of the inner-city ring is actually in the neighbouring city of Salford.

[57] Appendix 1 is a more detailed account of the history of the inner-city and current levels of deprivation.
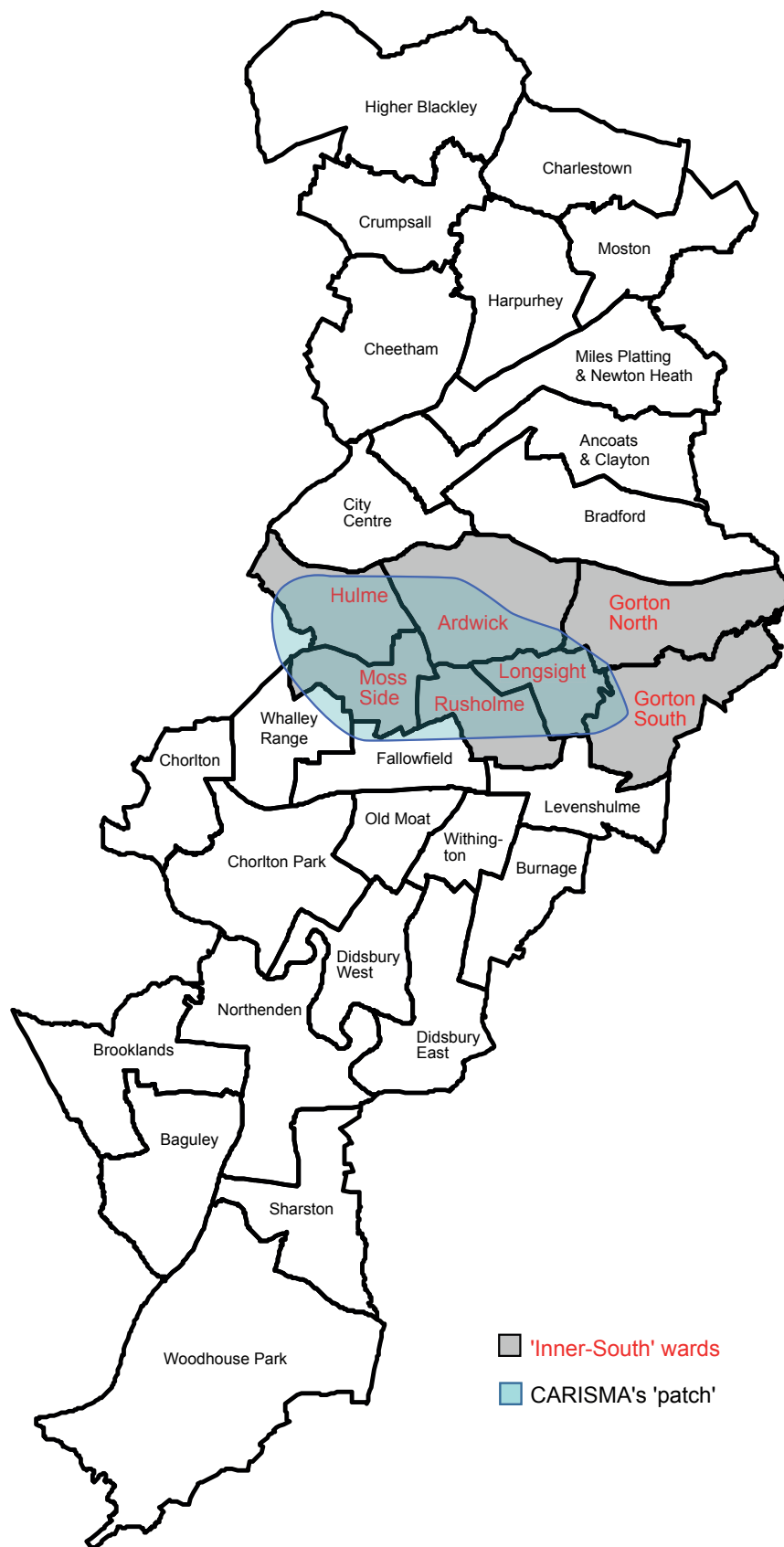
Map 2: Manchester Wards and Carisma's 'patch'.
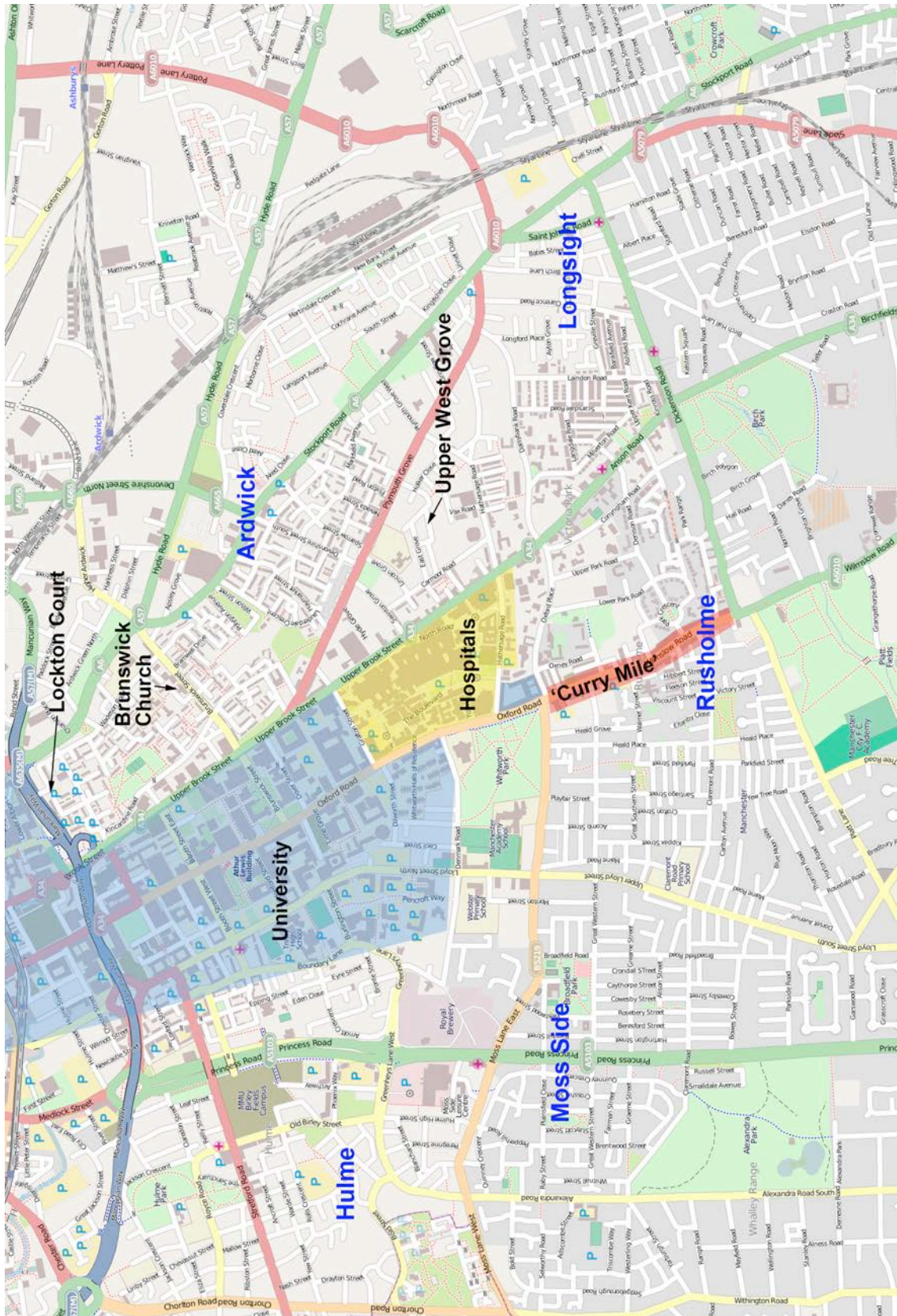
Map 3: Inner-South Manchester.

Map Data © OpenStreetMap contributors. <http://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>

that attracts visitors from across Greater Manchester and beyond. This is one of the expressions of a rich ethnic mix across the area.

In terms of local demographics and feel (specific areas people identify with and have a sense of belonging to) the area sub-divides into a number of smaller communities, which take little notice of official boundary lines.[58] These are characterised by factors such as different ethnic mixes, different ages of housing, and local amenities, and usually delineated by main roads, parks or other physical features, such as the University and hospital areas.[59]

1.6.3 Ardwick

I live in the Chorlton-on-Medlock district of Ardwick Ward (see map 4), which is immediately south of the City Centre. After four years in a top-floor flat at the northern end of Brunswick council estate, in May 1983 we moved to our present address in Upper West Grove, Chorlton-on-Medlock, and close to the southern end of the estate. Several major roads running through the ward help divide it

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[58] For example, most people on the Anson estate assume it is in Longsight Ward. It is in fact in Rusholme. For many years we thought our area of Chorlton-on-Medlock was also in Longsight, but it is in Ardwick Ward.

[59] Moss Side Ward, for instance, splits neatly into two parts, east and west of the A5103 Princess Road, one of the main arterial routes into the city. To the east is old Moss Side, rows of terraced housing, blurring to the south into Rusholme. To the west is the Alexandra Park estate, newer Council housing, part of the building boom of the 1970s. It is further split by Alexandra Road which runs parallel to Princess Road. The three main gangs of Moss Side, Pepperhill, Gooch and Doddington all originated on the Alexandra estate, and while incidents spilled over to the other side of Princess Road, it was all of Moss Side that got branded the "Bronx of Britain," with resulting – and ongoing – post-code discrimination for those seeking jobs, and other negative results for the more settled and older community there. This was another re-cycling of the "Moss Side myth" that has disadvantaged local people since the post-war immigration, and was exacerbated by the 1981 riots <http://www.people.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/2006/09/24/britain-s-bronx-93463-17809403/> Accessed 1/2/2013.
I have written about these issues in "Carisma: The First Ten Years."
<http://www.carisma.me.uk/Carisma10.pdf> See note 288.

into a number of distinct communities: Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick Green, Brunswick, Grove Village, New Bank, Coverdale and West Gorton.[60]
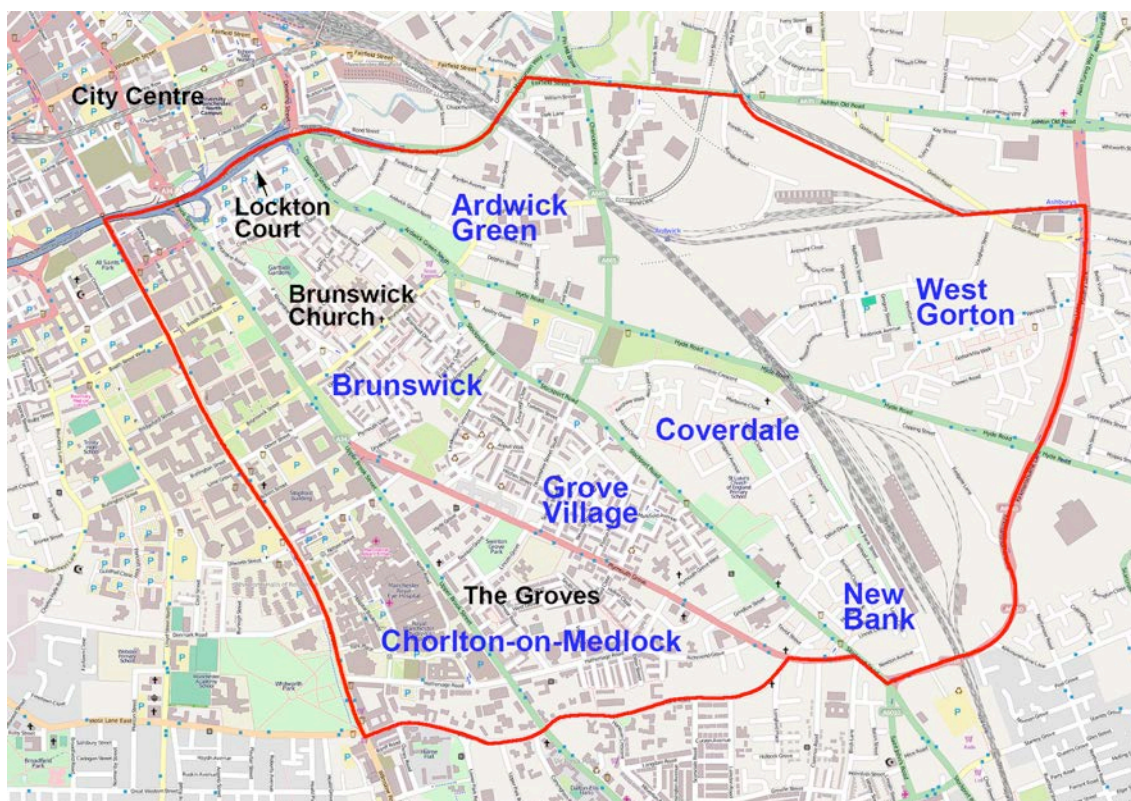
Map 4: Ardwick Ward.

Map Data © OpenStreetMap contributors. <http://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>

A separate village before the Industrial Revolution, Ardwick became a wealthy suburb of Manchester in the nineteenth century (and known as such by social commentators Charles Dickens and Fredrich Engels), and home to famous Victorians such as Sir Robert Peel, and the Gaskell and Pankhurst families. As Manchester continued to grow, Ardwick became heavily industrialised and filled with factories, railways and back-to-back terraced houses. As decline set in, these were to form part of the extensive slums that were cleared after the Second World War in a determined effort by the Council at regeneration. Unfortunately,

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[60] Confusingly not part of one of the Gorton Wards.

due to haste, false economies, design errors, and insufficient consideration to things such as provision of adequate local amenities,[61] much of the new housing has since had to be refurbished or, in some cases, replaced.[62]

In recent years several PFIs (Private Finance Initiatives) have begun a fresh wave of demolition, rebuilding and refurbishment of houses mostly less than forty years old. A new characteristic of these schemes where they are in inner areas close to the city centre is a mix of different sizes and styles of houses and apartments, some for purchase, some for rent, hoping to attract an influx of more affluent residents, creating a mixed-income community,[63] as the demand for city-centre dwellings bulges into the inner-city. In the case of Ardwick, the new Grove Village, next to Chorlton-on-Medlock, has been created within an estate built in the 1970s as an attempt to solve a high crime rate by dilution, replacing a third of the houses with new mixed housing and refurbishing the rest.

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[61] "The council was so focused on building its large estates that it failed to provide the type of social amenities that people needed to maintain a reasonable quality of life." Peter Shapely, The Politics of Housing – Power, Consumers and the Urban Culture (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007),149.

[62] Such as Hulme's notorious deck-access Crescents. "As early as 1975, a survey showed 96.3% of tenants wanted to leave, and Architects' Journal described Hulme as: 'Europe's worst housing stock ... hideous system-built deck-access blocks which gave Hulme its unsavoury reputation.'" Stuart Hylton, A History of Manchester, 216, quoting Miles Glendinning, and Stefan Mathesius, Tower Block (Yale, University Press, 1994), 256. In Ardwick the not dissimilar Coverdale estate (known locally as 'Fort Ardwick'), like the Hulme Crescents an architectural award winner, was demolished in the early 1990s. MP Gerald Kauffmann reported a resident calling for its demolition within a few years of its being built. House of Commons debate on housing (Multi-Storey Developments), 14th November 1974. <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debate/?id=1974-11-14a.747.1> Accessed 9/2/2013.

[63] "Current Planning Policy Guidance (PPG3) explicitly states that local authorities should ' … seek to create mixed communities'. Mixing incomes is seen as contributing to sustainability and social inclusion, and also to the regeneration of existing low income neighbourhoods." E. Silverman, R. Lupton and A. Fenton, A good place for children? Attracting and retaining families in inner urban mixed income communities (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, University of London, 2005), 7.

This half-century of building, repairing, demolishing and re-building, with the disruption of moving residents or them having to live in building sites, has had a cumulative de-stabilising effect, not conducive to people feeling settled, secure or rooted in their communities.

As a part of the inner-city ring, Ardwick Ward features consistently in the lower ends of the various indices of deprivation.[64] It has become known for its poor health statistics, though some comparative improvement has taken place in recent years.[65] A measure of 'healthy life expectancy' – the age before ill-health strikes – in 2006 gave Ardwick a figure of 57.5, the seventh worst ward in England and Wales.[66]

1.6.4 It's actually not that bad round here!

A 2007/2008 Manchester City Council 'Quality of Life' survey reflected the 'feelgood factor' of the area to some extent in that residents in the inner-south wards expressed a 'well-being' (defined as 'overall, satisfied with their life'[67]) of between 60 and 85%, though it should be noted that only Rusholme was actually above the Manchester average. Again, the measure of sense of belonging

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[64] See Appendix 1b.

[65] For the period 1999-2003, Ardwick had the lowest "Life and Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth" of all the wards. The Manchester Partnership Team, Manchester's 2nd State of the Wards Report 2007/2008 (Manchester: Manchester City Council, July 2008). This has risen to fourth lowest by the 2010/11 Report, but still below the Manchester and England average.

[66] The lowest figure was 54.9 (Middlehaven, Middlesborough); the highest was 86 (Didcot Ladygrove, Oxfordshire). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6985692.stm> Accessed 9/10/2008.

[67] Manchester Partnership Team, Manchester's 2nd State of the Wards Report 2007/2008, 5.6, 69. It should be remembered that it is in the Council's interests that such a survey is a positive one!

in a local area shows a range across the wards of 91 – 50%, though none of the inner-south wards come above the average and all except Rusholme and Moss Side score lower for satisfaction with the area.[68]

Despite the statistics and the conditions they describe, the modern inner-south area of Manchester is a far cry from the squalor of Engels' time, and the positives of the area, to which I can testify from over thirty years of personal experience, are many, not least the friendliness and good humour of the majority of the people. The vibrancy of the mix of many cultures gives a richness to the area, shown particularly in food and festivals. We feel that our children – growing up in these streets and attending a local school with many different countries of origin – have an advantage, as they make their way in our pluralist, multi-cultural society, over young people in other more mono-cultural areas of the city or country.

The next chapter examines 'presence-among', the first stage of 'mission-with', and will describe how I came to live as a Christian incomer and raise a family in the Ardwick area, with theological reflections on influences and decisions made, before some exploration of wider issues raised by the fact that my incoming was an unusual phenomenon.

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[68] Manchester Partnership Team, <u>Manchester's 2nd</u> <u>State of the Wards Report 2007-2008</u>. 5.2, 65.

Chapter Two

'Mission-With' Stage One:

'Presence-Among'

2.1 Introduction

I am not a native of inner-city Manchester, so in this chapter I explain how, in 1980, from a middle/upper-working-class white suburban background in Northern Ireland, I became a resident in an inner-city community in inner-south Manchester.[69] A description of life in our two homes during this period includes reflections on a number of key experiences. These illustrate the development of my thinking and practice as it went through what I now recognise as a process from seeing mission as 'mission-to' and 'mission-for', to seeing it as 'mission-with'. I also reflect on the dynamics of daily interaction with local people, both in terms of cultural adaptation and missiological significance. The teaching and example of a local church leader, Martin Gooder, were influential and crucial to a sense of calling and change of direction that led to my re-location, and so the chapter also outlines his theology and explores the reasons why such a move is untypical. This will lead into an exploration of incarnation, the call of the disciples, and early church missional praxis as ways to look at the nature of Christian discipleship and mission from a 'mission-with' perspective.

2.2 Christian Incomers

'Incomer' is a term used of an outsider coming into a place or community, described by the Oxford Dictionary as "a person who has come to live in an area in which they have not grown up, especially in a close-knit rural com-

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[69] 1.6.2

munity."[70] It is used in the sense of immigrant or settler, and sometimes by indigenous people to denote someone who is 'not one of us'. There can be a number of reasons for becoming an incomer – family, economic, leisure – but they are usually to do with seeking to improve circumstances or enhance life-style.[71] In our case, the deciding factor was one of Christian calling to a particular place and community, and it has resulted in what has been called a "journey downward."[72] This might not always be the result of re-locating, and the element of calling the only reason for it, but the inclusion of calling as a reason is the key feature in being a '*Christian* incomer'.

In telling my story my intention is not to put myself forward as a special case. I am one of a number of Christians from my church who, over the years, have chosen to move to and live in this part of Ardwick.[73] Additionally, across this city, country, and other cities and countries across the world, there are other fellow 'Christian incomers' who have made what is a deliberate downward move, most without any sort of fanfare.[74]

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[70] <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/incomer> Accessed 7/5/2013.

[71] My wife's hometown, Whitstable in Kent, has, in recent years, seen an influx of people from London buying weekend and holiday homes. They are known locally as "DFLs" (Down from London).

[72] John Vincent, Radical Jesus: The Way of Jesus Then and Now (Sheffield: Ashram Press, 2006), 83. I understand the use of "downward" in the sense of how society measures people's worth by economic power, educational attainment and class, and our relative starting points, but I am uncomfortable with the overtones which imply patronising. In Kingdom terms, as a move towards those Jesus called "blessed," and who have much to teach me, then "upward" also fits.

[73] There are currently two other families from the church living in the immediate area (though not in The Groves) long-term, together with another that moved in more recently. Other families and individuals have moved on to other parts of Manchester or further afield – one is currently at an Anglican training college in Birmingham.

[74] There are some *with* a degree of fanfare – such as the Eden projects in Manchester (a model that is discussed in more detail in 4.13 below). That does not add to or take

We have deliberately chosen to not aspire to rise to the level where our economic potential as university-educated professionals would normally take us – big house, nice area, good schools, Waitrose, golf club and, more than likely, a lively church to be a part of.[75] There is arguably nothing wrong with any of that in itself, except that as Christian incomers we have taken time out to ask God 'where?' not just 'what?' and responded to a sense of calling to be a part of this community, which has some 'issues'. There are plenty of *more* deprived areas in this city, but there are even more that are *less* deprived, especially out in the suburbs. There are, of course, also, issues in the suburbs, as I have been reminded numerous times – just different ones. However, I wonder how many suburban dwellers would be willing to swap *their* issues for those of inner-city dwellers?

A fellow Christian incomer in another city sums it up well:

> We have tried to take the Bible seriously; it says go to the ends of the earth.
> One of those 'ends' in our society is most certainly the outer estate. We can't
> believe God wants all his name-owning salt and light in the suburbs. We think
> it should take a special dispensation not to go and do likewise.[76]

A Christian calling and decision to live here, and not where most of our peer group gravitates, challenges the assumption that that is what everyone does. There are some parallels with the classic calling to overseas missionary work,

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away from their commitment, though it could be asked if the spotlight does add a pressure to be seen to 'succeed', however that is measured.

[75] What I have heard called the Eleventh Commandment of the middle-class: 'Thou Shalt Improve Thyself'.

[76] Andy Dorton, "On the Estate," in Urban Church: A Practitioner's Resource Book, Michael Eastman and Steve Latham eds (London: SPCK, 2004), 63.

and further parallels once in situ, such as learning to function in a different culture.[77]

However, I am not aware of any incomers I know having 'gone home' on furlough. This *is* home. It is, first of all, ordinary life. I have no particular sense of this being special or heroic and I am fairly certain other Christian incomers would share that view. My case is somewhat different in that my work has been that of a 'full-time Christian worker', currently as part of 'Urban Presence', set up for the express purpose of encouraging a stronger Christian presence in areas such as this.[78]

2.3 Coming to Manchester

As noted in 1.1 above, I came to Manchester from my native Belfast in 1978, initially for a year as a post-graduate student, as the first half of training to be a Probation Officer, or so I thought at the time, after graduating in Theology from Queen's University Belfast. During this year I became involved in the Christian Union (CU) – more so than I ever did during my under-graduate years. Manchester CU had an outgoing ethos and members were far more integrated with the life of the university and Student Union, whereas in Belfast the CU at the time had a reputation of being an exclusive clique holding their meetings and, apart from the occasional outreach activity, keeping very much to themselves. I

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[77] This is explored in 2.13.

[78] A part of that work is to encourage theological reflection on mission and ministry praxis in inner-city contexts, so that could be said to be good reason to tell my particular story as an example of 'incoming', and also try to reflect on it and draw out the theological implications.

now recognise that episodic and distanced message-based approach as 'mission-to'. My adverse reaction to it, and preference to get involved in the life of the Student Union (though initially, it must be said, for economic rather than missional reasons) can be seen now as an early step towards 'mission-with' thinking.[79]

Photograph 2: Brunswick Church.

Though not of that denominational persuasion (or any other for that matter),[80] on my first Sunday I attended 'Brunswick', an Anglican church situated on Brunswick council housing estate in Ardwick near the university (see photograph 2).[81] The normal practice for Christian students arriving in a city was to

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[79] Appendix 2 is an unpublished article I wrote some years ago reflecting on my Belfast experience.

[80] I had decided from my experience and observations of life in Northern Ireland that denominational affiliation – as distinct from belonging to a local expression of church – was unbiblical and more trouble than it was worth.

[81] Official name 'Christ Church Brunswick,' but known simply as 'Brunswick.'

spend several weeks 'sampling' the various churches before settling in one. For me, one visit to Brunswick was enough. It was friendly, informal, and close by.

2.4 Brunswick

I got drawn into the life of the church at Brunswick and its mission to its parish, which mostly constituted council housing. I began to learn about life on the estate, and got to know some of the residents, for many of whom 'church', 'God', 'Jesus', and anything related was an almost total irrelevance.[82]

Brunswick's minister was Martin Gooder. With his wife Carol, he had committed to serve in this area long-term and had already been there for twelve years (they were to remain until the early 1990s), guiding the church through a period of extensive demolition and rebuilding across the area.[83] This included the new church building, opened in 1974, which Martin helped design.

Through Martin's teaching and example I began to learn about inner-city life and ministry. Although the old slums had to go, with them had gone much of

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[82] I remember speaking to a man who genuinely thought that the church building was a swimming pool. It is a modern building, and the side of it he would have passed on his way to and from the local shops has few windows and does not afford a view of the foot high white plastic letters: 'Brunswick Parish Church.' This ignorance of church and what it is about was in marked contrast to what I had been used to in Northern Ireland, which was, and remains, a far more 'churchy' society, though this element is declining. I had been brought up to go to church, and it was something just about all my friends and neighbours did in the suburban area I grew up in, but in many cases, including my own, it was just something you did on a Sunday, with no relevance to the rest of the week or to life. This had the effect of inoculating many people, whereas at least on Brunswick estate things were more clear-cut. A local young person who had been attending our youth work had a Gideon New Testament at home that he had been given at school and decided to read it. "I used that bit at the front that tells you what to read if you're feeling sad or lonely. It said Romans 8. I turned to page 8 and I couldn't find any Romans anywhere." This would not have happened in Belfast.

[83] 1.6.3

any sense of community, as residents had been summarily dispersed. The new houses were filled randomly with people from across the city who were expected to create community from scratch. The houses were better, but loneliness, deprivation and poor health persisted.

At this point it would be appropriate to outline Martin Gooder's theology as it was to prove influential for me in learning about mission as being a witness and incarnational presence in a community, and pivotal in a growing sense of call to the inner-city. This led to my decision to stop probation training and remain in Manchester.

2.4.1 The Theology of Martin Gooder

Gooder describes his and Carol's early thinking as based on incarnational theology and overseas missionary models, partly as they originally thought they may be going to China:

> … a lot of our initial missionary thinking was based on the life of Hudson Taylor, and Hudson Taylor when he first went out to China was horrified by the English missionaries who were there who were all huddled together in the English ports and were living out a kind of colonial lifestyle.[84]

They were struck by the way many missionaries

> … exported not just Christianity but all their Western values, so that to become a Christian you had to become a Westerner, and Hudson Taylor saw this is not the gospel. The gospel is you go to people where they are and you become one of them. Jesus came and identified with us. He didn't shout from heaven. He became one of the people.[85]

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[84] Interview with Martin and Carol Gooder, 25th November 2010. As part of my research I felt it important to re-visit those early days in Brunswick with Martin and Carol and check the accuracy of some of my memories and perceptions from that time.

[85] Interview with Martin and Carol Gooder.

Taylor saw that effective mission required more than making forays from the safety of ex-pat enclaves and risked ridicule for behaviour not befitting an English Victorian gentleman, such as wearing Chinese clothing. But "it was the Chinese he wanted to win – rather than sacrifice their approval for that of the small foreign community in the Ports."[86] He clearly had the Incarnation in mind in his justification for taking on Chinese clothing and culture, writing that as Jesus was sent to the Jews "it became him in all things to be like unto His brethren. In language, in costume, in everything unsinful, He made Himself one with those He sought to benefit."[87] He goes on to write that the chief objection Chinese people had to Christianity was "that it is a *foreign* religion, and that its tendencies are to approximate believers to foreign nations."[88] He continues:

> I am not peculiar in holding the opinion that the foreign dress and carriage of missionaries … the foreign appearance of the chapels, and indeed, the foreign air given to everything connected with religion, have largely hindered the rapid dissemination of the truth among the Chinese … Let us live in their houses, making no unnecessary alterations in external form, and only so far modifying their internal arrangements as attention to health and efficiency for work absolutely require. Our present experience is proving the advantage of this course …[89]

When their missionary calling clarified towards the inner-city in England, the Gooders realised a lot of what they had learned about overseas mission applied equally to that context:

> … we began to realise that God was calling us not to China but to the inner-city, and that in many areas there were fewer Christians in the inner-city than

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[86] Dr. and Mrs Howard Taylor, Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret (Chicago: Moody, 1932), 28.

[87] Hudson Taylor, China's Spiritual Needs and Claims, 3rd edn (1868), appendix. Quoted in Marshall Broomhall, The Jubilee Story of the China Inland Mission (London: Marshall & Scott, 1915), 32.

[88] Taylor, China's Spiritual Needs and Claims, 32.

[89] Taylor, China's Spiritual Needs and Claims, 32.

there were in China and we found ourselves in a mission-field where the Gospel had hardly ever been properly preached or heard.[90]

This was an expression of incarnational ministry, following the example of Hudson Taylor.

> We must be prepared to follow Jesus in the principle of the Incarnation … by ceasing to be 'one of them' and becoming 'one of us'. There must be at least a heart-identification with the people of Brunswick, so that we share their pain, their struggles, their frustrations, their conflicts. That is why, for us, it has been essential to live in Brunswick, and for our children to grow up through the same school system as everybody else.[91]

All of this was based on a theology of Christian discipleship as total commitment to Christ, which would necessarily involve sacrifice. "Saved to Serve" was a phrase Martin often used. This was the basis of the challenge that would be given to those who sought to join Brunswick church:

> … if you're serious about being a follower of Christ, it demands sacrifice. Sacrifice means involvement, means identification with the people, and if you're really prepared to do it, you need to come and live with the people like we do.[92]

The grounds for this method of ministry were in cross-cultural missionary principles and incarnational theology. "The gospel needs to be brought from a foreign culture, and needs to be incarnated into the indigenous culture."[93]

> Is it possible to minister in the inner-city if you are from a different background? The answer lies in a 'missionary' attitude to life. Any missionary must leave his own cultural background and go to an alien one, vastly different from his own. Jesus himself left the glory of heaven for a completely alien situation on earth. He calls us to do no more![94]

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[90] Interview with Martin and Carol Gooder.

[91] Martin L. Gooder, The Brunswick Papers (Manchester: self-published, 1988), 20. Several of their contemporaries in inner-city parishes for various reasons lived further out and travelled in.

[92] Interview with Martin and Carol Gooder.

[93] Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 30.

[94] Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 167.

Such was his clarity of vision that Gooder actively discouraged people from joining for what might be different reasons.[95] Church was not primarily for the comfort of the members: it was there first for the cure of souls in the parish.[96] As with Hudson Taylor in China, the perception of the Church by local people was that it was foreign – for the rich. This was indeed the history of the Anglican Church in the inner-city[97] and so "the Church of England in the inner-city ... has never really been a church for the local people."[98] This view over the years has come to form part of the working-class psyche[99] and was a barrier that had to be broken down and replaced with a positive alternative.

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[95] Due to the proximity of the university, each Autumn a fresh wave of students would turn up to check out the church (as I had done), with some deciding to settle there. Martin and Carol were welcoming and pastoral, but also very clear that the primary mission of the church was to the local estate, and students would be expected to join in with that in some way. This challenge was made with a smile and a post-service showing of 'The Brunswick Story' – slides of the recent history of the area, demolition, new houses, and the new church building. On a few occasions, feeling too many students were coming to Brunswick, Martin had no qualms about encouraging some to move to other inner-city churches where their presence would be much more useful. This generous willingness to share and give away was something I admired him for.

[96] "The church is the church only when it exists for others..." Bosch, Transforming Mission, 375. This is reminiscent of the quotation attributed to the former Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple: "The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members."

[97] "... the Church of England has never enjoyed a golden age in urban Britain." Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, Faith in the City (London: Church House Publishing, 1985), 45-46.

"The nineteenth century church allowed itself to be captured by the prevailing class structure. The upper and middle classes ruled and administered there just as they did everywhere. The lower classes were tolerated and smiled upon, and seen as worthy targets for the charitable. A truly working class style of worship, church life, leadership and evangelism was never really allowed to develop. This poses some critical questions about the church today. A middle class church is irrelevant to working class people." Robin Gamble, The Irrelevant Church (Tunbridge Wells: Monarch, 1991), 63.

[98] Interview with Martin and Carol Gooder. While this, as stated in Faith in the City, can be argued in an institutional sense, there have been a good number of individual congregations, such as Brunswick, that have worked hard to identify with inner-city communities.

[99] "A tradition had been established, and strongly reinforced by time, that the working-classes did not go to church." Gamble, Irrelevant Church, 36. In the early eighties

> We are asking that you should join us in attempting to build a church which is culturally unsuited to your own interests – in which at times you will feel uncomfortable so that the local people may feel at home. ... Our policy therefore is to discourage people from coming here, if they come for the wrong reasons. ... it is essential that our leaders and potential leaders, understand clearly all the issues involved and have sufficient missionary commitment to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of the people of Brunswick.[100]

Gooder was clearly advocating what I would now identify as 'presence-among', the first stage of 'mission-with'. He was keen to see members of the church living in the local community, not as part of a missional community or in an official capacity or to enable them to do a specific project, but simply as residents and witnesses to their faith. However, as an evangelical, in terms of mission praxis, at the time his was a 'mission-to' and 'mission-for' model, with 'to' as the priority, echoing Packer's "two tasks."[101] Where Gooder goes beyond Packer is in his addition of sacrificial incarnational identification as a vital aspect of mission.

2.5 Staying in Manchester

As the months of that first year in Manchester passed, I began to feel increasingly uncomfortable about my plans to apply for the second year of probation training which would entail moving to another city. I wanted to stay in Manchester, and one day in March 1979 tore up the application forms I had for courses.

Joslin estimated church-going in working-class areas at less than 1%. Roy Joslin, <u>Urban Harvest: Biblical perspectives on Christian mission in the inner-cities</u> (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1982), 46. Given the overall decline since, that figure is unlikely to have improved.

[100] Gooder, <u>Brunswick Papers</u>, 159, 160.

[101] 1.3.2, note 23. "Meeting the social needs of man is important, but it is <u>not</u> the gospel." Gooder, <u>Brunswick Papers</u>, 103.

Reflecting back, I think I was feeling the beginnings of a call to the inner-city, but at the time it was more a case of knowing what I did not want to do.

Not long afterwards I was offered a job for a year at Brunswick Church. Martin had found funding to employ someone to take on some administrative jobs, freeing him to visit other urban churches and lead missions or give training. While he was away our curate Peter Hobson would be in charge.

This role was to begin in September. Meanwhile I completed the last few months of my course, spent the summer working as a musician in Holland (continuing something I had done back in Belfast) and started seeing a pretty redhead called Judith I had got to know at church and University.

The year working at Brunswick involved things like attempting to fix holes in the church roof, producing the monthly 'Brunswick Broadsheet' on an ancient Gestetner duplicator (with a page count of over a million), getting supplies from the Cash and Carry and a number of other behind-the-scenes jobs. As part of the staff team I got to work closely with Martin, Carol, Pete and his wife Sue, and even went along on some of the mission trips, usually to help with music. I learnt more about inner-city ministry and lived in 'Barnabas' one of the two church community houses.[102]

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[102] These had been bought several years previously to house several members who wanted to live locally, but would not be able to qualify for Council Housing, which at the time made up just about all the housing stock in the parish. 'Barnabas' and 'Timothy' were 'as near as possible' compromises just off the estate. Gooder wrote about those of us who felt a calling to live locally: "Some of the students had caught the vision of the need for involvement in inner-city ministry. We thank God for those who deliberately looked for jobs in the Manchester area after graduating in order to play a part in our teams. We have had to pray and work hard to find housing for such people

Through the year my sense of calling to live in this area grew stronger, and I decided to put my name down for a council flat in the parish on Brunswick estate. This was toward the end of 1979. Judith and I had got engaged (at a speed we would never recommend to our own children) and she shared this call to inner-city Manchester.

2.6 Moving In: Lockton Court

I did not have enough points to get a council flat. However, as there were several people willing to take my place in Barnabas, a letter to the Council led to an offer of 69 Lockton Court (see photograph 3), a single bedroom flat on the top floor of an eight-storey block at the north end of the estate, overlooking the inner-ring road. The previous tenant had left the flat in a bad state, but with the help of a work-party of friends I had moved in by late January 1980.

The deck-access block was one of three on the estate, all single bedroom. The location was great: five minutes walk from the main railway station, Piccadilly, less than ten minutes to the city centre. The church was a few minutes walk in the other direction across the estate.

I continued with my job at the church, along with more events and concerts, and around Easter got an offer from 'Youth For Christ' to work with two other musi-

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in a basically council housing estate. We have had two community houses on the edge of the parish. Others have lived in deck-access housing which the Council deemed as unfit for families [Lockton Court where I moved into was one such]. Still others have made considerable financial sacrifices to buy houses in the small areas of private housing which have recently been built." Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 70.

cians in a band that would work mostly in schools, beginning in September. Judith graduated as a speech therapist in the summer and accepted an offer of a job in Salford. We got married on September 27, and 69 Lockton Court became our first home together. Ironically, just as we began living in an inner-city area, I started a job that would take me all over the country, and occasionally further, for weeks at a time. But the base was here.[103]
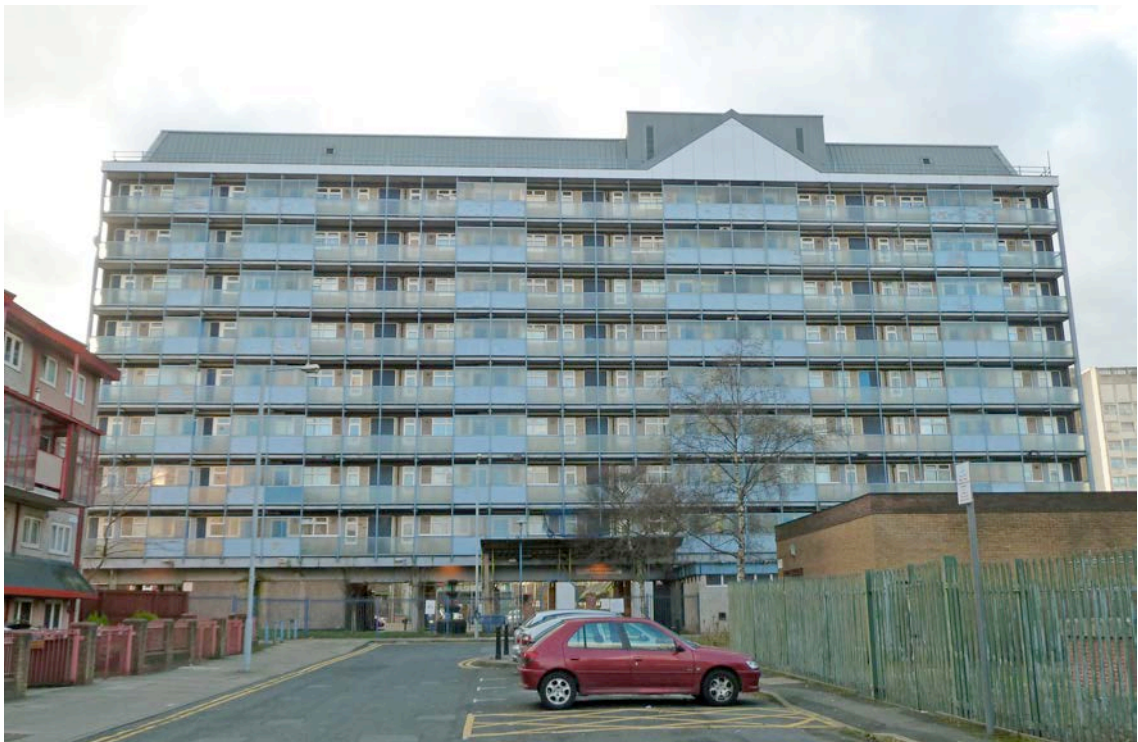
Photograph 3: Lockton Court.[104]

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[103] My job with YFC took me to a wide variety of local situations and gave me experience of different, if predominantly evangelical, churches, working alongside them on periods of mission. However, even in that role it quickly became apparent that our effectiveness depended to a large extent on the degree of local on-going missional life-style present in the context we were coming into. Through this itinerant work I was becoming more aware of the contrast between churches in suburban areas and those in inner-urban and overspill areas, which as a rule were smaller and often tended to struggle. Looking back now, I can see that seeds were being sown.

[104] No. 69 is in the middle of the top floor. Since we left some refurbishment has taken place, including the addition of a pitched roof.

2.7 Life in Lockton Court

What makes the headlines about the inner-city are the stories of crime, ASBOs (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders), benefit-fraud and racism. Not deemed news-worthy (and why should it be) is that most of the time in our inner-city location we were living ordinary lives doing ordinary things. We went to our jobs, shopped for food, went to church, and visited friends. Occasionally something would occur that would remind us of where we were, but we soon became virtually oblivious to things like the unsanitary or exotic aromas in the lift. Judith's colleagues at work were a bit puzzled as to why she did not live in a 'nicer' area. Our parents were a bit perplexed. Gradually we grew aware of some of the dynamics of where we were: this was not suburbia.

The majority of the flats contained just one person, as was the case with quite a few of the houses and other flats on the estate making many people isolated as there seemed to be little neighbourly spirit.[105]

Neighbours on our floor included two elderly sisters in separate flats at either end, an ex-tank driver who had fought in the war in North Africa and Italy, a lovely Catholic lady, and a mysterious man we only saw a few times. The only other couple were retired Glaswegians who lived next door.

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[105] Sometimes this was evidenced in quite dramatic ways. I remember going to a flat in another of the blocks in response to a request for prayer as the owner thought it was haunted. The issue turned out to be guilt feelings. A neighbour had been found dead in his flat just after Christmas. It was reckoned he had been there for some time, as it was the smell that finally raised the alarm. If someone had just looked through the letterbox, his body had been quite visible in the hall.

There was a flat on the third floor with a red bulb in the kitchen, which never had its curtains drawn. A young couple below us had violent arguments, once involving throwing a TV out of the window, and we called the police on several occasions. Sometimes there were blood stains, or abandoned underwear as well as the more usual litter.

Apart from Mrs S., an elderly widow we already visited through the church's 'Friends of the Flats' scheme,[106] it was rare to be invited into a neighbour's flat. Most interaction was on the walkway or waiting for the lift. We realised going for meals or coffee was a middle-class thing, among white British at least: in some Asian and Muslim cultures hospitality is important. In one flat we were in I noticed a large bookcase that contained one book and quite a few videos. Our bookcase contained books. We asked Martin Gooder if we should move our books into the bedroom. His reply was: "No. You need to be yourselves. If you try to be something you are not, people will sense your discomfort. You can only go so far in identifying with local people. A lot of people around here, it's not that they can't read, it's more that they don't read. This is why we do lots of visual stuff in the services. It's not that one way is better or worse, just different." The books stayed put.[107]

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[106] The 'Friends of the Flats' scheme offered a weekly visit from one of a team of volunteers. Many took this offer up and some came into the life of the church as a result.

[107] "You cannot avoid being who you are. You cannot run away from what your birth, upbringing, education, church allegiance, reading habits, cultural interests, friends and peer-groups have made you. You are a rich person not a poor person. … But you can do something. You can decide whether you are going to put yourself in a situation where all those tendencies and elements within your make-up are going to be confirmed, protected and exaggerated – or whether you are going to put yourself in a situation where these tendencies and elements are going to be questioned, exposed and curtailed." John Vincent, Radical Jesus, 81.

I was away with the band in July 1981 when the Moss Side riots took place. Over the phone, Judith told me of seeing groups of people from our estate heading across to Moss Side[108] and hearing the noise and seeing the flames from her eighth floor vantage-point. By an incredible piece of foresight, or maybe godly insight, our church had already organised 'A Festival for Brunswick' to take place in early September. This proved a timely and positive response to the riots and included a successful family carnival day on the local primary school sports field.[109]

We learned about the frustrations of being a council tenant in several ways. One missed rent payment, caused by our bank missing a Standing Order payment, resulted in a Repossession Notice – scary enough for us, but what effect would this have had on elderly or more vulnerable tenants? The Council did not always move so fast. Lockton Court had a flat roof and was generally not in great repair. The hole in the roof right over the cooker in our kitchen took eleven months to fix.

We heard stories from neighbours of broken toilets that took weeks to repair, or of other faults that they did not bother to report or attempted to fix themselves. It was not uncommon for people to lose their tempers in the Council's Neighbourhood Office, venting their frustration on a council worker usually with no per-

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[108] The local buzz was that our area was not quite as organised as Moss Side (and, some added, the shops were not worth looting) so we just joined in over there.

[109] "… people were encouraged into involvement in an event they'd previously shown no interest in, and *they enjoyed it*! Set against the backcloth of July riots (Moss Side only a mile away) this was doubly rewarding to see, and a pointer to the whole estate that it can be otherwise!" Peter Hobson, "A Festival for Brunswick." Mainstream 14 (Sept. 1983), 13. <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/mainstream/14.pdf> Accessed 6/2/2013.

sonal responsibility for the problem. One man picked up the heavy metal stand the queuing rope was attached to and smashed it against the glass twice. The glass was armoured so did not break, but the staff on the other side still leapt in all directions. He then set the stand down, turned to the queue and apologised, sat on the floor and burst into tears. A few minutes later the police arrived.

2.7.1 The Broken Lift

One of our dealings with the Council concerned the lifts. There were two, one large, serving the even-numbered floors, one tiny, serving the odd-numbered floors. Some of our elderly neighbours would only use the big lift as the little one gave them claustrophobia. So when it started to break down every few days, each time requiring the Fire Brigade to come and rescue whoever was inside, many of them took to using the stairs the whole way or in some cases just would not go out. Individual letters or complaints at the Neighbourhood Office brought no response from the Council. After several weeks of breakdowns, Judith and I decided to put together a petition and take it round all the doors. Just about everyone signed and the petition was sent to the Council, with a letter, also copied to our MP, local councillor, the Manchester Evening News and the local vicar, Martin Gooder. We had letters from the MP and councillor, promising to investigate, and an article in the newspaper.[110] The lift was fixed within a week.

Beyond a sense that it might help us to get to know some of the other residents better with a view to inviting them to the Carol Service, we had no particular

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[110] "Anguished old age pensioners living in a Manchester block of flats are demanding action to keep their lift working before tragedy strikes …" Manchester Evening News, July 1982.

sense at the time that our lift campaign was a missional activity in itself. Our missional activity was the delivery of the church's monthly 'Brunswick Broadsheet' and any conversations that came out of it. At this time, I was clearly still operating on a 'mission-to' basis, with some 'mission-for' through 'Friends of the Flats' or as needs presented themselves. Reflecting back now – given that it was an action that would improve the well-being, or *shalom*, of the residents – by Bosch's definition the lift repair was an expression of mission in and of itself.[111] Some years later I was to realise that this was an embryonic piece of 'Community Organising', if only in getting the other residents involved by signing their names – everything else we did 'for' them rather than 'with'. More of this was to follow,[112] but with a better understanding of the wider missional application and the value of the activity in itself and not just as a means to a spiritual end.

2.8 The Groves

By 1983 we were wondering about starting a family. Our flat was not intended for children, and the Council would not let them to families. However, to get enough points for something larger in the area required having one child with another expected. A small number of new private houses were being built on another part of the estate but they were very small and beyond our means. Martin told us about The Groves, tucked away between two roads running

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[111] "Mission is a multi-faceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualisation and much more." Bosch, Transforming Mission, 512.

[112] See 3.3.

along one side of the estate and the closest bit of older private housing. It turned out these were five streets of terraced houses that had survived the demolition of the 1960s and 1970s due partly to their good condition but also because their residents had campaigned for them to be left alone. We had a look and number 17 Upper West Grove had a For Sale sign up. Though still not huge, it was much larger than the new builds on the estate and around half the price. We liked it, and after some dithering, decided to buy (see photograph 4).

Photograph 4: Upper West Grove. *(No. 17 is the third door from the left.)*

On hearing that we were going from renting to mortgaging, the response from well-meaning relatives or friends, was that they were glad we had moved onto the 'property ladder'. They were relieved that we were doing the sensible thing, moving on from our inner-city council flat and investing in property. The relief faded when they saw where we had moved to, but implied behind the com-

ments about our house as a first step on said ladder was the assumption that we would eventually move again to somewhere 'better'. In 2013 we are still on that step.

Photograph 5: The Groves.

The over-riding factor in our decision to move to The Groves was the location, being within the same area, and close to where the church met. A lesser factor was my low income at the time; we got the mortgage on the strength of Judith's job as a speech therapist.[113] Though we could probably, with help from parents, have exercised an option to move to a more expensive house further out, an option many of our neighbours would not have, we also did not want to tie up

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[113] At that time, going from renting to the then popular endowment mortgage, our monthly outgoings actually went down.

too much of our income in mortgage payments and this became more crucial a couple of years later when Judith stopped working.

We moved in May 1983, a distance of about a mile and still within Ardwick Ward, and have lived in number 17 Upper West Grove since. Being an older, terraced street rather than a deck-access block of flats, The Groves had a very different feel to Lockton Court, and the mix of neighbours was wider, including African, Caribbean, Asian and Irish. Many of the houses are owned by a Social Housing Association, some by individual landlords, who tend to have students, and the rest are owner-occupiers. There are 142 houses in five streets, North, South, East, West and Upper West Groves, which form a rough capital 'A' shape. On two sides are the new-build council houses of the 1970s (see photograph 5).

Still in Ardwick Ward,[114] the area's old, official name is Chorlton-on-Medlock (many of us like the posh-sounding hyphenation). Chorlton-on-Medlock is also known as 'Little Ireland' due to the number of Irish immigrants that settled here over the years up to the 1960s.[115] Some of our Irish neighbours are still with us.[116] Our streets are very close to Manchester's main hospital complex, which

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[114] See note 58.

[115] <http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/districts/chorlton-on-medlock.html> Accessed 8/9/2010. When we first came here there were two Irish pubs, not Irish-themed, but where if you entered and listened to the voices you would think you were in Dublin or Limerick. Both pubs have long since closed, as have most others on the estate and in the area, victims of cheap supermarket alcohol and other factors.

[116] Mr L. is a charming and twinkly retired widower who supplements his pension by painting the exteriors of most of the houses on our street. He has been in Manchester since the 1950s but his accent is as strong as the day he arrived. He is a much-loved and well-known neighbour who welcomes people from every culture.

is a major local employer, and includes St Mary's where our three children were born.[117]

Early days in The Groves were taken up with sorting out the house. There were a few conversations with some of the neighbours, but most took little notice of us. Some of the attention we got was not favourable. On one occasion I brought the band's van home and parked it up the street in front of a windowless wall by the corner shop. There was an anonymous note on it next morning detailing what would happen to it if it was still there that night. For our first Halloween – actually several weeks before it, such was their entrepreneurial spirit – several local children called for a donation. We refused to give them anything. Next morning there was paint spilled on our car. A mental note was made for next year.

2.9 Children and School

In June 1985 our first child was born. As Judith wheeled Daniel along the street in his pram, our Irish Catholic neighbours would come out and place money under his pillow, one also adding a picture of a saint. This was one of the ways in which Daniel unknowingly helped us to get more known and accepted locally. Another came when he started nursery at the local school, St. Chrysostom's C-of-E Primary, just a few minutes walk away (see Photograph 5). Judith got to know several of the other mums, and I got chatting with some of the dads, when

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[117] Recently there has been a major redevelopment of the whole site, resulting in one of the largest hospital developments in Europe. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/ manchester/7374906.stm> Accessed 6/2/2013. A poignant moment for us and many other local families was the demolition of the old St Mary's building in spring 2010, with its top floor delivery room, from which I once took a photograph of our house.

going to and from the school. Judith became a school governor for a time, and I got involved in helping with some practical matters, such as providing a sound system for the school pantomime, and recording a 'Happy Birthday' backing tape for use in Assembly as none of the staff at the time could play it on the piano.

This sort of practical involvement, along with other bits of helping or being helped by our neighbours, arose naturally out of our being there and we would have been aware of our witness as Christians being in our willingness to help, but at this stage there was no further theological reflection or development of our thinking.

Judith also got to know more local mums through a number of years as part of the church Parent and Toddler Group, continuing through the arrival of our other two children, Alannah in 1989 and Holly in 1992. In 1999 Judith returned to paid work as a classroom assistant at the school. This further built up our links and relationships, and one of the benefits, unforeseen at the time, has been that many of the children she worked with then comprise the local teenagers now: they are still respectful!

We were fortunate in that the local primary was, and is, an excellent school.[118] Looking back, we feel our children benefitted from being there, in non-academic ways such as mixing with children from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds – there were about thirty first languages – but also academically doing well enough, with support from home, to progress. Several other families from church

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[118] Though the headmaster at the time kept the links with the local Anglican Church to a minimum.

also sent their children there, giving them, and us, a mutual support network, though the friendships they established were far wider than just with those they also saw on Sundays.

We were also fortunate to have a good secondary school option not far away. Again, this was located in the inner-city, with a highly committed staff, and children from a wide variety of backgrounds. Would we have made the same decisions had either school been a so-called 'failing school'? Maybe not.[119]

However, even with the availability of good local schools, some families at our church over the years have chosen the approach of their children to school age as the time to move to an area where the schools are 'better'.[120] This would be in terms of academic achievement, an important measure of educational growth to be sure, but not the only one. The usually unspoken implication, for those of us who chose to send our children to the local schools, was that we were not giving them the best chance to succeed. Yet friends who moved to work as missionaries in Malawi and put their children into the village school were regarded as heroes.[121]

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[119] We recognise our experience of seeing our children educated in inner-city schools (with all three progressing to higher education) may not always be the case for a family of incomers like us in the inner-city and so have tried not to use it as a standard for anyone else. Our mentors, the Gooders, for example, just a few years earlier, felt it was right to send their daughters, who had attended the local primary school on Brunswick Estate, to secondary schools outside the area. At one point we did move our youngest to another local school (also very good and about the same distance away in the other direction) during year five as the school was going through a difficult period. With four terms to go before leaving and problems with her class not being dealt with by the headmaster, we felt it was a crucial time for her on several levels, not just academically.

[120] Also the case in other churches. Appendix 3, d.3 (see note 200).

[121] We identified with an article written by a church planter on an urban estate who used the local school. "People (usually Christians) outside the area are horrified to hear that all the children on the church plant will be going to the local schools. The common perception is that since the local people go there, it will be 'rough' and the children will

Our children are bi-cultural, having absorbed values and beliefs both from us and from the local area. Their early friendships reflected the make-up of the area in that they were a mix of white, Asian, and Afro-Caribbean, though as they got older so the requests for lifts to visit friends in suburban areas got more frequent, reflecting a tendency to be attracted to others with similar backgrounds to their parents. However, the extra breadth of experience and relationships growing up and going to school in a multi-cultural area is something they have come to appreciate and seen benefits from.[122] In a number of ways they are more bi-cultural and bi-lingual than we are. We came here as incomers but they did not. We are immigrants, but our children are natives.[123]

2.10 Life on The Groves

Most of our neighbours over the years have been ordinary people that we have got on with well, a mixture of older, long-term residents, couples or people living alone, and various families. There are also some student houses, but due to the

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emerge at 16 illiterate! … It is true that the academic record of the schools in our area is not as good as in the 'nice' parts of the city. However, that is more a reflection on the home life of many of the children, than the school itself. If the children are encouraged to study at home and grow up in a stable, disciplined environment, they can do well no matter what the school is like. Judging from the reactions we have had from some Christians, I am forced to wonder whether they worship God or education. They say they want the best for their children, but it seems that the best is defined for them by the world not the Bible, and include a degree and a career." Steve Wood, "When The Going Gets Tough," New Christian Herald, 20/7/96.

[122] In 2007-8 one of our daughters spent a gap year working in Bangalore in India and found her upbringing prepared her for settling into the local community and making friends far better than her two co-workers who came from suburban towns – both leaving for the UK before the end of their time.

[123] "Many a priest will say to me, 'I cannot in all conscience visit that deprivation upon my family.' My usual rejoinder is to say, 'Can you not see what cultural deprivation you may be introducing your family to if you live in a monocultural, well-heeled parish where no one has a clue about the issues which others face?' But my impassioned plea is not given much credence." Laurie Green, "I Can't Go *There*!," in Andrew Davey ed., Crossover City (London: Mowbray, 2010), 2.

transient nature of student life there is not a lot of contact. We have also had our share of 'problem' families, joy-riding and mini-bikes (see photograph 6), and houses where drug-dealing, domestic violence, and prostitution have gone on and various criminal activities have been based.[124]

One neighbour's husband of eight months disappeared the day his citizenship came through. Another had rotweiler, alsatian and pit-bull terrier dogs in his yard and sometimes offered items like duvets and carpet round the doors. Not long after being caught in possession of a local garage's steam cleaner (through the simple process of following a trail of oil drips to the back of his van) he went off to prison and the house was re-let. One of our experiences of joy-riders involved being awakened in the early hours by them colliding with our car. The four occupants were apprehended but, despite evidence and wit-nesses, no charges were brought. It is perhaps not surprising that there is little interest around here in schemes like 'Neighbourhood Watch', and that stories circulate of other means of dealing with crime and criminals that do not include the involvement of the police.

On a number of occasions we have worked with our neighbours on particular issues that we were affected by. These have included street lighting, rubbish

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[124] One family in particular, consists of an alcoholic mother and four children by several fathers, and now three grandchildren. The house acts as a magnet for all sorts of people with frequent comings and goings and occasional confrontations, arguments and fights, usually on the street outside the front door. We actually get on quite well with them and have helped them out with lifts, pens, scissors, and tools on numerous occasions. A few years ago we refused to sign a petition being got up by another resident to persuade the housing association to move them on. Our feeling was that the community has managed to contain them for nearly fifteen years and that has constrained their behaviour to an extent, which would probably not be the case if they were in another area with more similar households.

collection, fly-tipping, smoke and ash from the hospital's waste disposal chimney, a car-parking issue, turning a piece of waste ground into a community garden and improving the local park.[125] But most of the time, with most of our neighbours, it is ordinary life on an ordinary street.
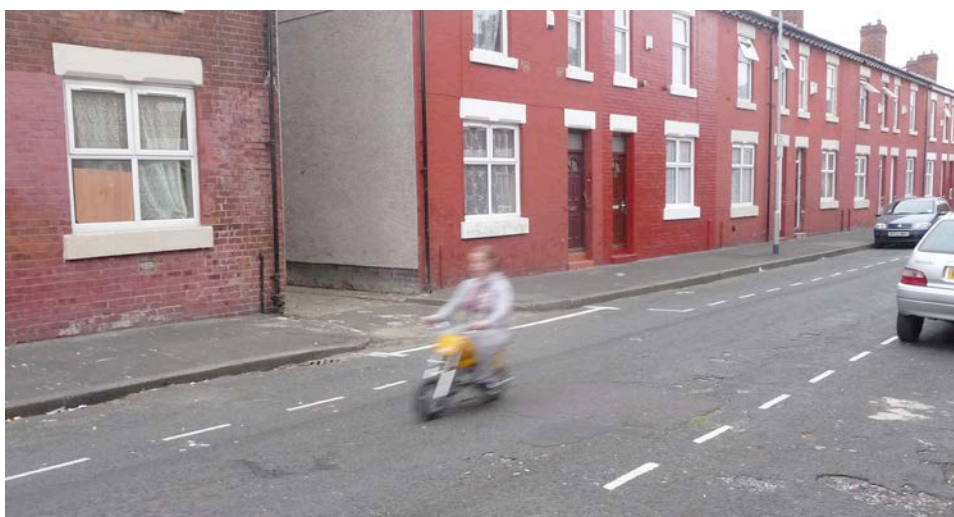
Photograph 6: A mini-bike on The Groves.

In the early 1990s with a third child on the way we wondered about lack of space and had a look at a few bigger houses, all close by, but apart from the not inconsiderable jump in price, we just could not feel at ease with leaving this group of streets. A strong feeling I had had several times before came back to me of being placed here by God, like a Chess Master carefully positions his pieces, and that our primary calling was to 'be' where we had been located. Any tentative plans were shelved and, through some remarkable occurrences,[126] we were able to create an extra room in our loft – confirmation that we were where God had called us and that we should stay put.

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[125] The last three of these will be reflected on as case-studies in Chapter Three.

[126] These included finding an envelope in the hall one evening containing a Banker's Draft for £2,000. To this day we do not know where it came from.

2.10.1 Interaction with Local Culture

As with Lockton Court, a lot of our interaction with neighbours is on the street or doorstep. 'Going for a coffee' or being invited round for a meal has only happened with Muslim neighbours, never with white working-class ones.[127] Their invitations are to weddings or birthday parties. A recent fiftieth party involved the usual food, drinks, chat and music with adults and children mixing. Later on the drinking games started, with the children still present, though not taking part. The acceptance of drunkenness is a part of the culture, though interestingly neither Judith nor I were pressed to join in with this part of the evening. It did mean we were able to drive some guests home later.[128] The contrast with a Muslim wedding we were invited to was stark: in this culture people appear to be able to have just as much of a good time without any alcohol being consumed.[129]

Over the years we have not had many conversations with neighbours that could be regarded as overtly 'spiritual', and most of those have been with Muslim neighbours for whom religion is bound up in everyday life and culture (rather than being one of the two things British people traditionally do not talk about). We have not felt it appropriate to push our beliefs, preferring to try to live as

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[127] We had a graphic experience of the differences between cultures when we had a meal at neighbours who are Pakistani Muslims, for whom hospitality is very important. A delicious home-made curry was served, and, as is the polite thing to do in our culture, we cleaned our plates – only to have them instantly refilled. By the third helping we were unable to finish, and only then were the plates taken away. It was only later we discovered – with much mutual amusement – that the polite way to appreciate food in their culture, and signal you have had enough, is to leave some on the plate.

[128] Evidence of a general cultural shift in attitude towards drinking and driving.

[129] Something our wider Manchester culture could learn from, as the local authority with the worst alcohol harm levels in England and Wales, as shown in the Local Alcohol Profiles in England report, Sept 2010. Four of the top five were Greater Manchester boroughs. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-11138535> Accessed 2/9/2010.

good neighbours with integrity, in agreement with Murray that: "Evangelism … is not the starting point for mission in a plural society."[130] In that regard, we are respectful of other people's beliefs – particularly so in the case of our Muslim neighbours – and we have problems with trying to force or manipulate conversations in a particular direction as such tactics seem vaguely dishonest. However, the fact that we are committed Christians is known. One evening a local pastor was coming to our house to meet with me. He was a few minutes late: "Sorry, I forgot your address, so I knocked at a door and said I was looking for the Christian couple and they said it was number 17."

2.10.2 Mission as Normal Life

We have long felt very comfortable living here and now feel to a large degree accepted as 'locals'. While this is largely due to the length of time we have been here and factors such as sending our children to local schools, I think it can also be attributed to the fact that we have seen this area in a very straightforward way as being just 'where we live'.

Most of the time we are living ordinary life doing the sorts of things neighbours do everywhere. The important differences are that we are doing it with an awareness of missional implications,[131] we are doing it here – having considered the 'where' as well as the 'what' – and we are not following the pattern of many of our peers.[132]

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[130] Stuart Murray, <u>Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World</u> (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 234. Murray continues: "Given the horrendous record of intolerance in Christendom and deep mutual suspicion, the priority is to build relationships of respect and friendship. If these are genuine and involve more than a superficial communication, it is perfectly legitimate to share religious convictions and encourage conversion (in either direction)."

[131] "Major events have a role to play in church life, but the bedrock of gospel ministry is low-key, ordinary, day-to-day work which often goes unseen. Most gospel ministry

Can a Christian's 'mission' be equivalent to, or at least based on, his normal life lived with an awareness of oneself as a Christian (a "whole-life faith" as opposed to a dualistic "add-on devotional to… suburban, professional life"[133])? It may include some intentionality and some praxis which is more overt, but the basis is a life lived in a house in a street in a local area in a city, alongside other people; a life which can be observed.[134]

This is not meant to be a heavy expectation, but an awareness of the fact that all people, through their everyday actions and choices, reveal something of their worldviews and values in subtle or obvious ways. If I am known as a Christian, then that will impinge on all my interactions with my neighbours. So when, in a re-enactment of one of Jesus' stories, one of them rang the doorbell at just before midnight asking if I could phone for a taxi for her as she was out of

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involves ordinary people doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality. ... But the ordinary is only a vehicle for Christian mission if there is gospel intentionality. The ordinary needs to be saturated with a commitment to living and proclaiming the gospel." Tim Chester and Stephen Timms, Total Church: A radical reshaping around gospel and community (Nottingham: IVP, 2007), 60. Chester and Timms draw a distinction between 'gospel' and 'social action', prioritising the former which I disagree with. I prefer a way of working which combines and allows for both, as determined by relationship and the situation. I also do not put as high a priority on 'proclamation'.

[132] The significance of the incarnational notions of identification and being sent for 'presence-among' will be discussed in 2.15 below. Suffice to say here that it means for 'mission-with' that discovering the 'with whom', and therefore the 'where', are as important in finding and following our calling as the 'what'. Being a 'presence among' can and should be a part of a Christian's life in any community, inner-city, suburban or rural, but taking the 'where' of calling seriously should lead to a degree of re-dressing of the imbalance of where Christians tend to live.

[133] Tom Sine quoted in Janet I. Tu, "Christian communities try 'whole-life faith'," Seattle Times, 29/7/2006. <http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2002960429_church29m.html> Accessed 10/6/2010.

[134] This has been the experience of other Christian incomers. "Our lives are watched and our faith is seen being put into practice. It's the same model Jesus used. People can judge for themselves whether it makes a genuine difference but our hope and our prayer is that our presence in this community will bring about lasting and positive change in people's lives." Interview with Rich and Emma Newby, Hull YFC, Youth for Christ News, Autumn/Winter 2012.

credit, my response would have been logged and her evaluation of my Christian faith slightly adjusted accordingly, even if subconsciously.

As the first ingredient of "working for the *shalom* of your city,"[135] Linthicum draws a parallel to the instruction to the Jewish exiles in Babylon to "seek the welfare of the city" through the ordinary elements of life.[136]

This adds a depth to living among and with, by placing a significance on the normal. God places as much value in the everyday actions of believers living among and being observed by others as people of faith as he does in a special evangelistic event. But does the church? Rather than "this is the mission field to which I feel called to lay down my life in service" with its heroic overtones, it is simply: "this is where I live." How effective or authentic is mission praxis which one travels elsewhere to do, where daily integrity is not really a factor? That sort of episodic praxis may feel more like real mission activity and therefore more appealing but, though requiring effort and commitment, could be said to be actually *less* costly than one where there is no 'On Duty' sign and no 'Off' switch.

Have I 'failed' because I have not done my incoming as "hi-viz Christianity"[137] and cannot point to converts? Or is there a problem with serving "only on the basis of

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[135] Linthicum, Building a People of Power, 92. See 1.3.4.

[136] Jeremiah 29:5-7 (New American Standard). "welfare" is the Hebrew *shalom*. Linthicum paraphrases the passage: "Don't isolate yourself from the rest of the Babylonian community and create a Jewish ghetto. Enter fully into the life of that city. Get a job and enter into its economy. Buy a house or rent an apartment. Become a Yahweh-lover who loves your city's people and commits himself or herself to its life and being. Weep with those who weep. Laugh with those who laugh. Live and move and have your being in the city as people who are transformed by the magnetic love of Jesus Christ. And by so doing, become God's presence in the city to which I have called you." Linthicum, Building a People of Power, 92. "Magnetic" echoes Kreider's "fascination" in 2.15.3.

there being 'fruit', evidences of my service making a difference"?[138] That partly depends on what counts as 'fruit', which is related to one's definition of mission.

2.11 Urban Presence

By the late 1980s I was working with another band half-time, mostly in the North West, and also overseeing Youth for Christ's various ministries and projects in the same region. This included supporting a new project in an inner-city area of North Manchester, called 'Urban Action Manchester', and characterised by the workers living incarnationally in the context. After a shaky first year as the founders discovered that their youth work theory on the whole just did not work with the young people of Moston and Harpurhey, a new model gradually evolved which involved working with young people where they were, on the streets, rather than trying to bring them into buildings. I took on a role of working with churches to build awareness and understanding of the issues facing young people in deprived parts of the city. This led to an invitation to join the coordinating group of 'Network', an alliance of evangelical churches and organisations trying to link and liaise in Greater Manchester much as the Evangelical Alliance does nationally.

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[137] "Hi-Viz Christianity means that the church of Jesus has deliberately and noticeably positioned itself back into those places from which it had withdrawn." Matt Wilson, Eden: Called to the Streets (Kingsway: London, 2005), 88.

[138] From a reflection on the writings of W. H Vanstone. Paul Fromont, "Rev W. H. Vanstone in the Suburbs," Prodigal Kiwi(s) Blog. <http://prodigal.typepad.com/prodigal_kiwi/2005/11/rev_w_h_vanston.html> Accessed 8/9/2010. "Vanstone serves to counter my tendency to serve only on the basis of there being 'fruit,' evidences of my service making a difference. This is the Jesus-way. The quiet way of faithfulness. This is what Vanstone would call the 'deep end' of life, church, and mission. Vanstone encourages me in the slow and lonely work of imagining something different; of seeing this place and the *missio Dei* within it, differently. Vanstone encourages me to persevere, to trust God; for this is God's work."

Within Network I became one half of a sort of 'urban conscience' for the group, which was otherwise all from suburban churches. The other half was Derek Purnell, who lived in Newton Heath in inner-city North Manchester. We discovered we had a similar vision to work with churches and Christians located in inner-city areas. In 1996 I ended my formal links with YFC and we set up 'Urban Presence'. We wanted to encourage and support those who, like ourselves, were there already, whether individuals, organisations or churches, and also educate and challenge the wider church concerning the inner-city as a 'mission field on our doorsteps'.[139] We encouraged Christians to consider becoming 'bivocational workers' in response to "… what is basically a 'missionary call' to move to an urban area and live and worship there while continuing in their existing jobs."[140] This was to address the imbalance between where most Christians were located and where most of the population lived.[141]

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[139] We felt that the cumulative effect of the drift to the suburbs, and a loss of the 'where' aspect of Christian service limiting movement in the other direction, had left inner-city areas that could be said to fit the Lausanne definition of an unreached people group, originally formulated for overseas mission: "A people or people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelise the rest of its members without outside (cross-cultural) assistance." Lausanne Committee Strategy Working Group, Chicago, 16th March 1982.

[140] <http://www.urbanpresence.org.uk/services.html> Accessed 8/6/2013. This is a 'where' vocation paired with a 'what' vocation. See also 4.15.

[141] For Manchester we estimated that 75% of the people lived in inner-city areas (including overflow estates), and that 75% of Christians lived in suburban areas. This was a 'best guess' based on observation, census figures and statistics in books such as Joslin's Urban Harvest, as no comprehensive research had been done to gather more accurate statistics (confirmed by Peter Brierley, director of Christian Research in correspondence with Derek Purnell in 2000). We felt this was symptomatic of a lack of awareness and interest from a wider church that was mostly located and focused elsewhere. There were other indicators. As part of a dialogue with the Evangelical Alliance about the urban context, we undertook two pieces of research. One examined the teaching programme over five years of a major Christian conference and showed that out of 425 seminar titles and programme descriptions, none were directly about the Urban Agenda, and 17 could possibly have had relevant content (Paul Keeble, A Survey of Spring Harvest Programme

One of our first pieces of work was with Urban Action Manchester, setting up a new Management Group and applying for charitable status.[142] Initially we worked exclusively with Christian organisations, churches and projects. Often there would be a degree of partnership with other groups and agencies, but this was seen as a useful means to support the ministry of the Christian partner. It was not until beginning to work with Carisma six years later, and then through reflecting on that praxis, that I began to re-assess and recognise that others, not necessarily Christian, could share concerns and were working positively in their communities. While also maintaining that Christians have a unique contribution to make in terms of relationship with God, it was arrogant to think we had some sort of monopoly on caring and commitment to help people. In more recent years I have tended to speak more of Urban Presence's work as "resourcing good news" in the city in a wider sense – whoever was trying to make it.

2.12 Reflection on the Negatives

> Moving into the neighbourhood is what incarnational ministry is all about, but should not be undertaken lightly. It's not without personal and family cost – and this does need to be considered.[143]

Seminar Information, 1996-2000 (Manchester: Urban Presence, 2001)). The other surveyed Bible and Ministerial Training Colleges: of those that responded few had dedicated urban modules or courses, and some others had urban topics within other modules.

[142] Derek and I both served on the Management Group for a number of years and UAM was to expand to three projects. Of these the M13 Youth Project in my area is now the only one remaining, the other two being later subsumed into Eden projects. M13 retains the link with YFC, though, while clearly Christian in ethos and working, it is very far from being – and is much more than – an evangelistic outreach project. See 4.12.

[143] Eleanor Williams, top ten tips for starting an urban fresh expression. This is number two, one being to have a clear sense of call. "Urban fresh expressions," Fresh Expressions. <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/guide/examples/urban> Accessed 27/9/2012.

We have, for the most part, found living in Chorlton-on-Medlock a positive experience. Over the years we have had several burglaries, and car break-ins, and incidents where our house or possessions have been damaged or vandalised. When the gun crime issue was at its height there were a number of incidents in or near our area.[144] While these are not pleasant or desirable experiences, they have not made us consider moving elsewhere.

Our neighbours for the most part have been responsive and friendly. With a couple of exceptions, those that have had or caused problems have not stayed long. The occupants of one house that turned out to be the base for a drug-dealing operation kept a very low profile, and did not tend to have clients calling (unlike two other houses with low-level dealing), presumably to not draw attention to themselves.

Our children (apart from an occasional wistful comment about how big a friend's or cousin's house was) have, we feel, come through their upbringing in an inner-city context well. I have referred earlier to our daughter's ability to mix and settle in a community in Bangalore,[145] and our son chose to live in an area of Sheffield very similar to where he grew up. We are not aware of any resentments or feelings of being deprived in some way, but, if anything, an appreciation for the rich variety of cultures that co-exist in this place and maybe even a

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[144] These included a number of shootings and the arrest of two armed suspects late one night who had taken refuge in our back yard. See 3.2.1.

[145] 2.9, note 122.

touch of pride in the 'street savvy' they all possess.[146]

However, I am aware of other incomers with very different stories. These have involved resentment from and conflict with local people, problems with struggling inner-city schools, lack of positive support from friends or church. In some cases this has led to them moving out of the area, in others there have been issues with children growing up resentful of their parents' calling and faith, and their time and energy spent on ministry. In all such cases there are no glib and easy answers when the only 'crime' has been to try and follow a perceived calling from God to go against the flow to the suburbs.

Our biggest negative experience had nothing to do with our decision to settle long-term in the inner-city. This was the sudden death of our son Daniel at twenty-five from anaphylaxis in December 2010. It took place in Sheffield where he had moved some years previously to study and, then, meet and marry Tess, and settle. It was a massive shock on all levels, raising many emotions, doubts and questions. We had – and still have – tremendous support from family, and friends, particularly from our church, but there was also an outpouring of sympathy and comfort from many of our neighbours, some of whom would have known Daniel growing up on The Groves. They came to talk and listen, they cried with us in our front room and on the street, a few – including some Mus-

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[146] An indicator of our rootedness here can be seen in an incident from a few years ago when our son was surrounded by a group of young men who wanted to steal his money and phone. Suddenly one of them recognised him as being 'from The Groves', and they immediately left him. One cycled up to him later to apologise! Ardwick has a number of student residences and houses, and the mugging rate is among the highest in Manchester. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1490377_crime-down-your-street-robbery-hotspot-in-the-heart-of-manchester> Accessed 10/5/2012.

lims – travelled over to Sheffield in hazardous freezing weather to attend the funeral. Looking back, this tragic experience revealed the depth of acceptance and relationship we have acquired over the many years we have lived here. The trust that we have in some of our neighbours meant that it did not occur to us to hide or minimise our vulnerability as grieving parents, or the struggles we have had with our faith, and though such an outcome could not have been further from our minds at the time, this openness has led to these relationships being deepened further.

2.13 Whose Culture?

I have described above some of the ways in which we have interacted with our neighbours and ways in which we have sought to learn from and adapt to their cultures.

In her study of a remote Scottish island Tamara Kohn describes an "in-comer/islander continuum" – a line along which incoming non-islanders would move, or not, as members of the population. Kohn asserts that the way to progress along the continuum was not by self-conscious adopting or manipula-tion of symbols of the culture but through engaging in "that 'action' that takes place in the humdrum of everyday life" and that this may be a "more revealing marker of identity."[147] The processes of becoming part of a community can be "… very quietly and subtly enacted and embodied by people in the everyday. In fact, they might be so quiet and subtle as to be invisible to the very people that

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[147] Tamara Kohn, "Becoming an Islander through Action in the Scottish Hebrides," <u>The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</u> vol. 8, no. 1 (2002): 145.

they define."[148] The concept of a continuum is helpful as it implies movement towards and an ongoing and living process. This was largely the case for us and something we came to realise with hindsight rather than being part of a deliberate strategy. Of course that realisation could lead to it becoming an ongoing strategy, which could in turn nudge our praxis towards the self-conscious.

There is a balance to be found here between two extremes. One is a deliberate and self-conscious adopting of local ways and symbols as a means to gaining acceptance so that the gospel can be shared. The other is living normally and gradually absorbing these ways and symbols, but without any sense of self-awareness as a Christian – maybe through a sense of duality where 'Christian' is a mode for certain times and places. Trying to find a balance means that most of the time you are erring on one side or the other, if only slightly. Being aware of the dynamic, but not in any intense way – this is, after all, about ordinary life, so getting on with it is the best way to proceed – can help to be an ongoing corrective:

> for those who do want to 'belong', it is through action that we see them
> adopting new ways of being and doing – sometimes highly self-consciously,
> and yet often unself-consciously and unreflexively, but always
> meaningfully.[149]

Given this continuum from outsider to insider that the incomer moves along as differing cultures meet, how and to what degree differing cultures adapt, are altered, or mix when they come together, has led to various models to be put forward for how cultural identity is acquired. In the area of bi-culturalism, alter-

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[148] Kohn, "Becoming an Islander," 145.

[149] Kohn, "Becoming an Islander," 150.

nation, an additive model "in which individuals know and understand both cultures and can shift between behaviours appropriate for the given social context, appears to be most suitable for developing bicultural competence."[150] Our children's ability to switch into a broader Mancunian 'street' accent and vocabulary when with other local children is a clear example of this altering of behaviour to fit context. This adapting to fit in is not something we deliberately taught them to do, though we may well have modelled it to some extent.

> The alternation model of second-culture acquisition assumes that it is possible for an individual to know and understand two different cultures. It also supposes that an individual can alter his or her behaviour to fit a particular social context. ... [it] suggests that it is possible to maintain a positive relationship with both cultures without having to choose between them. ... this model does not assume a hierarchical relationship between two cultures. Within this framework, it is quite possible for the individual to assign equal status to the two cultures, even if he or she does not value or prefer them equally.[151]

LaFramboise et al conclude:

> ... the more an individual is able to maintain an active and effective relationship through alternation between both cultures, the less difficulty he or she will have in acquiring and maintaining competency in both cultures.[152]

Lingenfelter and Mayers adopt a concept suggested by Malcolm McFee in his study of Blackfoot Indians acculturation into white American society, where individuals became bicultural – able to take on up to 75% of the other culture, but also retaining 75% of their own – in effect being "150% men."[153] Lingenfelter

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[150] Gail Dawson, "Partial Inclusion and Biculturalism of African Americans," <u>Equal Opportunities International</u> vol. 25, no. 6 (2006): 435.

[151] Teresa LaFramboise, Hardin L. Coleman, Jennifer Gerton. "Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence and Theory," <u>Psychological Bulletin</u> vol. 114, No. 3 (1993): 399-400.

[152] LaFramboise et al. "Psychological Impact of Biculturalism," 402.

[153] Malcolm McFee, "The 150-Percent Man: A Product of Blackfeet Acculturation," <u>American Anthropologist</u> 70 (1968). McFee also speaks of 'Interpreters', certain Indians in the bi-cultural mileau who learn to mediate between and better understand

and Mayers use an incarnational model of a cross-cultural missioner, following the example of Jesus who was the only true fully bi-cultural "... 200-percent person, fully God and fully human in the life and world of Jewish culture."[154] Though writing primarily out of overseas missionary experience, their observations apply equally well to working-class and middle-class cultural differences, some of which I have referred to, such as books or videos, holiday destinations, having coffee, different meanings for 'dinner' and 'tea'.[155] Given 200% is impossible,

> ... we must be willing to become 150-percent persons. We must accept the value priorities of others. We must learn the definitions and rules of the context in which they live. We must adopt their patterns and procedures for working, playing and worshipping. We must become incarnate in their culture and make them our family and friends.[156]

I would suggest that the fifty percent overlap is an inevitable tension that must be lived with, along with a feeling of not being entirely "at home" in either culture: "there will be stress involved in the process of acquiring competence in a second culture while maintaining affiliation with one's culture of origin."[157] Accepting the values of others and adopting their patterns needs to be done critically and there will be frictions and dilemmas. This must be balanced by

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the two cultures and how they relate. "The Interpreters can talk to and better understand both sides. Yet they are Indian-oriented. They live with and want to be accepted by the Indian group and to maintain their Indian identity." 1100. This parallels the experience of several individuals I know from the inner-city working-class culture who have become Christians and learned some of the middle-class culture of the church, but stayed true to their roots.

[154] Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, Ministering Cross-Culturally (2nd edn. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 122.

[155] "We had our dinner at what you would call lunchtime and tea was a meal as well as a drink. We were never invited out to supper but in the vanishingly unlikely event that we had been, my parents would have expected a cup of cocoa and a biscuit." Philip Collins, "Schools are not the way out of the middle-class," The Times, 9/9/2010.

[156] Lingenfelter and Mayers, Ministering Cross-Culturally, 122.

[157] LaFramboise et al., "Psychological Impact of Biculturalism," 408.

placing our own values and patterns under similar scrutiny, especially where they could cause mis-understanding or offence. Lingenfelter and Mayers do elsewhere qualify their advocacy for missionaries wholly entering into the culture of those they are among by adding: "Moreover, they must do this in the spirit of Christ, that is, without sin."[158] Paul's wisdom in deciding which issues to concede and on which to make a stand, and when – such as food offered to idols, circumcision, eating with Gentiles – is an example of engaging with different cultures while retaining integrity with his Christian beliefs.[159]

2.13.1 Bringing God or Finding God?

Given the missional aspect of our decision to live in this community, in response to a sense of calling from God, in what sense, if any, does the missioner bring God into a context? Or was God at work in the context before the missioner got there? Bosch sees the mission of the Church as a part of the complete mission of God – the *missio Dei*.[160] God has always been active in his world, and continues to be, independently of, as well as through, the missional work of the Church.

So, what role does the Church have to play? Is it dispensable? In one sense it is. God can always find other ways to achieve his purposes. But, historically, God has chosen to use people to reach people with the message of his love and desire for relationship. This is a theme of the Old Testament with his choice of the People of Israel, and is shown supremely in the coming of Jesus who told of and showed the Father, and began to train a group of his followers to con-

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[158] Lingenfelter and Mayers, <u>Ministering Cross-Culturally</u>, 23.
[159] 1 Cor 8:4ff & 10:23ff; Acts 16:1-3 (cf. Gal 2:3); Gal. 2:11ff.
[160] 1.3.1

tinue his mission of bringing this Good News to the world. With further training promised through the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus commissioned this group, to continue his work.[161]

In considering in what sense God is mediated by the incoming missioner, there are two extremes to be avoided. One is to think that the missioner brings God with them into the context, which is to say that previously God was somehow absent. The other is to suppose that, in our culture and long history of Christian teaching and influence, any particular context is already sufficiently exposed to God and the missioner is therefore only a reinforcer of what is already present – all are already children of God. While there may be situations that approach either extreme, it would be unlikely that any were totally ignorant or cognisant in knowledge of the Gospel and commitment to God. The answer would appear to be somewhere between the extremes.

> We can always be challenged by and learn from those who are suffering, but if we bring nothing we have no mission. Although Christ is already present in the city, this is rarely perceived; while we may debate whether we bring Christ, we certainly should reveal him.[162]

Donovan puts it this way: "He [God] was there before we ever got there. It is simply up to us to bring him out so they can recognise him."[163]

There is a significant place for the missioner, and something they can add, but there is also a need to first find out where the local people are up to – which will be somewhere beyond square one – and respectfully begin there.

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[161] "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you." 1 John 1:5 (NIV).

[162] Derek Purnell, "Faith Sharing," in Eastman and Latham eds., Urban Church, 127.

[163] Vincent Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered (3rd edn. London: SCM, 2001), 47.

Morisy states that Christians have something worth sharing in social action which is neither an unconditional gift – i.e. devoid of gospel content – nor a pretext for evangelism, or indeed taking advantage of the vulnerable. If we have experienced faith in Jesus as having made a difference to us, and we believe it could be beneficial to the well-being of another and their community, then to "respond only to people's social welfare needs, when this Christian faith is assessed in having played a profound role in one's own well-being, is oddly inconsistent."[164]

In a discussion about communicating the Gospel to others, Tillich speaks of participation being essential, but also of the need for distinctiveness:

> We can speak to people only if we participate in their concern, not by condescension, but by sharing in it. We can point to the Christian answer only if, on the other hand, we are not identical with them.[165]

The addition of a fresh perspective could help local people long immersed in the context. Vincent notes that: "… the problem often is the absence of people who can get a proper perspective on the local situation, sufficient to be able to see ways of development and change." And that: "… a bit of distance, as in objectivity, can be a good thing, complementing the close-up, seeing the wood for the trees, bringing new perspectives, so long as it serves and does not assume control."[166] However, he goes on to emphasise that this must be from a basis of being with, hence sharing in the issues and experience of the context.[167]

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[164] Ann Morisy, Beyond The Good Samaritan: Community Ministry and Mission (London: Continuum, 1997), 6.

[165] Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture (Oxford: University Press, 1959), 207.

[166] Vincent, Hope from the City, 126.

[167] "The real contrast is not with people who come in, and those who are there already. The real contrast is between locals and incomers on the one side, and the permanent

In a number of passages in Acts there is evidence of awareness of God, if not of response to and worship of God, before the arrival of the missioner.[168] However, the missioner brought fresh insight and revelation to do with the person and work of Jesus that built upon what they already knew and took them to a new place of commitment and relationship. So Philip begins with the passage in Isaiah the Ethiopian official was reading and Paul in Athens, seeing that they were "very religious," begins by speaking about the inscription on one of their altars: "what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you."[169]

It is also clear however, especially from Acts 10, that the revelation was not all one way. Through his encounter with Cornelius Peter is significantly moved forward in his understanding of God and in the universality of the gospel.

'Presence-among' is with a missional intent, balanced by a recognition that the missioner is there as a learner and as one who finds God there already ahead of them. Any genuine relationship changes both parties and is an end in itself, not a means to 'making them like me' or even sharing the gospel in an overt way.[170] While not hiding the fact of being a church-goer or having Christian faith, any sharing of that faith is primarily through actions and attitudes and getting to

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outsiders – those who presume to evaluate or dictate what is to be done, who never become incomers, but remain outsiders, be it as professionals or critics." Vincent, Hope from the City, 126.

[168] Acts 8:26ff: Philip and the Ethiopian official; 10:1ff: Peter and Cornelius; 17:15ff: Paul in Athens; 19:1ff: disciples of John.

[169] Acts 17:23 (NIV).

[170] Green speaks of entering in "with trepidation … as we are on 'holy ground'". "… the purpose of our entering into the marginal place is not to impose our culture or to win spiritual 'market share' but to give ourselves away, to listen with rapt attention and to meet Jesus there." Laurie Green, 'I Can't Go There!', in Davey ed., Crossover City, 5.

know and be known by people through building relationships and friendships. It is, therefore, initially mostly non-verbal – in contrast to engineering 'opportunities' for conversations about faith, something regarded as good practice in some evangelical circles.[171] Instead, any verbal sharing of faith is by responding to questions asked or remarks made by others. Particularly in the initial period of settling in and beginning and building relationships, we felt there was a need for a kind of 'intentional passivity', being responsive rather than pro-active, not necessarily taking the initiative, asking for help and letting people give us advice and do things for us. After all, they had the local knowledge. This was a way of getting on with: "if it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."[172]

2.13.2 Whose Church?

An interesting variation on "whose culture" is one invariable consequence of mission that historically has had to be imported. This is the governance and running of the church, particularly when pre-determined models are required.

In Brunswick, Gooder accepted membership and commitment from several individuals and families who were based further away and did not decide to move in, and indeed he credits their input (especially in the early days of building up the church) as being crucial. The understanding and basis was that the

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[171] Lupton reminds evangelicals that the Great Commission was preceded by the Great Command and the New Command. "… to my questioner who asks 'How do you bring the Gospel into this work?' I answer: begin with the fundamentals. The great command and the new command will take you where you need to go. As St. Francis of Assisi said, 'Preach the gospel and use words when necessary.'" Robert Lupton, "Evangelism is More than Words," <u>Urban Perspectives</u> (Atlanta: FCS Urban Ministries, July 2012). <<u>http://fcsministries.org/blog/evangelism-is-more-than-words</u>> Accessed 21/7/2012

[172] Romans 12:18 (NIV).

main focus was on the local parish area and their role one of supporting and resourcing local ministry and locally based believers. The aim was to build a congregation of locally-based Christians, combining local people and incomers. "Commuters are not encouraged, but those from outside wanting to settle in the area are."[173] But it was the commuters and those of us who had moved in who seemed to graduate towards the PCC and leading services, fellowship groups and meetings.

The dependence on imported leadership was attributed to a dearth of suitable skills in the local community. Gooder notes that the people with ability and aspiration tended to be those who could, and therefore did, move away. A big surge in this exodus occurred when compensation funds were made available during the redevelopment of the area, leaving behind those who "did not have the money, ability or initiative to get out."[174] This did not just affect the church; attempts at establishing tenants associations failed, and local schools had great difficulty in recruiting parent governors.

> So the church starts a long way back in terms of growing indigenous leadership in that kind of community, and I do not believe the 'doctrine' that all we have to do is find the natural leaders – in 20 years I've met very few.[175]

But could another issue be having to organise the local church according to denominational requirements? Gooder regarded the Church of England as an awkward fit with inner-city working-class culture,[176] but was the 'leadership' required equated with ability to lead and teach in a certain Anglican way? The

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[173] Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 31.

[174] Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 19.

[175] Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 19.

[176] 2.4.1.

<u>Brunswick Papers</u> includes a paper written by a curate, "The Nature of an Inner-City Congregation," which says:

> A church where most or all the members come from a relatively socially and educationally deprived class is a church that will fail in many basic Christian functions, notably teaching and leadership.[177]

Notwithstanding the nature of the community, this begs the question of what measure of teaching and leadership is being used here, and raises the issue of the effect of middle-class and institutional culture, aspiration and method being mixed in with the gospel values being taught and therefore, perhaps inadvertently, being a causal factor in Christians leaving the inner-city.[178]

Green calls the urban a "difficult environment for the more traditional church."

> For while such a church expects its members to engage in rather antiquated forms of committee decision-making, to assume a dominantly middle-class, literate culture and commit free time weekly on a regular basis, the urban scene simply does not function in that way.[179]

He expands the cultural mis-match to "forms of interaction and worship which do not come easy to local people,"[180] but does not blame the local people for the problem.

Hudson Taylor's revolution of the missionary methods of his time was a reaction to Christianity being perceived as a foreign religion, taking converts out of their native culture.

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[177] Gooder, <u>Brunswick Papers</u>, 30.

[178] See 2.14.1.

[179] Green, 'I Can't Go *There*!', 3.

[180] Green, 'I Can't Go *There*!', 3.

> It is not their denationalization but their Christianization that we seek. We wish to see Christian (Chinese) – true Christians, but withal true Chinese in every sense of the word.[181]

Writing from an African context, Donovan contends that the Western European culture-bound concept of Church is not part of the Gospel. The local culture should be allowed to shape churches and worship, risky though that may be, and in his case a source of tension with the sending body. He challenges assumptions of cultural superiority.

> Are Masai pagans further away from salvation than European and American? Is endemic and incurable cattle thieving further removed from salvation than assassinating and killing and selling deadly weapons and cheating in business and lying in advertising?[182]

Is mission in inner-city areas unnecessarily hobbled by having to use culturally unsuitable models? Is it a price that has to be paid to be part of a bigger, supporting, 'sending' institution? Hasler writes of a "suburbo-centric" church "dominated by managerial and professional thinking"[183] which is incompatible with non-suburban, white middle-class contexts, and appeals for research into "ways to respond to what is sociologically coherent on the ground."[184]

Pioneers such as Taylor and Vincent Donovan – who attempted to bring to the Masai people a gospel message unencumbered by centuries of Western European culture[185] – and their modern equivalents[186] took huge risks, not least of

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[181] Taylor, China's Spiritual Needs and Claims, 32.

[182] Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered, 45.

[183] Joe Hasler, Crying Out For a Polycentric Church: Christ centred and culturally focused congregations (Maidstone: Church in Society, 2006), 106.

[184] Hasler, Crying Out For a Polycentric Church, 107.

[185] Donovan's model for taking the gospel to a geographically foreign culture has been studied in Emerging Church and Fresh Expressions as a template for mission to post-

isolation, and were much mis-understood and criticised.[187] Would a simpler definition of church serve such communities better? Donovan believed that once God's love and its demonstration in Christ had been explained the missioner's job is complete as he had "come to the end of the good news."[188] His job is to preach "not the church, but Christ" and "any valid, positive response to the Christian message could and should be recognized and accepted as church."[189]

> Institutionalized and structured in a way entirely different from ours, or noninstiutionalized, nonstructured and nonorganized, this response of theirs, as strange as it might seem to us, must be recognized as the church, or we are doing violence to Christianity.[190]

Donovan was in a very different context and culture, and it could be argued that some continuity and interface with the wider historical Church forms and functions should be ensured, but the same principle of flexibility to allow for culturally relevant expression of church surely applies.

A balance between support, accountability and an appreciation of being a part of a continuing history on the one hand, and local autonomy with freedom to develop in ways sensitive to the local culture on the other, while seeking to

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modern and post-Christian cultures seen as socially foreign. For example: <http://www.missionaloutreachnetwork.com/profiles/blogs/a-reflective-review-of> Accessed 24/4/2013.

[186] 'Living Stones' is a contemporary example of church planting as missional community in an urban culture with a deliberate avoidance of any conscious adopting of an off-the-peg imported model. <http://www.livingstonesnewtonheath.org.uk>

[187] Taylor's was dubbed the 'pigtail mission' in the Shanghai press. Dr. G. Wright Doyle, 'Between Two Worlds: J. Hudson Taylor and the Clash between British and Chinese Customs, Cultures' and Laws'. A paper presented to the Yale-Edinburgh Group for the Study of the History of Missions and of Non-Western Christianity, Yale Divinity School, July, 2009. <http://www.globalchinacenter.org/analysis/_hristianity-in-china/between-two-worlds-j-hudson-taylor-and-the-clash-between-british-and-chinese-customs-cultures-and-laws.php> Accessed 6/1/2012.

[188] Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered, 66.

[189] Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered, 66, 68.

[190] Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered, 68.

utilise the complementary strengths of both, is probably the ideal to aim for.[191]

What would a "150%" bi-cultural church look like?[192]

2.14 The Location of Christians

We now look in more detail at some of the issues which have led to the situation where a minority of Christians live where the majority of the people are. Our move into the inner-city was, in part, a response to this situation.

As the Church always operates within a host culture, there will always be an influence, and there is an ongoing task to recognise what is biblical and what is cultural. But can that influence be so seductive as to get to the point where some of its diluting effects on priorities and behaviour seem to be largely unnoticed? A strong aspect of the prevalent contemporary middle-class culture is the ambition to improve economically and socially. When alloyed with Christian discipleship, the result is a movement away from certain locations and communities and towards others, mirroring that of the wider aspirational culture. This has created a physical distance between a majority of Christians and a majority of the population.

There is also a cultural distance created, resulting in a mis-match between church and many people,[193] and much mission praxis becoming an episodic,

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[191] A tension in organising the Peace Week that will be discussed in Chapter Three is between the local culture's way of doing things at the last minute, with lots of energy and passion, and with it, arguably, more integrity to the context, and my middle-class desire to plan in advance. A blend of both works best (but is tricky to achieve) so that if we want to invite the Lord Mayor to an event we do not leave contacting his office until the week before!

[192] After Lingenfelter and Mayers (2.13).

programmed activity which requires little or no close engagement with, or appreciation of, the culture of the other. This physical and cultural distancing weakens an identificational 'presence-among' in inner-city, working-class areas, with an ensuing damaging effect on 'mission-with' praxis in those places and among those people.

2.14.1 Redemption and Lift

Those like myself who came to Brunswick Church from beyond the estate were challenged to move in.[194] But Gooder also asked local people who had become Christians to show commitment to their community by not moving out. He recognised the process identified by Church Growth experts as 'Redemption and Lift'.[195]

> The process of changing begins at conversion and goes on for the rest of life. It will effect lifestyle, values etc., e.g. a growing sense of stewardship of money and property once they realise that it all comes from and belongs to God. Many such become more wealthy because less wasteful! They then begin to move up the social scale – homes improve, clothes improve.[196]

Gooder was also aware of the frequent consequence that those previously

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[193] 2.4.1, note 99.

[194] 2.4.1

[195] "The well-known phenomenon of 'redemption and lift' – the acquisition of new values by new Christians leading to a move up the social scale – is as common as ever, and accelerates the process in which those with the most social energy leave the community. The place thus inevitably becomes a kind of sink for all those without the ability to succeed in life." Tony Adamson, Inner City Evangelism – A Personal Reflection (Nottingham: Grove 1993), 7. The term first appeared in Donald McGavran, The Bridges of God: a study in the strategy of missions (London: World Dominion Press,1955). Vincent described this process as a "social escalator." "Get on it poor, you get off it rich. Get on it simple, you get off it qualified. Get on it working-class, you get off it middle-class. People from small inner-city working-class churches on street corners have got on and got out. They took their churches with them, and Christianity is strong now … in suburbia rather than the inner areas." John Vincent, Into the City (London: Epworth, 1982), 112.

[196] Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 169.

unable to leave the area become able to leave and, invariably, did just that. He

was critical of the 'selfish' Christianity he felt it indicated.

> Some inner-city churches complain that conversion encourages people to climb
> the social ladder and actually move out of the area – to buy their own homes.
> This is very draining on the inner-city churches concerned – a strong church can
> never be built because people move out as soon as they are converted. That is a
> mark of selfish Christianity and is defective – they recognise that they are saved
> – but not that they are <u>saved to serve</u>. Christ surely sets people free so that they
> can win their friends for Him. The new Christian needs an immediate missionary
> commitment.[197]

It is important to distinguish between 'Redemption and Lift' and what Purnell

has identified and called 'Redemption and Leave', something that inner-city

churches often fail to recognise as a separate issue, assuming it to be a part of

the 'lift' phenomenon. He accepts that the 'redemption and lift' principle is

"inevitable in certain circumstances but it should not equate to 'redemption and

leave.'"[198] Taking this further, if 'lift' is defined more tightly as the acquisition of

new values, leading to positive changes in lifestyle, priorities and attitudes –

which should surely be seen as fruits of conversion – and physically moving up

and away is removed as an inevitable consequence, then 'Redemption and

Stay' becomes an option. Vincent, in writing about the incomer's "journey

downward" and noting it is for "those who have," allows for the Kingdom bring-

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[197] Gooder, <u>Brunswick Papers</u>, 170 (his underlining). I only discovered through the
recent interview that back then Martin would personally challenge those he became
aware of who were considering moving away. "I had to say fairly strongly to the people
who became Christians, listen, I live here and I'm committed to stay here. Some of our
Christians … have made big sacrifices to move in. What gives you the right, now you're
doing well because you're Christians to move out? And I think it hit them between the
eyes, that this is what made the church, this was how they became Christians and
therefore if they were serious about following Christ, they too need to stay put for the
sake of the church." Interview with Martin and Carol Gooder.

[198] Derek Purnell, "Urban Presence," in John Vincent ed., <u>Faithfulness in the City</u>
(Hawarden: Monad, 2003), 69. This process results in churches which are smaller or
have a sizeable percentage of members travelling in from outside the area.

ing things like education and money to "those who have not."[199] However, the fact that this 'lift' usually does lead to 'leave' calls into question the nature of the values being taught to new Christians, and which parts of the prevailing culture are questioned and which assumed. In a survey of twenty-four local churches I conducted in 2010,[200] most had seen people move away from the local area. This seemed to be accepted with little evidence of any questioning of the phenomenon.[201]

In a middle-class dominated church there appears to be an assimilation of the aspiration to upward mobility, where the ambition is to rise as far as our economic potential and education will take us.[202] When local people become Christians this is imbibed as part of the prevailing culture. So when, as a consequence of their conversion, more of their potential is realised and they do more training or become capable of holding down a job or getting a better-paid one, and acquire the ability to move up and out, that is exactly what they do, as 'lift'

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[199] "The journey downward is for people who are doing well, who have raised themselves, who have acquired things, or people, or education, or money, or status. Jesus called them the rich, 'those who have'. But this is not addressed to 'those who have not'. For whom rightly the Kingdom brings some of these things." John Vincent, Radical Jesus, 83.

[200] This survey was intended to find out more about local church responses to PeaceWeek and these findings came about through asking about the make-up of congregations between local, ex-local and incomer. The results of the survey are summarised and evaluated in Appendix 3, and Appendix 4 is a set of tables of responses.

[201] "… people are moving up the social ladder, buying houses." "… they started here and they just sort of moved out." "… those with get up and go, getup and do just that." Local church leaders asked about people moving away. Appendix 3, d.3.

[202] Consequently a promotion and boost in salary and the car or holiday it makes possible are conveniently seen as blessings from God.

leads to 'leave'. While done for understandable reasons, it indicates calling to the place or community not being considered as one of them.[203]

Another factor is what gets modelled to local members by their church leader. If he or she is not teaching about 'where you live', is from a middle-class background, perhaps living in a separated rectory or manse, and moves on after a few years to a church in a suburban area, then some 'Redemption and Leave' in a congregation should not come as a surprise.[204]

2.14.2 Life Decision Number One

It needs to be said in the defence of those who choose to move away that wanting a better experience and access to more opportunities for your children is not a bad thing in itself.[205] Gooder's point is about what, or rather who, has prior claim.

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[203] While the movement of Christians away from inner-city areas is a well-documented phenomenon – including my own survey (noted above) and anecdotal evidence from other Christian practitioners in such contexts – I acknowledge that my evaluation of 'redemption and leave' is in part influenced by my auto-ethnographic status as an incomer to and member of a community which tends to be left.

[204] A 2011 study of Methodist ministers showed 6% living in the bottom fifth of most deprived postcodes. Michael Hirst, "Location, Location, Location," Methodist Recorder, 10/5/2012, 8. Of the twenty-one local church leaders interviewed in Appendix 3, nine lived in the areas where their churches met. In cases, however, where this is in separate Rectories, Vicarages or Manses, some of which are further segregated by walls, gates and driveways, it is questionable to what extent this is actually 'in' the local community.

[205] "There is nothing wrong with having more money and concern for the kids – but this should not automatically equate a move." Purnell, "Urban Presence," 69. The same factors come into play for moves in the other direction, as this church leader describes his struggle with "downward mobility" through a calling to an inner-city parish: "I discovered how tenacious were my expectations that, as life went on. I would better my living conditions – go upwards, get richer and 'live bigger' – ideas utterly foreign to Christ's teaching. I justified them because of my family – 'it would not be fair on my children for them to suffer' (In which I meant that they might not have the same materialistic excess as their contemporaries). I little realised how much we suffer if, in fact, we have too much." Charlie Cleverly, Epiphanies of the Ordinary: Encounters that change lives (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012), 163.

The concepts of 'saved to serve' and readiness to sacrifice, as integral to Christian discipleship for Gooder, obviously included where to live and what to do. His encouragement to Christians was "to get their priorities right by first finding a church where they could belong and choosing their new areas on that basis."[206] Finding a job and/or home and then looking for a church would be the wrong way round.[207] This explains the calling of members to move in or stay near the church, and challenging the 'redemption and lift/leave' tendency, a link also made by Purnell writing about people moving out.

> … in our discipleship generally we accept a capitalist and unbiblical ideal that our career is the most important factor and where we live and worship works out from that. We do this rather than recognising that *every believer* has a call on their life and needs to discover how and where God wants us to serve Him in this world. Our career should then serve that principle rather than dictate to it.[208]

Tom Sine also wonders if as the Church we "... have allowed modernity and Western culture instead of biblical faith to shape the aspirations and values that drive our lives"[209] and asserts that:

> ... life decision number one for followers of Jesus … is discovering how God wants to use our lives to be a part of God's loving conspiracy. Then we make all the other important life decisions – where to work, where to live and even whom to marry – in light of that first decision.[210]

Sine goes on to say, with Purnell, that Christian calling is for all, and not an elitist notion or just for so-called 'full-time workers' such as pastors and mis-

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[206] Gooder, Brunswick Papers, 9.

[207] This reversal of the usual order of things is an echo of Jesus' challenge to his disciples and those who wish to be his disciples – if you want to be first, be the last; to be the greatest, become the least; to gain life, lose it. Mark 8:34-37; 9:35; 10:42-45.

[208] Purnell, "Urban Presence," 69. He then adds that the church should reciprocate by supporting its members in their workplaces and not just see them as resources for church activities.

[209] Tom Sine, "The Wrong Dream," Tear Times, Autumn 1996.

[210] Tom Sine, The New Conspirators: Creating the future one mustard seed at a time (Bletchley: Paternoster, 2008), 236.

sionaries. One of the most important responsibilities of the local church is to help its members "discern our calling, write it down, and begin to orchestrate our entire lives around our sense of God's call, just as Jesus did."[211] For a decision as major as choosing or changing where we live there will be a number of factors to consider, many of them positives. Surely, for a Christian, consideration of calling needs to be one of them.

2.14.3 Cultural Blindness

Writing from a Roman Catholic perspective, Rohr criticises a cultural blindness and compliance with prevailing culture in the church, resulting in a Christianity which has failed to discern wider cultural impact and "has not succeeded in naming the real evils well" that are destroying Western society.[212] For him most Christian ministry is concerned with: "'churching' people into symbolic, restful, and usually ethnic belonging systems rather than any real spiritual transformation into the mystery of God."[213]

Brueggemann agrees:

> Discipleship requires a whole new conversation in a church that has been too long accommodationist and at ease in the dominant values of culture that fly in the face of the purposes of God.[214]

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[211] Sine, New Conspirators, 236.

[212] Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert, The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective (Campbell, CA: Crossroads, 2002), xvi.

[213] Rohr and Ebert, The Enneagram, xvi. He goes on to quote Thomas Merton, writing of believers whose faith practice becomes habitual and peripheral leading to lives which are "…essentially the same as the lives of their materialistic neighbors whose horizons are purely those of the world and its transient values." Thomas Merton, Living Bread (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy,1956) xxii.

[214] Walter Brueggemann, The Word That Redescribes the World: The Bible and Discipleship (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 95.

Morisy also sees a dangerous entanglement with the mainstream. "So far the Church has found it more acceptable to speak up on behalf of the poor than to confront the mainstream culture which forms us so extensively."[215] She wonders if our diffidence about the "dishonesty and denial that infect suburban and affluent living" is because "challenging 'the mainstream' risks biting the hand that feeds us, and risks onlookers inspecting our lifestyle and wagging their heads as they find it no different than their own."[216]

Sine asks: "Why don't we discuss the influences of the values of the dominant culture at church?"[217] Part of the answer lies in a view of conversion in the Western church limited to transformation of the spiritual and moral.

> We rarely hear that God might want to transform our cultural values too. Part of the reason for this is that too many of us have been conditioned to unconsciously baptize those values instead of question them.[218]

If the Church is accommodating aspects of modern culture uncritically, to the point that 'Religious Activities' are included among lists of hobbies on Consumer Surveys, then there is a serious issue.

2.14.4 Distance

Being a 'presence-among' is an essential pre-requisite for 'mission-with' praxis. How effectively can a church or individual Christian minister or practice mission

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[215] Ann Morisy, Journeying Out: A New Approach to Christian Mission (London: Morehouse, 2004), 96.

[216] Morisy, Journeying Out, 96. Morisy notes that, ironically, this is at a time of hunger in society for 'transformative experiences', as people reach saturation point with acquiring stuff – something already being exploited in advertising by associating products with experiences rather than what they can actually do. This represents an opportunity for the Church as "the original purveyor of transformative experiences," 219.

[217] Sine, New Conspirators, 77.

[218] Sine, New Conspirators, 77.

from a physical and cultural distance without trying to overcome the divide? Such mission praxis has a real danger of being seen as reaching in to make 'them' like 'us',[219] and of making new Christians with an inbuilt aspiration to assume the culture of their mentors rather than grow in faith within their own. There is an agenda to see others becoming fellow-Christians, as that is one of the goals of mission, but how can that be separated from also becoming middle-class suburban?[220] Is there an assumption of the superiority of a certain lifestyle and culture, which happens to be the one we own? Bosch speaks of a time when Western Christians "were unconscious of the fact that their theology was culturally conditioned; they simply assumed that it was supracultural and universally valid."[221]

Green states that this methodology of the old missionaries is still a danger to be aware of.

> It is all too easy to enter into a deprived area or culture … expecting to introduce God into the place of mission and in fact introducing only an alien, gentrified culture.[222]

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[219] "The mission on the margins is not to bring the margins into the centre, which always means that the centre dominates the margins, and either co-opts or excommunicates its members. The mission on the margins is intended to constantly challenge the centre with viable, relevant alternatives, so that the centre can itself be part of the margins." John Vincent, "Basics of Radical Methodism," in Joerg Rieger and John J. Vincent, Methodist and Radical: Rejuvenating a Tradition (Nashville: Kingswood, 2003), 46.

[220] "Christian behaviour is confused with middle-class behaviour … Once a working-class man takes up middle-class behaviour patterns, he is a major step nearer emigrating either mentally or physically from the social grouping in which he has grown up and the district in which he lives." David Sheppard, Built as a City (London: Hodder & Stoughton 1974), 60-61.

[221] Bosch, Transforming Mission, 448. "Mission in the colonial era had a very thick Western accent." Stan Nussbaum, A Reader's Guide To Transforming Mission (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 107.

[222] Green, "I Can't Go There!," in Davey ed., Crossover City, 5.

The effect should be not to pull individuals out of their culture or context but to permit them to become authentic followers of Jesus within it.[223] Thus, "… incarnational mission means that people will get to experience Jesus on the inside of their culture's meaning systems."[224]

To bring us to a place where priorities, cultural blindness and distance can be addressed and 'redemption and leave' can be challenged by the call to follow Jesus and its implications, we now turn to look at a biblical basis for mission as praxis arising from 'presence-among' through looking at incarnation, the call of the first disciples and the praxis of the early church.

2.15 Incarnation, Following and Fascination

2.15.1 Incarnation

The climactic act in God's mission – the *missio Dei* – to estranged humankind was to become one of us. Jesus was the embodiment of a human life lived in union with the Creator and Father God – the ultimate incomer. Not only 'man', but also 'a man', "born in a particular place at a particular time"[225] and within a particular host culture: the "200-percent person."[226] This close identification with

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[223] "[conversion]... does not require the convert to step out right of his former culture into a Christian sub-culture which is totally distinctive." John Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World (London: Falcon, 1975), 122. Perhaps "*should* not require" would be more accurate. This may be the ideal, but in practice is difficult to achieve.

[224] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, The Shaping of Things To Come (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 40. Frost and Hirsch are strong on reaching people within their own cultures, but emphasise using work and leisure networks, which is more fitting for a dormitory town than an inner-city context.

[225] Gustavo Gutiérrez, The God of Life (London: SCM, 1991), 84. Gutiérrez calls the birth of Jesus an "incarnation into littleness."

[226] Lingenfelter and Mayers, Ministering Cross-Culturally, 122.

those he came to can be seen as the definitive expression of 'presence-among'.[227] "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."[228]

Missionally, then, incarnation is about going, or being sent, to a people group, making our dwelling among them, and embodying the host culture,[229] rather than issuing an invitation for them to come to us.[230] Jesus' commissioning of his disciples according to John's gospel, "as the Father sent me, I now send you,"[231] shows continuity with his mission. Vincent calls incarnation the "decisive gift of Christianity … not just the gift of incarnation in Jesus, but the gift of constant incarnations."[232] Bosch describes the Christian faith as "intrinsically incarnational … as the church will always enter into the context in which it happens to find itself."[233] Davey writes: "if God became human, the experiences and concerns of being human are those of the divine."[234] Incarnation "is as much about faithfulness in the mundanity of everyday life as the sweep of the

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[227] In a more fundamental and general sense of God present among humankind, rather than the specific of a particular community for a particular period of time, as, apart from possibly the pre-ministry years in Nazareth that we know so little about, his lifestyle for the three years of ministry was of an itinerant teacher, not settled in any one place

[228] John 1:14a (NIV). Or "The Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood." Eugene Peterson, The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language (Colorado Springs, CO, Navpress, 2004), 1444. "In the light of such a dwelling, place – geography itself – took on a sacred meaning." Frost and Hirsch, Shaping of Things to Come, 36.

[229] For example Hudson Taylor and Martin Gooder: 2.4.1.

[230] Seen by Murray and others as the way forward for mission in a post-Christendom age when the Church has moved from the centre to the margins.

[231] John 20:21 (NCV).

[232] John Vincent, Hope from the City, 127.

[233] Bosch, Transforming Mission, 191.

[234] Andrew Davey, "Christ in the City: The Density of Presence," in Davey ed., Crossover City, 91.

kingdom amidst the powers"[235] and incarnational principles are:

> critical to urban mission bringing an understanding of the human dimension at the heart of the *missio Dei*, as well as the potential to discover the divine 'at home' and 'at work' within the urban culture and society.[236]

In the light of this incarnational model of close and intimate identification each follower of Jesus needs to discern their individual calling, to be sent as the Father sent him, and the first question, given the importance of place as a focus of incarnation, should be "where?" Given God's "preferential love for the poor"[237] should going where they are be the default rather than the exception?

2.15.2 Following Jesus

Beginning with the calling of the first disciples, Jesus' words "follow me" clearly had practical implications and were not just something intellectual or spiritual.[238] Nets, boats and a tax booth were left behind, signifying preparedness to leave jobs and security – similarly family members, homes and villages – "for the sake of the Kingdom of God."[239] Commentators agree:

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[235] Davey, "Christ in the City," 90.

[236] Davey, "Christ in the City," 92.

[237] "God has a preferential love for the poor not because they are necessarily better than others, morally or religiously, but simply because they are poor and living in an inhuman situation that is contrary to God's will. The ultimate basis for the privileged position of the poor is not in the poor themselves but in God." Gustavo Gutiérrez, On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987), 94.

[238] Mark 1:16-20; 2:14. Painter argues that the twelve disciples were a unique group that did not include Levi (Mark 3:16-18), but nevertheless he notes that Levi too was called to follow and left his place of work. John Painter, Mark's Gospel (London: Routledge, 1997), 37, 56. This would seem to be a problem for those who claim a special case for the twelve, thereby excusing anyone else from such a radical response to the call to follow (see also Meier, note 272 below).

[239] Luke 18:29 (NIV).

> These scenes impress us in two ways: on the one hand, we see the authority of Jesus, who calls men to follow him and is instantly obeyed. On the other, we are reminded of the total demands that his call to discipleship makes.[240]

> His word lays hold on men's lives and asserts his right to their whole-hearted and total allegiance, a right that takes priority even over the claims of kinship.[241]

> So compelling is the claim of Jesus upon them that all prior claims lose their validity. Their father, the hired servants, the boat and the nets are left behind as they commit themselves in an exclusive sense to follow Jesus.[242]

The ties were not broken in some sort of cultic isolationism as Jesus is shortly afterwards teaching and healing from Peter's home,[243] has a meal at Levi's house immediately after Levi "left everything" to follow him,[244] and one of the fishermen later has to catch the fish with the coin in its mouth.[245] This was about a re-ordering of priorities and deciding what really mattered. Everything was on the line for the sake of the Pearl of Great Price. Differences in context and culture notwithstanding – this was an itinerant Rabbi they were being asked to accompany[246] – there was a cost to following this teacher that they were willing to pay. It is referred to on other occasions,[247] and seen by the disciples themselves as significant.[248]

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[240] Morna D. Hooker, The Message of Mark (London: Epworth, 1983), 105.

[241] C.E.B. Cranfield, The Gospel According To St. Mark (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), 69.

[242] William L. Lane, The Gospel of Mark (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 69.

[243] Mark 1:29-34.

[244] Luke 5:27-29.

[245] Matt 17:27.

[246] Ernest Best, Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1981), 171. Best sees discipleship in this Gospel presented as "movement after Jesus." Referring to the calling of disciples: "At the beginning of each incident Jesus is in motion and he says to those whom he calls 'come after me' i.e. get into motion." 171.

[247] "'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself …'" Mark 8:34-38 (NIV).

[248] "Peter said to him, 'We have left everything to follow you.'" Mark 10:28 (NIV).

In Mark, Jesus' public ministry opens with words summarising his message: "Repent and believe the Good News!"[249] Repent, or conversion (Gk: *metanoia*), is about a changing not just of the mind, but of the whole person, and is a call to discipleship.[250] The challenge to anyone wishing to be a disciple to deny self and take up the cross also signifies a change of attitude and a willingness to sacrifice.

Brueggemann traces back the call to follow given by Jesus to that made by the God of the Old Testament who calls and sends and "disrupts the lives of settled people, who gives them a vocation which marks life by inconvenience and risk"[251] Choosing Abraham and Moses as examples he states that they had their lives, respectively, "radically displaced" and "wrenched away from what he might have thought was the circumstance of his life and radically relocated …"[252]

> The same God, in the life and in the utterances of Jesus, makes the same claim in the New Testament. In each case the call, an authorizing imperative, is a disruption that set lives on totally new trajectories that has not previously been in purview.[253]

Citing the calls to the four fishermen in Mark 1, and other examples of calling in Mark, he concludes that in all these cases:

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[249] Mark 1:15 (NIV).

[250] "In fact the predominantly intellectual understanding of *metanoia* as change of mind plays very little part in the NT. Rather the decision by the whole man to turn around is stressed. It is clear that we are concerned neither with a purely outward turning nor with a merely intellectual change of ideas." J. Goetzmann in Colin Brown, ed., <u>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology vol. 1</u> (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1986), 58.

[251] Brueggemann, <u>Word That Redescribes the World</u>, 93.

[252] Brueggemann, <u>Word That Redescribes the World</u>, 93, 94. The Old Testament has a number of examples of the calling and ministry of servants of God involving physical re-location. For instance: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel, Nehemiah, Jonah.

[253] Brueggemann, <u>Word That Redescribes the World</u>, 94.

it is clear that Jesus enacts a major claim upon people's lives that places their lives in crisis, the same sovereign claim that is so uncompromising in the narratives of Abraham and Moses.[254]

In direct parallel, despite the leap from these to our own "times, places and circumstances," the same God today calls people into his Church. Not to join an institution but "to sign on for a different narrative account of reality that is in profound contrast to the dominant account of reality into which we are all summarily inducted."[255] In describing what this entails, in terms of what we are called away from and towards, he concludes that it is indeed to an "impossibility."

When the rich young man walked away sadly,[256] having been told that his wealth was what came between him and the Kingdom of God, and it all had to go, Jesus "loved him" but did not go after him and try to negotiate a percentage.[257]

Jesus' encouragement to his followers to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well"[258] clearly shows the changes of priority and attitude that are behind a distinctive Christian lifestyle. "These things" refers back to basics such as food and clothing, essentials which people run after and worry about. Our contrasting attitude, based on

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[254] Brueggemann, Word That Redescribes the World, 95.

[255] Brueggemann, Word That Redescribes the World, 95.

[256] Mark 10:22. Rowland comments that right from the start "Christians could not easily live with the rigorous social ethics attributed to Jesus in the Gospels," and lists a number of accommodations made in the first few centuries, though redistribution of wealth from rich to poor remained a strong characteristic until this too was compromised in the fourth and fifth centuries. Chris Rowland, Radical Christianity (Oxford: Polity, 1988), 56.

[257] "Perhaps in the name of being relevant and not putting people off, we are tempted to present the gospel as a mediocre tack on to the good life. But you cannot simply add the Jesus lifestyle on top of a normal, respectable lifestyle." Jennie and Justin Duckworth, Against the Tide, Toward the Kingdom (New Monastic Library, Eugene, OR, Cascade Books: 2011), 44.

[258] Matt 6:33 (NIV).

putting God's Kingdom first, before our needs, is to be one of not worrying as, "your Heavenly Father knows that you need."[259]

As Vincent points out, Jesus does not condemn aspiration so much as turn it on its head. "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."[260] Jesus "… assumes such an intention in his own disciples, and approves it, or at least claims that it can be met in a radically different way."[261] It is not the seeking, but what to seek and how to attain it.

Davey lists a number of consequences in the Gospels of encountering Jesus:

> some are called to follow, others to go home, some are called to testify, others to keep silent, some to embrace a radical break with possessions, home and family, others to rebuild relationships. To go home is not to opt out of discipleship but to live as a restored sign of the kingdom break in. While those who are called to minister may experience the need to follow Christ into another location, others will find that their discipleship lies in the familiar and the challenges of faith lived in the midst of family and neighbours in their own Galilee or Nazareth.[262]

However, this should not be seen as a list of options for the disciple to choose between. In a master/servant relationship the servant must be prepared for any of these, and more. It is the coach who decides where his players will play on the pitch.[263]

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[259] Matt 6:32 (NIV).

[260] Mark 9:35 (NIV). Also: 10:43-44, and gaining and losing life or the world in 8:34-37 for anyone who "would come after me."

[261] John Vincent, "Losing life, gaining life" in John Vincent, ed., Mark Gospel of Action: personal and community responses (London: SPCK, 2006), 71.

[262] Davey, "Christ in the City," 88.

[263] Lovell commenting on the salt, light and yeast, all of which Jesus calls his followers to be, says that: "each element fulfils its function when placed in proper relationship to something else." Lovell, The Church and Community Development: An Introduction (London: Avec Publications, 1972), 35. As a part of that relationship, I would include proportionate distribution.

If all Christians are actually living – or working – where God has "placed" them, as some writers state,[264] given the proportion in the inner-city, that would seem to be a massive contradiction to God's 'preference' for the poor.[265] Can we speak of God "placing" his people without any consideration of what factors were included or omitted in the decision to live or work in a particular location? If not, this would seem to imply that in every case where a job or promotion is offered or a house in that street comes onto the market it is down to the leading and blessing of God, who has guided the Christian to that place. Given that Christians are predominantly located in suburban areas this is in fact saying that the calling of God is subject to and governed by human ambition and aspiration.

Sine puts it quite bluntly:

> Many of the popular Christian teachings on discipleship are extremely narrow. They tend to limit the call to follow Jesus Christ to one small spiritual compartment of life. In all the other compartments they unquestioningly let the culture call the shots. For example, in spite of all the popular Christian teaching about Jesus' lordship, it's commonly understood what comes first. Our careers come first. Getting our house in the suburbs comes first. Our upscale lifestyles come first. Then, with whatever time, energy, or resources are left, we can follow Christ.[266]

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[264] Writing about 'whole-life discipleship', Greene implies that God has 'placed' all Christians in their locations and work-places. "… we have the people, and we have them in place." Mark Greene, Imagine: How We Can Reach The UK (London: LICC, 2003), 14. This does not take into account that most Christians live, work and socialise outside of the areas where the majority of the population is, including most of the long-term unemployed and those labelled 'NEETs' (Not in Education, Employment or Training). In recent years through the work of sociologists such as Charles Murray an 'under-class' has been identified which, according to Gamble is "usually outside the life and range of the Christian church." Gamble, The Irrelevant Church, 55.) Other factors are also of no concern; "Never mind that we are primarily middle class." Greene, Imagine, 17. This is 'whole-life discipleship' within parameters.

[265] Note 237.

[266] Tom Sine, foreward to Kraybill, Upside Down Kingdom, 9. Elsewhere Sine speaks of: "… working the Jesus stuff in round the sides …" of values and life-style already defined by our class, income and chosen way of life, making "… Christian faith as a

This is a long way from what Kraybill sees as the action of the Kingdom of God – presented by Jesus as a "new order breaking in on old ways, old values, old assumptions." It: "shatters the assumptions which govern our lives" so that we can no longer "assume that things are right just because 'that's the way they are'"[267]

Rather than "placed," Gittins actually uses the term "displacement."

> Those who are appropriately disturbed by the God of righteousness inevitably find their lives reoriented, redirected, and decentered: what we may call *displaced*. The life of a true disciple is no longer centred on self but on God. Disciples' lives are a continual process of displacement because they are always trying to remain faithful to the movement of God's grace and the inspiration of God's Spirit.[268]

Vincent considers discipleship "the only true Christianity," in which following Jesus "in his mission to people at the bottom of so-called society" is integral.[269] For those of us who come from a relatively privileged background, openness to such a "journey downward"[270] should be a mark of discipleship. This would involve considering a call to sacrifice some or all of the potential our background, education and social connections give us to aspire in terms of finance, status or career, to move towards those who do not have such advantages. Not primarily so that we can bestow some sort of hand-up, but in order to be with God's preferred-ones and to gain real insight into the structures of sin and

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little devotional add-on." Tom Sine, "Cultural Values." Interview at Greenbelt Festival, August 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX3HWCpt51Q> Accessed 2/9/2010.

[267] Kraybill, Upside Down Kingdom, 23.

[268] Anthony J. Gittins, Called to be Sent: Co-missioned as disciples today (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori, 2008), 14. Despite this, and describing 'missional' in terms of boundary-breaking, pushing through privilege and segregation to inclusion and welcome, with missional living something "every professing Christian must urgently discover and practice" (46), Gittins never goes into the implications of what that might mean in everyday life.

[269] Vincent, "Losing life, gaining life," 69.

[270] Vincent, "Losing life, gaining life," 75.

injustice that benefit us and disadvantage them, dynamics which work against the *shalom* of God.

A constricting of discipleship teaching to exclude the 'where' of Christian service explains why there is not only a flow away from the inner-city, but also little more than a trickle in the other direction. As an issue not addressed by most local churches,[271] then it is perhaps not so much a question of disobedience as of not getting as far as being a part of the average Christian's thinking. What is the modern equivalent of "they left their nets and followed him"? Even if it was decided that the answer to this question was that this was a sort of extreme discipleship just for a special elite, beginning with the original disciples and Paul,[272] and continuing today with rare heroes who become missionaries, the evidence seems to show that, for the most part, *the question is not even being asked*.

Not that we should set a particular standard of discipleship, below which God cannot use us – we all fail and need to grow. Among the twelve sent out to heal and cast out demons were Judas, Peter, James and John, all with big issues still to come. God will use what we give him, but this limited form of discipleship, which excludes large parts of our lives, restricts our potential as his servants.

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[271] "We encourage local involvement but we don't ever preach about where you live. … We wouldn't give any direction in that area." Local church leader commenting on ex-locals and incomers. Appendix 3, d.3.

[272] Meier in considering the implications of following Jesus concludes that we are led to "the obvious insight that we 20th–century Christians can appropriate and live the New Testament arche-type of discipleship only in a partial, metaphorical, or spiritualised way." John P. Meier, "The Disciples of Christ: Who Were They?" in <u>Mid-Stream</u> vol. 38, nos 1-2 (January-April 1999), 134.

2.15.3 Evangelism by Fascination

As the presence of Jesus is continued through the Church and where what Newbigin calls the "new reality" is seen, curiosity and questions will be the result, to the point that the missionary dialogue is "…initiated by the outsider who is drawn to ask: What is the secret of this new reality, this life of praise, of justice, and of peace?"[273] The "new reality" has to be more than a "devotional add-on"[274] to normal life.

A personal study of Jesus' actions in Mark's gospel showed around half of them were in response to the initiative of others. N.T. Wright comments on the number of times Jesus responds to questions. He talks of Christians "creating a context" through actions of service and kindness, of "forgiveness, healing, love and new creation – and when in that context you can speak about Jesus – what you're saying will be heard."[275] When it comes to the missional activity of the early church, Wright says the evidence does not suggest they were "being first century evangelicals, busily telling their neighbours about Jesus," but that they were living differently and in a way that caused a reaction. This speaks of an effective 'presence-among'. "When people see a community that is behaving differently they say, 'Maybe I should investigate.'"[276]

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[273] Lesslie Newbigin, <u>The Gospel in a Pluralist Society</u> (London: SPCK ,1989), 134.

[274] Tom Sine (note 266).

[275] N.T. Wright, "N.T. Wright on Mission – Snippets." <<u>http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/ Articles/284478/HOPE/About_HOPE/Theology/N_T_Wright.aspx</u>> Accessed 9/11/2011.

[276] Wright, "N.T. Wright on Mission – snippets." Elsewhere Wright says that evangelism that flows out from the church "giving itself to works of justice (putting things to rights in the community) and works of beauty ..." will come as a surprise. "You mean there is more? There is a new world and it has already begun, and it works by healing and

Bosch notes that: "References to specific cases of direct missionary involvement by the churches are rare in Paul's letters" as "… the missionary dimension of the conduct of the Pauline Christians remains implicit rather than explicit." Rather the lifestyles of ordinary Christians should be exemplary and "winsome," a "… powerful magnet that draws outsiders toward the church,"[277] and adding credibility to the outreach Paul and his fellow-workers were engaged in.

What we do find in the letters is encouragement to faithfulness and teaching concerning how to live and behave and relate to others, both within the church and outside it.

> Live such good lives that they will see the good things you do and will give glory to God on the day when Christ comes again[278]

We also find much about sacrifice and denial of self, and having a different attitude.

> Therefore I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.[279]

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forgiveness and new starts and fresh energy?" N.T. Wright, <u>Surprised by Hope</u> (London: SPCK, 2007), 244.

[277] Bosch, <u>Transforming Mission</u>, 137.

[278] 1 Peter 2:12b (NCV), echoing Jesus' words in Matt 5:16. Other examples include: "Do all you can to live a peaceful life… If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you." 1 Thess 4:11a, 12a (NCV); "Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have." 1 Peter 3:15 (NCV); "Be wise in the way you act with people who are not believers, making the most of every opportunity." Col 4:5 (NCV) – a passage that goes back to 2:6; "Do not continue living like those who do not believe." Eph 4:17 (NCV). This section on behaviour goes through to 6:9. Other similar sections occur in most of the letters, such as Rom 12:1 to 15:14, Phil 2:12-18, 4:4-9.

[279] Rom 12:1-2 (NIV). See also: Gal 6:24; Rom 6:13; Phil 3:7-8; 2 Cor 5:15 etc.

Also noting the lack of evangelism instruction, Kreider writes about the early

church growing "by fascination as well as by words, by its creative

distinctiveness, by its radiant Jesus-likeness, by its sheer hopefulness."

> The early church was growing rapidly, but in early Christian literature there
> are no training programmes for evangelism and practically no admonitions to
> evangelism. Why? I concluded, not least through reading what early
> Christians themselves said, that the church before the conversion of
> Constantine was growing because it was living in a way that fascinated
> people. It spoke to their needs; it addressed their questions; and it didn't so
> much persuade as fascinate people into new life.[280]

This 'fascination' is echoed by Myers who addresses the contemporary issue of

encountering people of different cultures, nationalities, and different faiths.

> We need to do our work and live our lives in a way that calls attention to the
> new Spirit that lives within us and who is changing us. We need to relate to
> people … in ways that create a sense of wonder. We must seek a spirituality
> that makes our lives eloquent.[281]

This requires us to be where people are, to be observable and in daily relation-

ship, with personal mission praxis in ordinary life flowing from our 'presence-

among'. As with gaining acceptance into a new culture, as noted by Kohn, it is

"that 'action' that takes place in the humdrum of everyday life" [282] which is

significant. Are our numerous programmes and projects, in evangelism, and

also in social action, a means of manufacturing contact that we do not have

already in everyday life – a substitute for an ongoing lack of engagement with a

local community?[283] Knocking on doors with leaflets or setting up a sound

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[280] Alan Kreider, <u>Becoming a Peace Church</u> (London: HHSC Christian Press, 2000), 36.

[281] Bryant Myers, <u>Walking With the Poor; Principles and Practices of Transformational Development</u> (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 321.

[282] Kohn, <u>Becoming an Islander</u>, 145. See 2.13.

[283] Musician and campaigner Andy Flannagan notes that the drift of Christians to the suburbs has resulted in a situation where most simply do not encounter the poor and powerless and asks: "Could we be the generation that doesn't have to

system on a street for an evangelistic rally to 'get contacts' would be unnecessary if church members were already a 'presence' behind some of those doors, and engaged relationally with their neighbours. If those members were encouraged Sunday by Sunday to live as Christians through the week, doing the ordinary things, then contacts and, more importantly, relationships would already be in plentiful supply. Hopefully through 'fascination', some of these would lead to interest in finding out about faith. If its members had more time to spend with their neighbours through being under less pressure to staff their church's outreach programme, would that actually result in more effective mission?

This chapter has looked at 'presence-among', the first stage of 'mission-with', by describing and reflecting on my story as an example of a 'Christian incomer' to an inner-city community, and how I came to make this "journey downward" – moving against a general flow of Christians away from the inner-city. I have looked at some reasons for that phenomenon and its non-questioning, before outlining aspects of incarnation, calling, following Jesus and early church missional praxis that challenges much modern mission praxis and indicates a different approach.

In the next chapter I explore the second stage of 'mission-with', 'project-praxis', through examining a number of case-studies to illustrate characteristics that distinguish this mode of mission praxis from others.

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start lots of projects and programmes to connect with and help the poor, needy and marginalised among us, but we're helping them simply because they're our neighbours?" <http://www.surefish.co.uk/culture/music/2012/010612-andy-flannagan-interview.html> Accessed 27/9/2012.

Chapter Three

'Mission-With' Stage Two:

'Project-Praxis'

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explore the second stage of 'mission-with', that of 'project-praxis', which arises from and builds upon the first. This is working with others from a shared concern about an issue affecting the community. To illustrate this outworking of 'mission-with' I will describe and reflect upon some of the specific initiatives and projects I have been involved with in this part of inner-south Manchester as case studies of 'project-praxis'. These have been selected as they show clearly the 'mission-with' characteristics of equal partnership and shared *shalom*-building. This is the dynamic Steve Chalke is talking about when he says: "true incarnation is when I go out and get involved with a local project where I don't run the show and I don't pull all the strings"[284] It breaks down the us/them, provider/dependent, superior/inferior barriers (whether based on substance or perception or stereotyping) that often come between the community and the Church. It also requires humility and makes the statement that Christians do not have a monopoly on goodness and caring.

None of these activities, for which I am claiming a missional element, could in any sense be regarded as church-led initiatives. Rather, they are community-led – and, importantly, community empowering – with, particularly in the case of Carisma, openness for local church support and involvement.

The first case study is Carisma, which with its main activity, PeaceWeek, has been a long-term community response to a gang violence issue affecting all of

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[284] Steve Chalke. Quote from "Faith in Politics," Christian Socialist Movement Conference, 2001.

inner-south Manchester. It was during a PeaceWeek event in 2005 that I first heard the phrase 'mission with'.[285] This was to mark the start of a process of reflection on work, which, by that time, I had already been doing for nearly three years. So, as a case-study it is an examination of ten years of involvement with Carisma during which time my thinking on 'mission-with' began and evolved. It is in part a reflection back on those first three years, looking for elements of what would be formulated as a '==mission-with=='' model, and in part reflection on praxis since, with a more conscious awareness of 'mission-with' as the model was developing,[286] through to the participant observation of the years since beginning this research.

Case-studies two, three and four are smaller projects in Chorlton-on-Medlock, which can be seen as expressions of Local Community Organising. I have already described above an early foray into what I would much later discover was using some methods of Community Organising.[287] In 1982, though seeking to live as a 'presence-among' in the community, I had no real conception of 'mission-with' as 'project-praxis' and was operating in a 'mission-to' and 'mission-for' mode. The difference with the projects below is that two of them –

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[285] 1.1

[286] A snapshot of where my thinking had reached can be seen in a paper I gave in late 2007, reflecting on, at that time, five years with Carisma. "What is different about what I am doing now to other community projects, or indeed Christian outreaches, that I have been involved in? (For a start, no training, prayer meetings, posters, invitation cards to special services.) Isn't mission something we as Christians do *for* the community? Can this be regarded as mission or is it inferior in some way? Most local churches seem to be uncomfortable with the concept and reluctant to get involved; why? What does it imply for the way the church traditionally sees and does 'mission'?" Paul Keeble, "Mission With" (Paper presented at the Urban Theology Collective, Hawarden, North Wales, December 2007).

[287] The Broken Lift, 2.7.1.

Residents' Car-Parking and the Community Garden – began after I had learned more about Community Organising, already had several years experience working with Carisma and PeaceWeek and had started to formulate my thinking on this second stage of 'mission-with'. There is also some overlap with this period of research, so the praxis and reflection on it are with an awareness of what was evolving as the 'project-praxis' stage of the 'mission-with' model, and observations on it in practice. The third project, working with others to improve our local park, began at around the same time as Carisma, and, as that developed, the notion of *shalom*-building 'project-praxis' that grew out of it can also be reflected in how I saw this involvement.

3.2 Carisma and PeaceWeek[288]

3.2.1 The Gangstop March and Forming of Carisma

'Gangstop' was the name given to a public march and rally organised on 1 June, 2002 by two local young men[289] after an upsurge of gang violence.[290] We

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[288] See also: <http://www.carisma.me.uk> and <http://www.peaceweek.co.uk>. For a longer, more detailed account of the forming and activities of Carisma, see "Carisma: The First Ten Years." This is a revised, expanded and updated version of an earlier draft of a chapter of this thesis, adapted by myself for use by Carisma and published on the Carisma website at <http://www.carisma.me.uk/Carisma10.pdf>. Parts of this section are summarised from this document.

[289] Friends Michael McFarquhar, from Moss Side, and Gary Gordon who lived in Longsight, two rival 'turfs', had the idea at a funeral. "At the last funeral we looked around. There were hundreds of people there, and we thought 'Why do you only get this level of community spirit at funerals? It's time to do something about it.'" The Guardian, April 22, 2002. "The idea came about after a series of 19 shootings in Longsight, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Moss Side and Hulme in less than four months. Three men died – Aeon Shirley, 18, Dean Eccleston, 24, and George Lynch, 36." Manchester Evening News, February 17, 2007.

[290] See Appendix 5, Home Office Statistics for homicides in Greater Manchester, showing an increase in shootings from the late 1980s when the gang violence issue in the inner-south began, hitting a peak in the early 2000s.

had been aware of the gang problem in the predominantly Afro-Caribbean Moss Side area for some years. By the late 1990s it had spread into Chorlton-on-Medlock with a number of incidents in or near The Groves.[291] I had been looking for a way to respond, so we went along as a family. From a central starting point in Whitworth Park the march took in the neighbourhoods where most violence had occurred in previous years – Moss Side, Hulme, Rusholme, Longsight, Ardwick (including Chorlton-on-Medlock and Brunswick) – before returning to the park for a rally (see map 5 and photograph 7).[292] The <u>Manchester Evening News</u> estimated a turnout of four hundred local people on the march, together with the Lord Mayor, local MP, Bishop of Manchester and local councillors, and it received good media coverage.[293]

The march and rally were planned as a one-off, with no real thought given to any sort of follow-up. However, on the day there was a clear demand for further community action, which was to result in a series of community meetings.[294] Out of these after a process of several months a new grass-roots community

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[291] I have written about this at greater length. Paul Keeble, "Gang Violence," in Eastman and Latham eds., <u>Urban Church</u>.

[292] This was to form the approximate area where Carisma operated: in practice broadly Moss Side and Longsight spilling into most of Ardwick, Rusholme, and Hulme. To the South it blurs into the northern end of Fallowfield Ward, to the East into Gorton, and to the West the edge of the neighbouring borough of Trafford. To the North it is bordered neatly by the Mancunian Way A57M inner-ring road.

[293]"No-one here is kidding themselves that this march will put an instant stop to the gun culture here in Moss Side and Longsight, but the organisers say it is an important first step in bringing the communities together in showing their opposition to the violence." BBC TV Report. One of the BBC interviewees was our then 13 year old daughter. Other <u>Manchester Evening News</u> and BBC reports: <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/15764_mums_plea_to_halt_bloodshed> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2020178.stm> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2019912.stm> All accessed 29/1/2009.

[294] Appendix 6 is a poster for one of the community meetings.

organisation called 'Carisma' emerged, consisting entirely of local people, of which I was one.

Map 5: Gangstop March Route.

Map Data © OpenStreetMap contributors. <http://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>

Carisma, which stands for Community Alliance for Renewal, Inner-South Manchester Area, was formally launched on 27 November 2002.[295] I was among the nominees put forward and approved for an interim core group whose job was to organise elections for a permanent group. These took place on 31 January 2003 and it was agreed that four members of the interim group, including myself, should stay on for continuity. At the November launch, co-founder Erinma Bell summarised the transition from Gangstop:

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[295] As reported in the Manchester Evening News, despite omitting some details and getting others wrong! <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/25149_communities_unite_against_gangs> Accessed 27/1/2009.
Also: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2523847.stm> Accessed 28/2/2009.
See also Appendix 7, poster for the Carisma launch.

Over the last three years 14 of our young people have been killed in gang related violence. The Gangstop march was an expression of feeling locally that enough is enough. Tonight is about keeping that determination going, building plans around it: Doing something.[296]

Photograph 7: Gangstop, 1 June 2002.[297]

The remit of the alliance could be summarised in three words:

- **Networking:** mapping and evaluating existing projects and provision and

  linking them both together and to need.

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[296] Moss Side resident Erinma Bell, now exercising a leadership role, quoted in a draft article for <u>Crux</u> Manchester Diocesan magazine, emailed by Communications Officer Gillian Oliver, 28/11/2002.

[297] This photograph was to feature in Carisma's publicity, though in an edited form (see Appendix 8) as at the time it was not felt wise to show who's hand the girl was holding.

- **Advocacy:** developing our own voice to engage with media, government, funders and police to counter the "Gunchester" label and the stigmatising of our young people.

- **Mobilising:** encouraging local people to get involved in positive action.

A statement of purpose for Carisma was agreed: 'life-chances for young people in the community.' This deliberately expressed the underlying positive ethos of the new organisation. To counter what we perceived as the default negative approach of agencies such as the Police and the local Council – very much governed by the pressure to bring down crime figures, and which saw our young people as needing to be 'diverted' away from something – we deliberately took an alternative, balancing view. This was that there needed to be positive, realistic and compelling alternatives for young people to be diverted *towards*. If they had these 'life-chances',[298] lessening the negative behaviour would, to a large extent, take care of itself. Our default position was to view our young people in a positive way, as individuals with gifts and potential and not collectively as a problem to be solved. As a first step this meant recognising and publicising the simple fact that most of them, most of the time, were not running around with drugs, guns, and knives. We were also keen to see that young people were not dealt with in isolation but in their contexts. These were both social: family, school, peer-group, community, employers, and sociological:

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[298] "A Weberian term that designates a person's chances of acquiring economic, cultural, and social goods." C. Calhoun,.ed., <u>Dictionary of the Social Sciences</u> (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 274. Denial of access to life-chances is seen as a result of passive social exclusion.

perception, discrimination, (under) achievement. Or, anything that could help or hinder their access to 'life-chances.'[299]

3.2.1.1 Getting involved. I went to Gangstop as a local resident concerned to do something. Also, as a Christian, I felt it important that I should be standing with those who had obviously suffered, whether through bereavement, injury, fear for themselves or for a loved one. I was also aware that there were issues of injustice and prejudice mixed in with the gang problem, especially for young black men who, involved or not – and most were not – were being stereotyped and labelled. Beyond attending the march I had no plans to do anything more, but when a follow-up community meeting was announced, as yet with no time or venue, I went straight over to give my details. Initially, beyond seeing this an opportunity to stand with other concerned local people in some way, I had no thoughts about starting or running anything, just to go along and see if I could join in or offer to help. At the time I had no conscious conception of this being a valid expression of mission, but reflecting back later, what I would now see as hallmarks of a 'mission-with' approach were present.

I got involved as one of a number of fellow residents who shared a concern about a vital issue in our community that was affecting us all.[300] In my case, my

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[299] Appendix 8 is a publicity leaflet first produced shortly after Carisma started which stated the ethos and aims succinctly and included what was to become an often used quotation from Edmund Burke (1729-97): "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing" – with the original 'men' altered to 'people'.

[300] As it became clear that I could provide some skills (e.g. creating publicity, setting up a trust) that came under the Urban Presence remit of "resourcing good news," the Trustees agreed to include Carisma as a part of my work which enabled me to give more time to the new organisation.

motivation was influenced by my Christian faith. While this was also true of some of the others, people of other faiths and none were also involved.

I was not in charge or in control of what was happening, just one voice among many. This could not be described as 'mission' in terms of the church taking the initiative and doing something 'for' or involving overt taking the gospel 'to' the community. The initiative had come from within, and was owned by, the local community itself and an opportunity was there to join in as an equal partner and co-worker *with* others.

This indigenous movement was about the common good of the community and taking positive action for the sake of the welfare and well-being of our young people. Through my reflection and research I would come to recognise these as aspects of biblical *shalom*, and marks of the Kingdom of God, so therefore for myself as a Christian, this was mission praxis,[301] one enacted alongside and with others in equal partnership.

This sharing of power with and working as one of the group, rather than being in charge, could potentially involve risks should the group decide on a course of action that I as a Christian would have problems with following. The safety and control of being the initiator and manager of a project operating from a local church base are lost through working in this way. In writing about "Mission from the margins" – the place that the Church increasingly occupies in a post-Christendom era – Murray uses the term "playing away," as we are no longer

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[301] Given a sufficiently wide definition of what is and is not mission. See 1.3.3.

on safe 'home' ground. He includes engaging with the agenda of others as a strategy and quotes Ann Morisy's model of 'community ministry'[302] as an example of praxis which: "removes power dynamics from the equation, as Christians become fellow strugglers, rather than sources of superior knowledge or virtue."[303]

3.2.1.2 "Where are the Pastors?" There was considerable openness in the Afro-Caribbean community to the churches being part of the process, even an expectation that the Pastors would take a lead in forming what was to become Carisma. This meant their non-attendance at community meetings was noticed[304] and the audible comment by one person as she looked around the room, "Where are the Pastors?" was an expression of surprise mixed with indignation. Les Isaac, a church leader from London whose 'Guns Off Our Street' event[305] had helped prompt Gangstop, ended up chairing the process. He describes an exchange at the meeting:

> Towards the end I took a question from the floor, 'Why are you, someone who is based in London, chairing this meeting?' Good question: I explained that many people had asked me to come, and that I had come at my own expense. 'Why had not a local church leader convened this meeting?' the questioner continued. 'You need to go and ask them that,' I replied.[306]

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[302] 4.5

[303] Stuart Murray, Church After Christendom (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004), 159.

[304] By the agenda item "Church Leaders Strategy," the August 6, 2002 Community Meeting Minutes note: "No response from church leaders, they will be followed up with a letter." This letter (see Appendix 9) invited church leaders to another meeting.

[305] "Two black church leaders in Britain, Les Isaacs and David Shoshanya, have been instrumental in trying to bring gun violence onto the church agenda. Together with a policeman, Ian Crichlow, they launched the 'Guns Off Our Streets' campaign in May last year. They visited churches in London, Birmingham and Manchester to raise the awareness of congregations about the issue as well as to give them strategies to deal with it." Marcia Dixon, "Guns and the Cross," The Tablet (January 11, 2003). <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/3765> Accessed 12/6/2009.

[306] Les Isaac with Rosalind Davies, Street Pastors (Eastbourne: David C. Cook, 2009), 178.

As very few Pastors had attended the community meetings so far, at Les Isaac's prompting, a further meeting was held particularly for church leaders and Christian organisations local to the areas affected by gang violence, but also open to those right across the city who might be concerned to support and help with what was a nationally publicised issue. I had for several years been involved with 'Network', a Greater Manchester network of local churches and Christian organisations and was able, in addition to inviting those I knew personally, to use their database of contacts to invite leaders and workers.[307]

The meeting took place on 21 September, 2002. Though the response was positive from those who came, the turnout of fourteen was disappointing, considering Les had driven up from London.[308]

The Gangstop March and its aftermath were featured in a city-wide 'Prayer Network' meeting also in September 2002 where activist Patsy McKie[309] was interviewed and an appeal was made for wider church support for the new, but

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[307] The Network database at the time had over 2000 records. Invitations were emailed to over 120 member churches and organisations. I also had an opportunity to mention the meeting on a BBC local radio interview. "We all need to recognise that if this problem is in our city it is our problem. Hiding it away in inner-city estates or prisons solves nothing. We need to engage with gang culture and young people in gangs and understand them without condoning what they do, and we need to provide viable alternatives for them. That will involve the wider community of this city, including the Churches. Finally, if you are a Church leader, please come along on Saturday. Let's take this opportunity to do something good in our city." Transcript of interview on BBC GMR Sunday Breakfast, September 15, 2002.

[308] A further meeting for church leaders was held on December 18 to which nine came.

[309] Patsy is one of a number of admirable people I have come to know through my involvement in Carisma. Her son Dorrie was shot and killed in 1999, and as a result she felt called by God to set up Mothers Against Violence, a campaigning, caring and mentoring organisation.

as yet un-named, community initiative. This was backed up by an article in the briefing paper for the event:

> With the involvement of Christians from day one, there is also a unique opportunity for the churches to take a leading role, not just the local congregations, but with real support and practical involvement across the city. But we need to move fast and use the impetus that exists. The question is already being asked "where is the Church?" as people and agencies have so far been quicker than we have to see that the Church has a role to play here. There is only so much local church members can do without the active support of their Leaders and Pastors. There is only so much local churches can do without the active support of the wider Body of Christ.[310]

3.2.2 Early activities: The Memorial Service and First PeaceWeek

The Carisma Core Group's first meeting on 10 February 2003 had a definite sense of "OK, what do we do now?" about it. Fortunately, several ideas had already been put forward, including a memorial service for those who had lost loved ones to gang violence. This was envisaged as a one-off and also de-signed for the community to draw a line under the past and seek to move on. As with Gangstop, it seemed to touch a nerve and grew from a small local affair to a city-wide event in Manchester Cathedral, with over five hundred attending, including civic dignitaries, and attracting much media attention.[311] As the central act "pictures of young men murdered in Moss Side, Longsight and surrounding areas were displayed as relatives lit candles, read poems and sang songs."[312]

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[310] Excerpt from the Prayer Network Update, Sept. 2002, Gangstop article by Paul Keeble. I was at that time one of the organisers of Prayer Network, which helped in getting this issue included on the programme.

[311] Manchester Evening News and BBC reports. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchester eveningnews/news/s/51/51547_cathedral_service_for_gun_victims.html> <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/52/52904_gang_war _memorial.html> <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/52/52954_a_prayer_for_peace.html> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2811259.stm> All accessed 27/1/2009.

[312] Peter Walsh, Gang War: The Inside Story of the Manchester Gangs (Reading: Milo, 2003), 306. Also referred to in Isaac, Street Pastors, 180-1.

As names of over forty of the deceased were read out, a friend or family member laid a single flower at the front. Local school and gospel choirs provided music, the Revd Joel Edwards spoke, and Les Isaac and the Bishop of Manchester led prayers[313] (see photograph 8).

Unfortunately, again, despite a lot of work, only a few local or other church leaders came.[314]

Photograph 8: Memorial Service, Manchester Cathedral, 1 March 2003.

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[313] The Bishop wrote later of his impressions: "One of the first services I attended in Manchester Cathedral was in remembrance of the many young people gunned to death in the city in the previous few years. Etched vividly on my memory are the images of plain-clothes police, discreetly armed, in the aisles; the rival families together in grief and prayer; and pictures of the murdered youngsters placed like icons beside the altar." Nigel McCulloch, "The quiet ministry of support carries on," The Church Times, 20 June 2008.

[314] Invitations were made through publications, personal contact, and a mailing sent on our behalf to the membership of Network. "This service is to give the wider community the opportunity to express support for those who have lost loved ones to gang-related violence in Manchester, and to commit ourselves afresh to seek peace and the well-being of our young people. We are looking to Christians and the Churches, not just locally but across the city, to pray and take a lead in showing support in the most practical of ways – by being there."

In the early planning for the Memorial Service it had been suggested we should have a 'Peace Week' of activities leading up to it.[315] By January nothing really had been progressed and with not long to go to the service, several of the group, myself included, thought there was not sufficient time to organise this as well. However, I had reckoned without the energy and passion of people with a vision to make things happen, seemingly out of thin air. The first Peace Week, or 'PeaceWeek' as it became known, ran from February 23rd to March 1st and consisted of a few school assemblies[316] and two events called 'Generating Peace' where people of all ages were encouraged to come together to hear and celebrate young people sing, dance, rap, and read poems on the theme of peace.

In that first year we also established an office in 'The Saltshaker', formerly the Pepperhill pub and base of one of the gangs. It had been closed by the police and taken over by St. Edmund's church as a Community Centre.[317] There we began what would be a series of community meetings, sometimes with visiting politicians.[318]

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[315] Minutes of Interim Core Group, December 12, 2002.

[316] The Core Group minutes of 10 March 2003 do not record the exact number, only "Very short notice, differing responses to approach for peace week by schools."

[317] "The war between the Gooch and Pepperhill saw a surge in violent assaults and drug related murders. At the height of it all, the Pepperhill pub was closed down and the remaining members regrouped around Doddington Close and became known as the Doddington Close Gang." <http://gangsinmanchester.piczo.com/history?cr=2& linkvar=000044> Accessed 8/6/2009.

[318] For example Michael Howard MP, at the time Leader of the Conservative Party, 6 December 2003. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/75/75191_ tories_attack_gun_crime_failure.html> Accessed 28/3/2012.

3.2.3 Further Development of Carisma

In the ensuing years, Carisma continued to develop in its role of networking, mobilising and advocacy, working with the media and representing the community on Independent Advisory Groups and other statutory bodies and platforms and, when appropriate, taking the initiative, either setting up projects or partnering with others where we saw a gap. Examples include 'Stop and Search' consultations and role-plays (where young people and Police Officers swapped places), working with the Home Office and local police[319] and 'Guns to Goods',[320] recycling metal from seized weapons in partnership with the police and Salford University.[321] In 2007 the organisation received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service,[322] and in 2008 Erinma Bell was awarded an MBE.[323]

3.2.4 Relating to the Police

One of the early issues to be reckoned with in Carisma was the community's

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[319] <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/news-special-moss-side-riots-1035294> Accessed 20/02/2013. This was an attempt to expose and take action on a situation where a long history of abuse of 'Stop and Search' powers had led to a self-fulfilling expectation of trouble on both sides. A major report into the Moss Side riots of 1981 cited as one of the causes resentment of 'Stop and Search' procedures where young black youths were physically manhandled, racially abused and occasionally subjected to physical violence. B. Hytner, Report of the Moss Side Enquiry Panel to the Leader of the Greater Manchester Council (Manchester: Greater Manchester Council, 1981), 25. 9. See also Appendix 3 of "Carisma: the First Ten Years" (note 288).

[320] <http://www.artdes.salford.ac.uk/business/enterprise-research.html> Accessed 29/3/2012. See also the websites: www.gunstogoods.org and http://showmetal.co.uk.

[321] These and other projects are covered in more detail in "Carisma: the First Ten Years" (note 288).

[322] <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1009/1009856_award_for_gun_campaigners.html> Accessed 28/3/2012. My reflections at the time are in this blog entry: <http://paulk-sabblog.blogspot.co.uk/2007/09/gold-braid-and-jerk-chicken.html> Accessed 29/1/2013.

[323] <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1054038_gun_campaigner_honoured> Accessed 28/3/2012.

suspicion of the Police, which was reflected within the Core Group. There was some resistance to my acceptance of an invitation to be a founder member of an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) for Manchester Multi-Agency Gang Strategy (MMAGS).[324] This had been set up in 2001 as an imaginative project, unique in the United Kingdom, based on 'Operation Ceasefire'[325] a much praised[326] scheme started in 1996 in Boston in the United States.[327] It was based upon the different agencies dealing with young people – in, or at risk of joining, gangs – working closely together in a 'joined-up' strategy.[328] Though the Police were only one of the partner agencies, MMAGS was initially perceived in the community as being no more than a Police-led front for intelligence-gathering. I resolved the issue by joining as an individual resident, but as time went on members of the Core Group began to meet and get to know a number of senior police officers who it was clear were also deeply committed to solving this problem.[329]

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[324] BBC News, October 14, 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2327823.stm> Accessed 1/3/2009.

[325] <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/gun_violence/profile21.html> Accessed 29/3/2012.

[326] "Our impact evaluation suggests that the Ceasefire intervention was associated with significant reductions in youth homicide victimization, shots fired, calls for service, and gun assault incidents in Boston." <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/programs/criminaljustice/research-publications/gangs,-guns,-urban-violence/operation-ceasefire-boston-gun-project> Accessed 29/3/2012.

[327] Karen Bullock, and Nick Tilley, Shootings, Gangs and Violent Incidents in Manchester: Developing a crime reduction strategy (London: Home Office, 2002), 1.

[328] Interestingly one significant partner-group of 'Operation Ceasefire' not included in MMAGS was the churches. "The streets are much safer. The collaboration between the black churches and the police has produced results unseen in any other city." The Revd Eugene Rivers, co-founder of the Ten Point Coalition, a network of 43 black churches in Boston. Quoted in: Sam Allis, "How to start a ceasefire: learning from Boston," Time Magazine, July 21, 1997 <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,986710-1,00.html> Accessed 13/6/2009. This could have been because there is no equivalent network in Manchester.

[329] I recall a meeting of the IAG (Minutes of MMAGS IAG, 3 November, 2003) where we were briefed by the detective in charge of the case of the recent fatal shooting of a

We grew to realise that not all police were the same and that the community's default position of suspicion, though understandable, given many past examples of injustice, had to be challenged.[330] Also, like it or not, the Police, and the Council and other statutory organisations, were part of the equation and had to be related to and worked with, though not uncritically.[331]

Reflecting back now it is clear that this involvement was a factor in breaking down an antipathy towards the Police. In the ensuing years others from Carisma joined other IAGs and we undertook joint projects with the Police, and built up close relationships with some senior officers. This was to be credited by the Police as playing a part in the eventual decline in gun crime.[332]

3.2.4.1 MMAGS-IAG Membership as an Expression of 'Mission-With'. From a 'mission-with' perspective, what is the difference between myself as a Christian being on the Manchester Multi-Agency Gang Strategy Independent Advi-

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young man (BBC News, August 29, 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/3190407.stm> Accessed 14/6/2009). He was almost tearful with frustration as he told us they knew who the killer probably was, but needed one of the other young men who were present to come forward as a witness. Witness protection is an ongoing issue. The dilemma is summed up well in this article. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/6089000.stm> Accessed 14/6/2009. "The police came to the door but I told them I didn't see anything because that's what you do."

[330] For British-born black and Asian young people through the 1970s, Fryer records persistent racist attitudes in education, housing, employment and the Police, and catalogues a number of significant incidents of racially motivated attacks and injustice in their handling by the Police and Courts. P. Fryer, Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain (London: Pluto Press, 1984). See also note 319.

[331] Such as: A member of Carisma spent several hours at a Police Station securing the release of a young black man who had been arrested in a case of mistaken identity. This was followed up by a complaint to the station Superintendent concerning the error and the disrespectful attitude he observed of some of his officers to the young man and his parents. Carisma was also critical of the actions of police officers at an incident at the Bridgewater Hall in the city centre in May 2008. <http://www.manchesterevening news.co.uk/news/s/1048474_probe_after_peace_activist_arrest> Accessed 28/10/2008.

[332] 3.2.7

sory Group and a non-Christian or a Muslim? In one sense none, the hope would be that each would strive to fulfill the role well. As a Christian I would ask where is the mission or gospel or Christian distinctive or 'saltiness' (changing the flavour to use the image of Matt 5:13)? By that I do not mean trying to engineer a conversation about the Bible at a coffee-break, but in doing the job itself. This is easier to define if it is a church-based or church-run activity such as a job-club, or toddler group, which could be seen as 'mission-for' the community, and easier still if it is a church-based activity with an overt 'spiritual' agenda such as a Children's Holiday Club or a Guest Service – 'mission-to' the community. 'Mission-with' is out in the community, alongside fellow members of that community and with no more power or ownership than anyone else – "playing away" as Murray-Williams puts it.[333]

Being 'missional' at the IAG meeting is a more subtle and nuanced thing. My relating to the group can be seen as personal mission praxis within a 'project-praxis' context. To give some practical examples from my experience: where possible I tried to speak positively about young people and, while not absolving them of responsibility, remind the group of the wider context of discrimination, disadvantage, stereotyping, lack of role models and a materialistic society that their criminal activity needed to be set in;[334] I encouraged partnership activities with churches and other faith groups, and publicised initiatives churches were involved in; I even commented on how the outdoor events of PeaceWeek invariably seemed to be rain-free (remarkable in Manchester in March). This led

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[333] See 3.2.1.1.

[334] While speaking from a Christian standpoint, I recognise that Christians do not have a monopoly on such views.

to several opportunities to engage directly with other members of the group or officers and officials about my faith, but that was not the end for which taking part in the group was the means. That my involvement also was to play a part in initiating positive relationships with the Police is another peacemaking or *sha-lom*-building outcome, which I would regard in a missional sense, given that we are to "live in peace with everyone."[335]

Lovell recognizes that in community development where "people with different skills and from different disciplines work together" Christians have a unique contribution to make.

> The Christian brings his own skills, his own resources, his own understanding of man's nature and, with these, the resources that are in Christ and the Church. These are resources to be offered at any appropriate point and examined in the same way as any other resources that a community development worker might offer to an autonomous group.[336]

These resources "in Christ and the Church" will be primarily located around the Christian understanding of the spiritual dimension to human problems and issues and their treatment and solution.

3.2.5 PeaceWeek

The first, hastily arranged Peace Week had worked well and we decided to do it again. We now had a support worker, Claire Barlow, to help with the organisation. The model began to form of a time and platform for anyone – individuals, groups, faith-groups, voluntary and statutory organisations, schools, businesses

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[335] Romans 12:18 (NCV).

[336] Lovell, Church and Community Development, 37,38.

– to join in "generating good news in an area known for bad,"[337] participating in the centrally organised events and activities, or creating their own. Through education, celebration, advocacy, and creative and positive messages and activities the aim was to increase well-being and confidence in individuals and, through that, community cohesion (to pick up some of the Council's terminology). Over the next nine years 'PeaceWeek' as it became known grew to become a fixture every spring, encompassing a range of activities and events.[338] These included the following:

- A Family March for Peace which took place at dusk lit by lanterns made by local children in schools or workshops. There were starting points in Longsight and Moss Side, finishing with a rally in a central place such as a park, the two 'sides' meeting up, so challenging the territorial rivalry that was a feature of the gang violence.

- 'The Launch Event'. The first night of PeaceWeek was given over to local young people to sing, dance, rap and act as a showcase to the world that there was as much talent here as anywhere else.[339] This grew out of our rather amateur 'Generating Peace' events and is a case of how much better something can be when people who know what they are doing get involved as partners – a good example of how the PeaceWeek dynamic worked.[340]

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[337] A phrase I came up with to use in our publicity. The use of the term 'good news' is an intentional allusion to building *shalom*, and to the gospel.

[338] Appendix 10 is a sample PeaceWeek programme leaflet.

[339] <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/peace-week-gets-underway-884737> Accessed 11/2/2013.

[340] Drawing in others with different skills and abilities to enrich the activity and increase ownership and confidence is an example of the partnering characteristic of 'project-praxis' spoken of in 1.4.3 and 3.1 above. While in doing this it is assumed the concern and vision

- Long before the more recent wider acknowledgment, local community members have recognised that risk of gang involvement begins at a young age for a number of young people, particularly boys.[341] So each PeaceWeek included a programme of assemblies, classes and workshops in local primary schools, sometimes with a creative project such as peace mosaics for a local park, a book of poems and artwork, or recording a CD of peace-themed songs[342] and occasionally a Showcase event if resources permitted.

- Since 2008 we have ended PeaceWeek with a peace awards dinner in a city centre hotel. Called the OSBAs[343] (Outstanding Social Behaviour Awards – a deliberate play on ASBO) these were designed to recognise positive contributions to the community, as opposed to negative ones, and

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to take action is shared, this delegation and sharing of power necessarily involves some risk as motives can be mixed and competency may not always be what I, or others, would hope for. There can also be disagreements and power struggles, especially when an initiative is perceived as successful (see note 346). But intervention (and reverting to 'for' rather than 'with') – if it is considered at all, or even possible if partnership is truly equal – should be a last resort. Maybe for some local churches the possible risks involved in joining with the local community rather than running an event for them go towards explaining their reluctance to respond to our invitations (see for example 3.2.6). The risk factor in 'project-praxis' is reflected on in 3.2.1.1, 3.3.1.1 and 5.2.2 below.

[341] "Their hardest task will be rooting out the gang culture now it has become ingrained. Members of the anti-gang community group CARISMA have begun to take their message to primary schools because they found that by the time the children reach secondary school, it is too late. One member gave a presentation to students aged thirteen and fourteen 'I asked them to come up with reasons for joining a gang, and they had no trouble filling the flip chart,' she said. 'Then I asked how they would get the money to buy an expensive piece of jewellery if they did not turn to crime, and they struggled. That is scary. And those weren't bad kids – they were just average.' That is how deeply the gang lifestyle is ingrained." Walsh, Gang War, 322. Walsh actually gets the age of the children wrong – they would have been Year 6, i.e. 10 or 11.

[342] Manchester Evening News, March 2, 2005. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchester eveningnews/news/s/148/148023_peaceweek_2005.html> Link: 'Related Audio Clips' plays a sample song. Accessed 29/3/2012.

[343] Website: <http://www.osbas.co.uk>

were well reported in the <u>Manchester Evening News</u>.[344]

- For three years we ran a community radio station, 'PeaceFM', as a four week RSL (Restricted Service Licence). This proved so successful that an application to OFCOM in 2009 for a five year licence was successful.[345] Music, radio and DJ-ing are very popular parts of the local Afro-Caribbean culture (seen in the long and normally benignly tolerated tradition of pirate radio in Moss Side), and this station also fulfilled another part of our advocacy remit in that it, quite literally, gave a voice to local people.[346]

- The PeaceWeek Shield was an annual sports tournament, usually Five-a-Side football, bringing together primarily young people from different areas, and often featuring an exhibition match with the Police or PeaceFM DJs.

- In 2006, in partnership with the Police, we implemented a request from the community for a weapons amnesty, calling it 'Good Riddance'.[347]

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[344] For example: <u>Manchester Evening News</u>, March 14, 2011, <<u>http://www.manchester eveningnews.co.uk/news/local-news/comment-awards-honour-the-true-heroes-856170</u>> March 16, 2009, <<u>http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1102532_ honours_for_peacemakers</u>>; March 15, 2010. <<u>http://menmedia.co.uk/Manchester eveningnews/news/s/1200343_salute_to_asbo_girl_who_turned_life_around</u>>.
This story was also picked up nationally: <u>The Guardian</u>, June 16, 2010.
<<u>http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/jun/16/zara-fredericks-asbo-osba</u>> All accessed 29/3/2012.

[345] <u>Manchester Evening News</u>, April 3, 2008. <<u>http://menmedia.co.uk/manchester eveningnews/news/s/1043619_licence_gives_peace_a_chance</u>> Accessed 29/3/2012.

[346] Not everything has worked well for Carisma. After initial fundraising and work from Carisma members to set up PeaceFM as a permanent community radio station, we established a separate company called 'Peaceful Media' to run it. Unfortunately this has been beset by an ongoing power struggle within the Afro-Caribbean community with accusations of financial irregularity and mis-management and a number of personal conflicts, some of them involving members of Carisma.

[347] <<u>http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/s/208/208371_guns_handed_in_ for_peace_week_amnesty.html</u>>
<<u>http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/4822788.stm</u>> Accessed 10/2/2013.
Making this work actually involved a lot of work behind the scenes by local police

- Other initiatives included a PeaceWeek newspaper, produced in partnership with local charity 'Healthy Ardwick' (15,000 copies were distributed around the area) and wrapping churches, schools and other buildings across the city in rolls of crime-scene incident tape with the message 'Work, hope, pray, long for Peace.[348]

- On a few occasions displays of photographs or art with a bearing on peace and images of the community have been shown in local supermarkets, churches and libraries.

- Events and activities arranged for PeaceWeek by or in partnership with other groups and organisations have included: music and poetry evenings, Family Comedy Night, the Peace Lecture, a community clean-up, Community Fun Days, Student Action day, community meetings, breakfasts, debates and 'Question Time'-style panels with local police, councillors and MPs. Some events have featured guests such as Nims Obunge (CEO of the Peace Alliance in London), Les Isaac, and a Police Officer and Community Worker from an area in Los Angeles with a deep-seated gang problem.[349]

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officers as it turned out that technically what we were proposing was outside of the then current legislation. The fix was to call it a 'hand-in' instead and get a special dispensation from the Home Office. This has since been used as a template for similar schemes in other parts of the country.

[348] Manchester Evening News, February 18, 2012. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1485847_police-tape-to-be-swapped-for-peace-tape-when-festival-gets-underway> Accessed 29/3/2012.

[349] LAPD officer praises city links. BBC News, Feb 28, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/6403169.stm> Accessed 28/2/2009. Hearing about the scale of the gang problem in South Central LA firsthand underlined the silliness of the media stories directly comparing Moss Side with this area or New York's Bronx (see note 59).

- We have also quite unashamedly co-opted and publicised other peace-linked events that have happened to be in the city during PeaceWeek.[350]

- Every year local churches and faith groups were encouraged, along with every other grouping and organisation, to get involved by supporting the core events, but also by creating their own events and activities, or simply by having a peace-related theme for already existing ones. Events that have resulted have included peace-themed Sunday services, a Leaders' Lunch, a breakfast for Church Leaders and local MPs, a 24-hours of prayer for peace, a peace vigil, buildings opened for reflection and prayer, an ecumenical peace service, a Buddhist musical evening and a Baha'i event involving meditations and music. There will probably have been others that we were not aware of, but over the ten years of PeaceWeek the level of involvement observed from the faith sector has been minimal, with several of the main churches of the area not participating at all. Discussion of this phenomenon continues below.

3.2.5.1 Involving the Churches in PeaceWeek. With the same positive ethos as Carisma, PeaceWeek, with its sharp focus and high profile activity, seemed to me to be an even clearer example of seeking to build *shalom* in our community and therefore 'mission-with' 'project-praxis' for Christians participating. Surely those churches who seemed reticent about supporting Carisma would now get on board, even if it was to have a peace-themed Sunday service during PeaceWeek – something they would be in control of? There was a lot of biblical

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[350] Such as the Throne of Weapons tour (2004), a talk by Claire Short (2005), a lecture by Robert Beckford (2008), World Book Day (2008), International Women's Day (2009).

material to draw on. However, the levels of recognition, support and encouragement given by council officers, councillors and police were, for the most part, not matched by the churches. To find out more about the reasons behind the wide variation in involvement by local churches I conducted a series of interviews with church leaders in 2010. [351]

One of the responses I received when asking church leaders about their involvement in PeaceWeek, particularly from evangelical churches, was that they could not get involved because they had their own programme of events running that week, or sometimes simply that it was not a priority for them over what they normally do.[352] This suggests a theological prioritising based on a narrower view of mission,[353] but there was also a correlation between a lower proportion of local people in a congregation and lesser likelihood of involvement in PeaceWeek.[354]

This prioritising was also seen in the reaction when I was invited to speak to a group of evangelical leaders about PeaceWeek at a Manchester planning meeting for a year-long national campaign called 'Hope 08'.[355] I presented it as an opportunity to work in a different way, *with* the local community, and sug-

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[351] The survey of local churches referred to in 2.14.1. See Appendix 3.

[352] "…it was just down to prioritising to be honest …we didn't feel as a church that we could give the time to it." Appendix 3, d.1. With a few of the more conservative churches there were also issues with working alongside other churches.

[353] 1.3.2

[354] Appendix 3.

[355] "HOPE08 sought to catalyse, encourage and support churches across the UK as, through words and actions, they worked together and with public bodies such as government, police and the media in service to their communities." Theos, The whole Church, for the whole Nation, for the whole year: An evaluation of HOPE08 (London: Theos, 2009), 14. <http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=35144> Accessed 3/12/2012.

gested partnering with churches across the city as a part of the social action aspect of Hope 08. Maybe it was coincidental, but several chose this late item on the agenda as the moment to leave the meeting. I was given a polite hearing by the rest, but no-one responded.[356]

3.2.6 Relationship with the Churches

I have noted above the degree of involvement and response from local churches and their leaders in the forming of Carisma and in PeaceWeek. One occasion in September 2005 illustrates this dynamic further.

As an organisation, Carisma has always had a tension between an aspiration to be well-organised, strategically thought-through and pro-active, and the reality of day-to-day life in inner-city Manchester. This introduces elements of chaos, short-term bodging, unreliability and being re-active and responsive to events, which actually reflects the nature of the context and can sometimes be incredibly powerful, if occasionally frustrating to some. For example, several years ago after a young man was shot and killed in the Hulme area,[357] members of Carisma picked up on a desire in the community to do something to mark this tragedy in some way. A candlelit march to the scene of the shooting and a vigil was hastily organised for the Sunday evening, and through some rapid dis-

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[356] Hope 08 Core Group, 6th November 2007.

[357] Manchester Evening News, September 15, 2005. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/174/174027_teenage_dad_shot_on_eve_of_birthday.html> Accessed 29/3/2012.

semination by phone, email and word of mouth, a good number of people came, including the local MP and councillors.[358]

Among those the office emailed or phoned were twelve church leaders. I included the text of the office email in one I sent to around fifty more church leaders and contacts I had.[359] Only three of the church leaders responded, all to say that their Sunday evening services were organised and could not be cancelled, or – as was suggested – re-located. So, apart from a few individual congregation members who had found out about the vigil separately, once again the absence of local churches and their leaders was glaring, and once again it was noticed.[360] It is true to say that the last minute nature of the event placed these leaders in a difficult position, though on this occasion this was Carisma trying to accommodate a reaction and desire from local people, rather than being disorganised. Of course church services need to be arranged in advance, but grieving local people will not appreciate that as an excuse. Presumably the short notice also was problematic for the MP and councillors who attended. I would still maintain that, with a bit of imagination, churches could at least have organised for some representatives to come, if not the leaders, and the "potential act of witness … for one Sunday to ask people to attend this meeting instead" that my email spoke of could have been realised. This episode reveals a contrast between local community immediacy and local church for-

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[358] The vigil took place on Sunday September 18, 2005. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/174/174528_peace_march_after_murder.html> Accessed 28/2/2009.

[359] Appendix 11 is the text of my email.

[360] "What are they doing that's more important than this?" was one comment I recall.

ward planning (and resultant inflexibility) which in this case was an impediment to the church effectively serving the people.

Such instances, together with a lack of presence at other events and meetings and little involvement by most churches in PeaceWeek led to a probably sub-conscious, but nevertheless discernible change in community attitude. Whereas in the early days, such as the community meetings back in 2002 after Gang-stop, church leaders were invited to meetings and events as a matter of course, years of inconsistency in turning up had a cumulative effect of them *not* tending to come to mind when invitation lists were made. For instance, the community members invited to meet with then Prime Minister Tony Blair in February 2007[361] did not include any church or faith group leaders – not through any deliberate act or intention that I am aware of – it just did not occur to anyone.[362]

Some aspects of the dynamics of Carisma's relationship with the churches may supply additional reasons for a reluctance to join in with PeaceWeek, or re-spond to other requests such as that described above. Was there an issue with the invitations coming from an ordinary member of the community rather than someone higher up in their denomination? Was there a reluctance to get in-volved with something that they did not own or control in some way and had no part in initiating? Was there a conceptual or practical problem with giving time

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[361] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/6388015.stm> <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/236997_blair_and_cameron_come_to_town> Accessed 29/3/2012.

[362] "To tell the truth when I think back at that time … the church leaders did not spring to mind as they were not the ones in the forefront making things happen and trying to make a difference with regards to young people and violent street crime." Email from Erinma Bell, 15/6/2009.

and resources to something that was outside of their own programme? Was I, or were we, perceived as a threat in any sense? Were there issues with Carisma's mode of communication, such as the short notice given at times? Some of these reasons may have been behind the use of words like 'agenda' and 'priority' in the interviews I conducted.[363]

3.2.7 A Note on the Future

The PeaceWeeks of 2011 and 2012 were adversely affected in several ways. One was quite straightforward: cuts in Council and Police budgets meant loss of funding from those sources. Another was problems at PeaceFM which led to some in the community boycotting events certain members of Carisma were involved in.[364] The third is a bit more subtle.

Figures released in January 2009 by Greater Manchester Police showed a dramatic decrease in the number of gang-related firearms discharges between Valentine's Day, February 14, 2008 and the end of the year.[365] The figure had fallen from thirty-eight in 2007 to just three in 2008 and, for the first year in a decade, there had been no fatalities. This was seen as the successful outcome of 'Operation Cougar',[366] an aggressive police operation which featured target-ing known gang members and disrupting their activities, and making novel use of health and safety legislation to pick up young people felt to be in vulnerable situations or locations and remove them to a 'place of safety'. The Police them-

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[363] Appendix 3.

[364] See note 346.

[365] Emergency Services News, 20/1/09. <http://www.esnews.co.uk/?p=3027> Accessed 14/6/2009

[366] <http://www.gmp.police.uk/mainsite/pages/xcalibre-cougar.htm> Accessed 23/4/2009

selves credited improved community relations as a crucial ingredient of the success of the operation.[367] The title of a <u>Manchester Evening News</u> article about the statistics asked, "Is this the End of Gunchester?"[368]

Though there were some concerns expressed by community members on the aggressiveness of Operation Cougar, and occasions when it got too heavy-handed where members of Carisma were involved in trying to sort out the consequences,[369] the drop in incidents as recorded in these statistics and especially the absence of fatalities was very good news. It was also some indication that the work of Carisma, such as PeaceWeek, and that of other community organisations and individuals, had borne fruit.

Though it took a while, as the lower levels of gun crime and gang activity persisted, the inevitable question was asked: "Is there still a need for a Peace-Week?" We faced it head on during PeaceWeek 2010 with a public debate involving senior council and police officers. Like several comments made at the time of the original figures being released,[370] the consensus was very much that

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[367] "Ten percent of our success is due to police work – the other ninety percent is due to a well functioning teamwork with local politicians, social authorities and local street organisations." Det. Chief Supt. Dave Keller, interviewed in <u>Politiken.dk</u>, May 8, 2009. <<u>http://politiken.dk/udland/article707058.ece</u>> Accessed 3/6/2009.

[368] <u>Manchester Evening News</u>, 29/1/2009. <<u>http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/video/?bcpid=1336747012&bctid=9423218001</u>> Accessed 2/6/2009.

[369] Note 331.

[370] "… the solutions to gun and gang crime are not as simple as just catching the bad guys, even though that is an essential component. If the streets on which they grow continue to fertilise criminality and violence, then we are merely cutting off the nettles, not pulling up the roots. … The sudden drop in gun crime in Manchester is down to more than just good policing. Communities deserve praise too." Ally Fogg, "Gunchester No More?" <u>The Guardian</u>, Feb 3, 2009 <<u>http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/feb/03/gun-crime-manchester-communities-police</u>> Accessed 23/4/2009.

work needed to continue, but now concentrating more on the issues that gun crime grew out of.

However, by 2011 it was clear that the focus of the politicians, police and funders was on other headlines, and the attention of much of the community had wandered too.[371] Victims of our own success? Maybe, but the best sort of problem to have.[372]

The result has been a decline in volunteers for PeaceWeek and a drop in turnout at events such as the Lantern Parade. For this reason, and the struggle for funding, we decided during preparation for PeaceWeek 2012 to make it our last. We are open for it to continue in some form, and would be willing to offer support, but our feeling is that it needs fresh energy and ideas and a 're-boot' to better fit the changed context. This should involve seeking to address the underlying issues, an area which Carisma as an organisation needs to develop further.

3.3 Local Community Organising

This section describes three examples of 'mission-with' 'project-praxis' arising out of our 'presence-among' in our local community. Each was an issue we were affected by personally, along with other local residents. These are on a much smaller scale than Carisma or PeaceWeek, but nevertheless also il-

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[371] I am reminded of a delegation that visited us from another city some years ago, a mix of police, council and community workers, who were looking for some advice about a gang problem that was just beginning. They were keen to nip it in the bud but, as one of them said, until someone gets killed we are not going to get any proper funding.

[372] Figures have remained low. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-16301463> Accessed 11/2/2013.

lustrate characteristics of 'mission-with' praxis. These are also examples where some community organising has taken place, perhaps without being full-blown 'Community Organising' initiatives which concentrate more on a political agenda seeking to change policies that adversely affect people.[373]

Community Organising in various forms can be traced back to the nineteenth century, but the modern form, with a political and campaigning edge was largely developed from the late 1930s by Saul Alinsky. He saw it as a way of addressing social problems by getting individuals affected by them motivated to take action. By pooling their resources and power to make a whole greater than the sum of its parts, they could challenge dominant and oppressive political powers. It has been defined as:

> a democratically-governed, values-driven process that catalyzes the power of individuals to work collectively to make the changes they want to see in their communities. Community organizers honor and develop the leadership potential in everyday people by helping them identify problems and solutions, and then by supporting them as they take action to make those solutions a reality.[374]

As such, Community Organising and 'mission-with' share values such as working with, empowering and partnership.

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[373] This would apply only to the Residents' Car-Parking project below, as well as to a more recent and smaller campaign with the local councillors to get The Groves 'Red-Lined' to control the number of houses of multiple occupancy.

[374] Catherine Crystal Foster and Justin Louie, Grassroots Action and Learning for Social Change: Evaluating Community Organising. (Washington: Centre for Evaluation Innovation, March 2010), 2. UK organisation, 'Powered By People' uses this definition: "Community organising harnesses people's energy to negotiate with power structures to create solutions to issues faced by communities." Mark Waters, "Powered By People Tool-Kit." <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/poweredbypeopleuk/toolkit> Accessed 15/2/2013.

3.3.1 Friends of Swinton Grove Park

In 2002 a council strategy to encourage local people to take an interest in the upkeep of Manchester's parks resulted in a meeting about setting up a Friends group for the small park near us off Swinton Grove.[375] Judith and I had taken our children there many times but the state of it was always a bit of a lottery – broken or <mark>vandalised</mark> equipment, litter and dog-mess, sometimes needles and condoms. At some point, due to a European Safety Directive, the swings and other equipment had been deemed 'unsafe' and instead of being replaced had simply been removed, further reducing use of the park. Only a few of us attended the meeting, but it was enough for council officials to fudge through the forming of a 'Friends of Swinton Grove Park' group,[376] and with it the ticking of another outputs box. Despite this inauspicious beginning, the group began to gel together well with each other and with Kirsty, our initial link person from Manchester Leisure.

Over ten years on, funding has been found for substantial improvements such as new play and all-weather sports areas, bins, benches, plants, railings, signs and an annual Fun Day[377] attracting several hundred people (see photograph 9). Our church has given substantial assistance to this day in recent years[378] – loan of tables, chairs, minibus and the vicar as DJ and bingo caller. The park is now heavily used by local people and has been awarded a 'Green Flag.'

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[375] See Photograph 5: The Groves.

[376] Website: <http://www.fosgp.org.uk>

[377] Appendix 12 is a Fun Day publicity leaflet.

[378] Not including the year it scheduled a work day on its building for the same Saturday: I made my displeasure known.

Photograph 9: Swinton Grove Park Fun Day, July 2012

3.3.1.1 Reflection on the Friends Group. When this project began I probably saw it as what I would now describe as a piece of 'mission-for' coming out of our 'presence-among'. We were joining with other local residents to improve our park. As my contemporaneous work with PeaceWeek led to a re-thinking of my conception of mission to include *shalom*-building – and that by whoever was doing it, whether they saw it that way or not – so too my perception of this project shifted. Improving the park has been another bit of *shalom*, a positive end in itself, and another way of getting to know people and work alongside them. As with Carisma, it is a situation where we are not in charge, but are members of a group working together on a specific project.[379] This is partner-ship and a sharing of power, and as such involves some risk.

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[379] "The most profoundly incarnational acts are those where we, as individuals or churches, not only serve our communities, but do so in projects we don't own and don't control – for, in the end, incarnation is fundamentally about giving up control." Steve Chalke, Intelligent Church: A Journey Towards Christ-centred Community. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 113.

There was once a situation where, after agreeing to hire a firm to provide the food for the Fun Day, another offering a better price was found. Some members of the group were all for telling the first company that the event had been cancelled or our funding cut, so we could hire the second. Judith and I objected to this on the grounds that it was deceitful and could cause the group problems if the lie was discovered. The group agreed and the arrangement remained as it was. What if the other view had prevailed? That may have been an occasion to exercise the power we had to withdraw from the group. However, on reflection I think people, with encouragement, are more than willing to do the right thing, especially if someone is willing to break ranks and voice their objection to a dubious proposal that needs group solidarity to prop up its shaky justification.[380]

3.3.2 Residents' Car-Parking

Two factors had caused a large increase in the numbers of non-residents parking on The Groves in 2007. The first was the introduction of a residents' parking scheme on the road at the bottom of The Groves, between us and Manchester's biggest hospital, which meant that our streets now provided the nearest free parking. The second was a major redevelopment of the hospital which reduced existing parking space there, leading to a large number of contractors' vehicles arriving every day.[381]

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[380] Lovell refers, perhaps slightly dramatically, to a "no-man's land that exists between church and community," but draws out an advantage of good relationships in such situations: "… when good groups and personal relationships have been established, the moments of crisis of conscience are moments of enormous educational value. People who do not share a Christian's view feel great responsibility towards a proven friend who is being driven into a conscience corner and will generally seek, and often find, a way out for him." Lovell, Church and Community Development, 59.

[381] The hospital initially had a map on its website showing contractors local places to park – including The Groves. This was quickly removed when our campaign started.

Within weeks of the start of the adjacent restricted parking The Groves were crammed full of cars, vans and minibuses (see photograph 10). Stories began to circulate. Apart from grumblings about not being able to park outside one's own house, there were more problematical issues and car and non-car owners were both being affected. A disabled person on East Grove had to walk fifty yards to his car; the minibus that collected and returned a special needs child every day was unable to get close; bins were not emptied as the lorry could not get access; deliveries were not made; families visiting parents and grandparents struggled to park. The fire brigade attended an incident one Saturday and said if it had been a weekday they would have had problems getting the engine in.

Photograph 10: Image used for the Residents' Car-parking Campaign.

Some individuals began to make complaints, but got no response. Others 'acquired' traffic cones, or used bins and other objects to protect 'their' space –

illegally. Frustration was increasing, and one or two confrontations had taken place. After a number of conversations with disgruntled neighbours I saw an opportunity to apply some of what I had been learning recently about Community Organising.[382]

One of the ideals behind Community Organising is to combine the little bit of power we each have to make a bigger impact together. Several of us took a survey door-to-door to record people's feelings and their stories, and get their thoughts on further action we could take.[383] A public meeting with the local councillors, the healthcare trust and contractors was felt to be a good next step. Suggestions of barricading The Groves with our wheelie-bins and letting down tyres were duly noted under "possible options if the meeting doesn't work." The results and copies of the originals (not the originals because things get lost) were sent to the councillors and the local Ward Coordinator and a venue booked and date set for the meeting. I started a website to track the progress of the issue.[384] We also produced a printed sheet reminding everyone about the meeting and that, to borrow a phrase that had become popular at Carisma meetings, "decisions are made by those who turn up."[385] Even with that advice I had a couple of conversations along the lines of "you can go on my behalf. I don't know what to say at meetings," belying the lack of confidence that holds

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[382] I had been doing some research after a Carisma training day had thrown up that what we had been doing partially fitted the Community Organising model.

[383] Appendix 13 is a sample survey.

[384] Website: <http://www.thegroves-m13.co.uk> I suspect this was visited more by the Council and some transport activists than residents, but that was useful in itself.

[385] A variation on "History is made by those who turn up," variously attributed, including to Benjamin Franklin and Disraeli.

many people back around here. I assured them they would not have to say anything if they did not want to, and that this was an occasion where numbers in the room was important.[386] Every opportunity was taken to encourage people to turn up, be respectful and, when the time came, to share the most powerful thing they had – their stories. For the more reticent we had a sheaf of stories from the surveys that could be read out.

On the day, we watched a group of visibly nervous councillors and council officials looking on as around sixty Groves residents arrived. The healthcare trust and contractors declined the invitation, but that apart the meeting was a complete success. The problem was outlined, some told their stories first hand, and before half an hour had passed we had been promised a residents' parking scheme in principle. Most of the rest of the meeting was taken up with a discussion about permits for visitors, such as the families of some of our older residents. No-one shouted. I was able to stay at the back and let people speak for themselves, telling their stories, and then, as confidence grew, make suggestions and comments to the council officers.

3.3.2.1 Reflection on Residents' Car-Parking. Working together on the shared issue of parking has had a good effect on The Groves. Many people have got to know others better. People love to tell the story of how we got the

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[386] I was actually less concerned about the shy as with some of our more vocal residents who could easily turn this into a 'shout at the suits' session. From a previous experience, when a local school was controversially closed down, I had observed that this tactic was counter-productive. However, it is the only one left for some with little confidence or ability to articulate building frustration felt at how 'they' always seem to put 'us' down.

Council to change its mind, and an important principle has been established: it is possible to make positive change by working together.[387]

There have also been side benefits. Judith and I have a higher profile, though we need to be careful that we do not become the default people for 'getting things done.'[388] We feel very much that the parking campaign was a working *with* rather than *for*, done as far as possible by consensus, which is an important dynamic. It helped that I also knew all of the local councillors and was able to act as a sort of go-between, but the crucial factor was focusing the frustration of a number of people and using that combined energy to positive effect. This was a small piece of empowerment, and therefore a small step closer to God's purpose for his created people of individual and corporate *shalom*. It led directly to another small step through the creation of the Community Garden.

3.3.3 The Community Garden

It was a neighbour who had the idea to do something to improve the communal area, known as The Croft, which four rows of houses, one of which includes ours, back on to.[389] At some point this had been landscaped and planted as a garden area, but by the time we arrived it was run-down and overgrown, used only for dumping, litter, dog-mess, drug-taking and drinking.

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[387] Council wheels move slowly and it took nearly two years for the scheme to actually be implemented. We had to bite our tongues when the local councillors gave themselves the credit for it.

[388] Community Organising's 'Iron Rule,' coined by Saul Alinsky, is: "Never do for people what they can do for themselves." Foster and Louie, Grassroots Action and Learning for Social Change, 3.

[389] See Photograph 5: The Groves.

This was in part a 'what can we do next?' after the parking campaign, and came out of a couple of clean-up days, initiated by a very good environmental officer at the Council who had noticed The Croft was in quite a bad way. Houses were leafleted with the dates and a group of student volunteers and a skip and some tools duly arrived. Only four residents joined in, but one who watched for a while from her back gate as the skip filled with litter, debris and weeds, saw the potential for the area and began to talk about what could be done next.
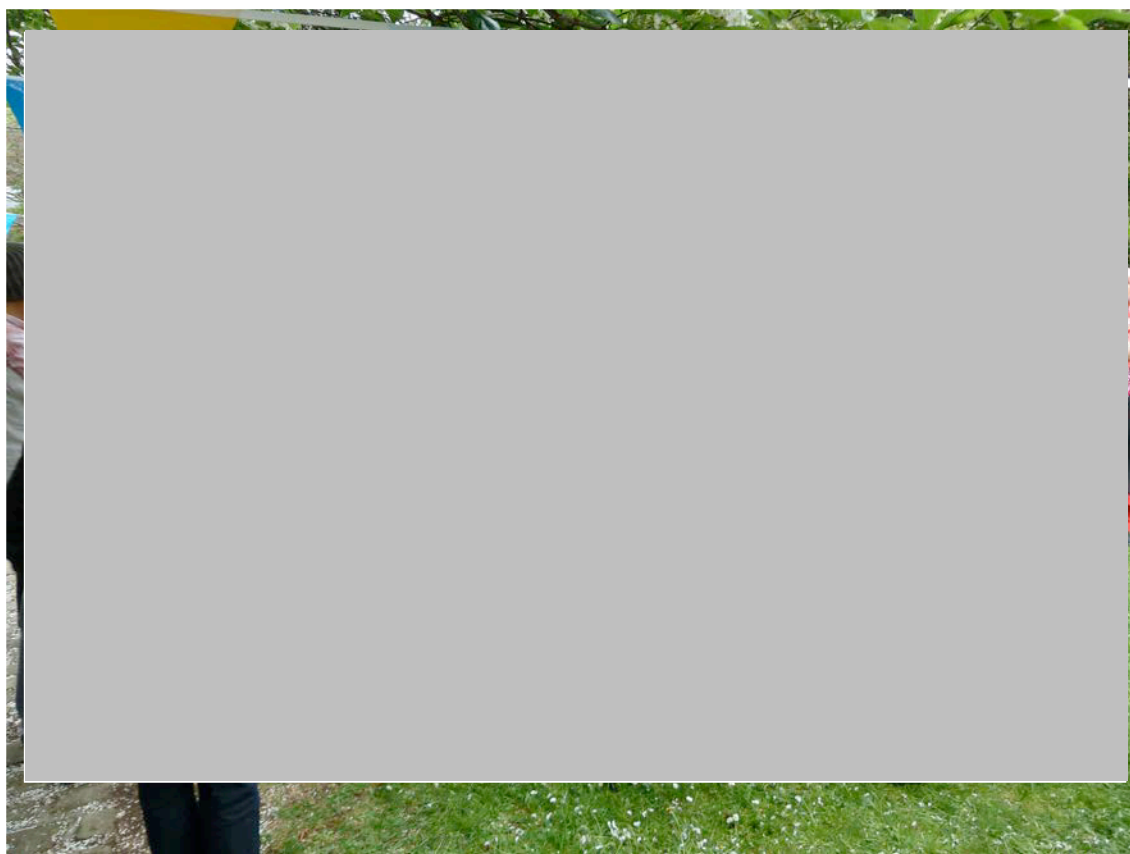
Photograph 11: Community Garden, Jubilee Neighbours' Day, June 2012.

The upshot, with some support behind-the-scenes by Judith and myself, was a 'Neighbours' Day' barbeque in The Croft in June 2010, funded by a £200 council grant. Around a hundred adults, children and young people came during the

course of a sunny afternoon, between two rainy days, and it was good to see people enjoying themselves and engaging with each other.[390] A short survey form gathered opinions and ideas for how to improve The Croft, and yielded commitments to give some time helping to maintain it. Since then many hours have been put in clearing, planting and weeding, and bids for funding for gates and plants have been successful. We have had more community events, planting and 'Big Dig' sessions and, in the summer of 2012, a Jubilee event (see photograph 11).[391]

Our neighbour who had the initial idea has discovered the benefits of taking action yourself rather than expecting 'them' to do something, and now helps with the Friends of Swinton Grove Park, along with other voluntary work. She is more confident and claims a noticeable improvement in her depression and in a tendency to drink heavily. Her house is a lot tidier and she has redecorated several rooms and made other improvements. She has returned to education through a series of short-term courses and recently she succeeded (where we failed some years ago) in setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme with the help of a local community police officer.[392] We have discovered that she used to bring her now grown-up children to the toddler group and youth work at Brunswick Church some years ago.

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[390] The difference in turnout between the council-organised clean-up and locally-organised events since can be attributed to local ownership versus wariness of the Council, better publicity, and, of course, free food!

[391] Website: <http://grovesgarden.org.uk> Appendix 14 is a leaflet for an event in the garden.

[392] As a nice piece of recognition from the Council, she (and Judith) were invited to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Garden Party in Manchester in March 2012.

3.3.3.1 Reflection on the Community Garden. In this example of 'mission-with' 'project-praxis', we were able to take a lower profile role, supporting someone else, in our working with others. Again, use was made of some elements of Community Organising, such as leafleting and requests for ideas, but this time at the suggestion of our neighbour. The creation of the garden has had the effect not only of improving our environment, but also of building self-esteem and bringing increased wholeness to a self-confessed one-time 'neighbour from hell'. Another bit of *shalom*, and evidence of God at work in someone's life, which we are hoping she will come to acknowledge at some point.

3.4 Reflection on 'Project-Praxis'

To what extent, if any, could I have been involved in these responses and projects had I not been a resident of the local area or member of the communities affected by the issues? A prerequisite for 'mission-with' is 'presence-among'. It cannot be done as effectively – if at all – from a distance. If the issue I am working on with others is not affecting me at least in some ways similar to how it is affecting them, can I really empathise and be motivated in the same way?

It could be speculated how much, if any, of the above would feature in a traditional missionary or evangelist's newsletter. This is praxis on the edges of what could be seen as 'missional', but can be foundational for other, more overtly missional activity based on relationship. However, each project, as a piece of *shalom*-building, is firstly an end in itself.

I wrote above[393] of church leaders, particularly evangelicals, not 'getting' this 'with' aspect of mission, or, more likely, prioritising other aspects. Another example concerns Community Organising. A number of Christians (including myself), together with people of other faiths, were involved in setting up a Manchester Community Organising body, known as 'ChangeMakers', to campaign on issues of injustice.[394] When I invited a group of evangelical leaders to an early meeting to formulate policies and strategies, only two came. They looked uncomfortable, made no contributions beyond introducing themselves along with everyone else present, and did not come again. In conversation later both said politely that they thought it was a great thing, but they did not feel personally that it was a priority for them.

3.4.1 Carisma and PeaceWeek

My getting involved with the gang issue came out of the concern, shared by other parents, about the safety of my family living in this area.[395] However, I did not have the additional issues involved in being black,[396] so the common ground was geographic, if not cultural, closeness. If I was black and living in another place could I be involved as 'mission-with' praxis on a basis of that

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[393] 3.2.5.1

[394] This was in 2007. ChangeMakers is now known as "Thrive: Greater Manchester." <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/poweredbypeopleuk> Accessed 15/2/2013. Carisma is a member organisation.

[395] For instance, my daughter being within minutes of the Ucal Chin drive-by shooting on Anson Road in June 2007. <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater -manchester-news/victims-ucal-chin-and-tyrone-gilbert-915490> Accessed 25/1/2013.

[396] "… we do remember the drugs thing being introduced, cos like *** remembers that and he had an option of either getting in, cos I remember it, you know a lot of the guys who are probably now dead or in prison. We remember when they were getting involved in the drugs, they had the money, they had the bling, the cars they used to drive, and you know, *** did have an option to get involved in the drug scene and sell the drugs or, lead an honest life." Interview with Afro-Caribbean resident, June 2009.

common ground? Or is there something particular or special about geographic location – being physically present in a particular place at a particular time? As remarked on above, being there counts with local people.[397]

I have written above about the importance of location and incarnational identification for Christians.[398] For Gutiérrez, incarnational embodiment of the gospel was crucial, with the church being a material sign of the presence of Christ with people, particularly the poor, and faith being evidenced by concrete action, orthopraxis, more than verbal assent, orthodoxy. "Practice is the locus of verification of our faith in God."[399]

A black person living in a different area could share the concern as they might identify with some of the underlying issues of racism and poverty. A white person living in Didsbury (Manchester's archetypal leafy suburb) could share the concern through having had a son or daughter injured by gang violence, or from being the head of a school in the Hulme/Moss Side area for many years, now retired – which is the position of one of Carisma's trustees. But what would Carisma look like – would it have got anywhere – if it was run by a group of white people from Didsbury and black people from Chorlton? Apart from occasional overspills, the gang issue was localised to a specific geographical area with an ethnically mixed population, so concern from white and black – and Asian – residents is valid as their children walk streets where there is a risk of violence. Black residents have an extra ground for concern as many of the gang

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[397] 3.2.1.2
[398] 2.15.1
[399] Gustavo Gutiérrez, The Power of the Poor in History (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 1983), 17.

members are drawn from their young people. There is scope for some involvement from 'outside', but it must serve, not dictate.[400] Being able to identify – knowing 'what it is like' to live in an affected area, or to be a part of a stereotyped and disadvantaged ethnic group – is an important basis for praxis.[401]

3.4.2 Local Community Organising

All of the local 'mission-with' examples in 3.3 above are specific projects in our immediate neighbourhood where we have taken a lead alongside others or supported someone else. As such they have raised our profile and given us the opportunity both to get to know more people and to deepen existing relationships. But they are all to be set against a background of being local residents and doing the things that local residents do, week in, week out. This is the important on-going 'mission-with' praxis background foundational to any specific response or project that may come along from time to time.

With the car-parking issue, it is unlikely that I would have heard of this or been motivated to get involved if it was not happening literally on my doorstep. It was causing *us* problems and I was aware that this was the case for others, including more vulnerable neighbours, and that some were taking perhaps unwise remedial action. Because I was in good relationships with neighbours, as well also being affected personally by the issue, I was able to discourage these methods and encourage our working together.

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[400] For example professional skills, such as accounting for the role of Treasurer, not available in the local context, but required for running a charity.

[401] An aspect of incarnational ministry. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses." Heb 4:15 (NIV).

Equally for working on the local park and The Croft, we were among those who wanted to improve the local environment and get better places and facilities for our children to play in. This creates individual and shared motivation, ground on which to build relationships, and a common feel-good factor when something is achieved. Both of these projects have involved co-operation with a number of council staff, but helpful as they have been, there is not the same level of joint feeling as in the final analysis they are doing a job and come in from outside.

In terms of well-being, or *shalom*, there has been a clear increase in The Groves area over the thirty years we have lived here. This can be inferred from obvious indicators such as lower levels of crime and vandalism and virtually no incidents of racist abuse or violence, to more subtle things like neighbours looking out for each other and relating more on the street and on doorsteps. Whatever the reasons – and there will be a number – hopefully the years of park Fun Days, improvements to the park and the creation of the Community Garden, and projects such as Residents' Car-Parking have helped.

The next chapter surveys a number of other expressions of mission which contain elements of 'mission-with', as explored in this chapter and in chapter two, such as partnership and incarnation, and makes comparisons with my experience, not only of 'mission-with', but also re-location and incoming.

Chapter Four

'Mission-with' Elements

in Other Mission Models

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I have been examining a model of mission, centred around my own praxis as a Christian incomer. 'Mission-with' requires close connection with a community, a 'presence-among', out of which arises 'project-praxis' with and alongside others.

There are many other expressions of mission and in this chapter I will briefly survey a number that contain elements of or have similarities with 'mission-with' praxis. They are a mix of methods, projects and people as examples of models. The first four are to do with ways of working, the next two assume or involve local presence, and the last seven also involve re-location. The intention is to be illustrative rather than exhaustive – the field of mission is sufficiently large for there to be, no doubt, others that I am not aware of[402] – and there is some overlap between several of them. With the more generic categories of Church Planting or Emerging Church I have selected a specifically urban, geographical example. Some of the other examples or projects listed could also be seen, or claimed, as planting or emerging, or 'Fresh Expressions' (for example 'Missional Community'), but such labelling is not really of concern here because I am looking more for elements of praxis shared with the model 'mission-with' such as partnership, building *shalom*, or 'presence-among', particularly with refer-ence to an inner-city context.

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[402] "Mission is a multi-faceted ministry in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualisation, and much more." Bosch, <u>Transforming Mission</u>, 512. The plethora of models of mission is evidence of much effort and energy being put in to rediscover mission for a post-Christendom age where the Church finds itself in a very different position in society, and the popularising of the wider conception of mission as *missio Dei*.

4.2 Co-Belligerence

The first model is some distance from my approach, but does involve Christians partnering with non-Christians in a limited way. A military term meaning to form an alliance against a common enemy, co-belligerence used in a mission context has been described as "the activity of Christians working together with non-Christians for a common political, economic or cultural cause."[403] It was advocated by Francis Schaeffer as an alternative for evangelicals to the extremes of separatism or compromised alliance.[404] Examples include campaigns on Sunday trading, free speech,[405] assisted suicide and human trafficking, and indeed could encompass any issue-based initiative or project raising awareness of an injustice that resonates with a Christian mandate to be agents of *shalom*.[406] So, a working 'with', but in a limited way as a marriage of convenience, as it were. Langois calls it a "dangerous business,"[407] sharing with Strange a strong degree of caution and mistrust of the other party or parties, and little regard for building relationship beyond the issue at hand. While I acknowledge a 'with' element here, it seems to be a reluctant partnership to achieve a predetermined Christian

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[403] Daniel Strange, "Co-belligerence and common grace: Can the enemy of my enemy be my friend?" <u>Cambridge Papers</u> vol. 14, no. 3 (2005): 1.

[404] "A co-belligerent is a person with whom I do not agree on all sorts of vital issues, but who, for whatever reasons of their own, is on the same side in a fight for some specific issue of public justice." Francis Schaeffer, <u>Plan for Action: An Action Alternative Handbook for Whatever Happened to the Human Race?</u> (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1980), 68.

[405] <<u>http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/335717</u>> Accessed 3/6/2013.

[406] These are British examples. Co-belligerence has been influential in the USA as a model used by the Christian Right to pursue a moralist agenda.

[407] Langlois lists several dangers and strategies to counter them, which include not trusting the co-belligerents. John Langlois, "Co-Belligerency: Right or Wrong?" <u>Hope for Europe</u>, <<u>http://www.hfe.org/resources/article_details.php?id=21&network_id=1)</u>> Accessed 31/5/2008.

moral aim, where care is taken to retain control. There could even be a hint of arrogance based on a view of the Christian partner as superior and setting the agenda. There is no notion of 'presence-among', the first part of 'mission-with'.

4.3 Make Poverty History

This is an example of Christians working with others in partnership on a shared concern on a global scale. It could be compared to the co-belligerence model only in that it is also a coming together on an issue. The inequality, caution and mis-trust characteristic of the latter are absent here – perhaps because resolving the issue was seen as more important than who held the reins or got the credit.[408] It was formed in 2005 as the UK expression of a world wide Global Call to Action Against Poverty[409] and its high profile campaign was at the G8 Summit in Edinburgh in July 2007.[410] The movement grew out of the Christian-initiated Jubilee 2000 coalition (now Jubilee Debt Campaign UK) which, from playing a leading role in putting Make Poverty History together, became one of many partners drawn from campaigning and aid organisations, faith groups, charities and unions.[411] The triple aims of Aid, Debt and Trade bear comparison with the *shalom* or Kingdom values of, respectively, mercy, forgiveness and

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[408] This Guardian article about Stephen Rand's retirement as co-chair of the Jubilee Dept Campaign in looking back and noting its leading role in Make Poverty History, makes no reference to its Christian motivation (or that of Stephen Rand or TearFund, the first major charity to get involved). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/apr/20/debt-owed-to-jubilee-debt-campaign> Accessed 3/12/2012.

[409] <http://www.whiteband.org> Accessed 3/12/2012.

[410] <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/2005/index.shtml> Accessed 3/12/2012.

[411] <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY3720in 37202005+46.twl> Accessed 3/12/2012.

justice. While acknowledging the potential risks involved, the 'with' element of being involved in initiating a response to an issue, but then becoming one partner or voice among many, is one I can identify with. Due to the global scale of this project, 'presence-among' in a local sense is not a consideration.

4.4 Avec

Operating at a more local level and based on the work of sociologists T. R. and M. Batten who developed a 'non-directive approach' for group and community work,[412] George Lovell's Avec model for community development contrasts working *for* and working *with* local community. Lovell argues that, while either may be more appropriate in a given circumstance, 'for' when used should be seen as a step toward 'with' as it reduces dependency, devolves power and responsibility, and promotes deeper relationships based on partnership rather than "benefactor-beneficiary." It also helps people "acquire independence, status, a feeling of being wanted and of being useful and significant, as well as resolving the specific need."[413]

> Working *with* people generates a sense of community. It helps them to feel that they belong and that they are equal partners; they begin to talk in terms of 'we' instead of 'them and us'. It is *our* project instead of *their* project, *our* centre instead of *their* centre, *our* idea instead of *their* idea.[414]

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[412] T.R. and M. Batten, <u>The Non-Directive Approach</u> (London: Avec Publications, 1988). An abridged version of T.R. and M. Batten, <u>The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community Work</u> (Oxford: University Press, 1967). This model has a lot in common with Community Organising (4.7 below).

[413] Lovell, <u>Church and Community Development</u>, 14.

[414] Lovell, <u>Church and Community Development</u>, 5.

While this is a clear 'with' methodology where "the worker is in no sense in control,"[415] having a lot in common with the praxis aspects of my model, it is more concentrated on general community development from a church base and does not specifically mention working with fellow residents on shared concerns arising out of being personally affected by issues through being a 'presence-among'.[416] Though it is serving and "helping others to … realise how they can help themselves,"[417] the help and learning is all one-way, from the church and its members to the people. It assumes churches "already have a network of men and women, voluntary and full-time, within their organisational structure,"[418] without any comment on the balance of such resources between inner-city and suburban areas.

4.5 Community Ministry

This is a model of holistic mission developed by Ann Morisy,[419] who is concerned that Christian discipleship needs to deepen beyond "being a law-abiding citizen who happens to go to church Sunday by Sunday and practices personal piety."[420] She writes of community ministry ventures for those in a place of relative comfort and affluence as steps towards a possible more profound

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[415] Batten, The Non-Directive Approach, 12. This echoes Chalke's definition of true incarnation (see note 1).

[416] It is actually the Battens who come closest to hinting at an incarnational model, writing of how "a worker using the non-directive approach needs to be able to identify himself with his clients very fully …" The Non-Directive Approach, 20. Still 'worker' and 'client' however.

[417] Lovell, Church and Community Development, 49.

[418] Lovell, Church and Community Development, 3.

[419] Frost and Hirsch's "shared projects" share several features with Morisy's model. "Shared projects allow the Christians to partner with unbelievers in useful, intrinsically valuable activities within the community. … The church can initiate … or simply get behind existing projects." Frost and Hirsh, Shaping of Things to Come, 25.

[420] Morisy, Beyond the Good Samaritan, 13.

change in lifestyle and challenging of the assumptions of mainstream culture. Christians work alongside non-Christians on a 'Vocational Domain' which is:

> The opportunity provided to enable people to respond to that sense within them that they could do more in their lives in relation to risk and concern for others.[421]

This domain is also seen as being about "encouraging and enabling people to express discipleship"[422] and to "discover and embrace their vocation – their distinctive call from God,"[423] being as much for non-Christians as for Christians. Morisy takes calling even further away than I have[424] from an elitist within-Church notion to do with priesthood or ministry. Discipleship too is opened to all in a way not dissimilar to my recognition that acts of building *shalom* are not the exclusive preserve of Christians.[425]

Morisy's model shares with 'mission-with' a wide definition of mission and several aspects of 'project-praxis', with emphasis on humility, vulnerability, relationships and partnership. However, what I would regard as a pre-requisite for 'mission-with', namely 'presence-among', is missing. Ultimately, this is a journeying out from suburbia in which there is no notion of incarnational minis-try, which may be seen as a step too far for Morisy's constituency. While there is working with local contexts on an equal partnership, some distance is left

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[421] Morisy, <u>Journeying Out</u>, 241. This, together with a 'Foundational Domain' (to do with helping people explore the possibility of God), are two areas the Church needs to put more resources into as they can serve the 'Explicit Domain' of core teaching and practice.

[422] Morisy, <u>Journeying Out</u>, 218.

[423] Morisy, <u>Journeying Out</u>, 204. This echoes Luther's notion of vocation.

[424] 2.14.2

[425] Morisy prefers to call discipleship 'Venturesome Love' to remove the connotation of "doing jobs in church."

between those contexts and where Christians tend to live and go back to after working on a project with others. This leaves her model open to "it's alright for you, you don't have to live here" criticism, a short step from 'us and them'.

4.6 The Isaiah Vision

Coming out of the World Council of Churches and advocated by Raymond Fung,[426] this is a strategy for local mission based on Isaiah's vision of a community characterised by long and healthy old age, no infant deaths, and where those who work receive the fruits of their labour.[427] As a *shalom*-building agenda that can be shared with other faiths and agencies, it can be worked on in partnership with others: "Christians rejoice over the fact of our non-monopoly."[428] There are many ways to work towards this dream, big and small, including an emphasis on "Christian involvement as persons, families and small groups in the course of daily living."[429] This inclusion of the ordinary is welcome, though the locations of those families and persons is not commented on – perhaps it is assumed. While being an end in itself, this working together is clearly also a means – as trust and friendship develops – to an evangelistic end of sharing the gospel in a more direct way. There also seems to be no mention of Christians joining in with expressions of this agenda initiated or already being run by others (though presumably this would not be inconsistent with this

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[426] Raymond Fung, <u>The Isaiah Vision: An Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism</u> (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1992).

[427] Isaiah 65:20-21.

[428] Fung, <u>The Isaiah Vision</u>, 7.

[429] Fung, <u>The Isaiah Vision</u>, 50.

approach). While honesty, humility and vulnerability are encouraged as vital to the partner relationship, the initiative, invitation to partnership, and with it the control, remains with the church.

4.7 Community Organising

A more political approach to working with others may be found in Community Organising.[430] Schaller sees a Community Organiser as a 'change-agent,' defined as an outsider coming in. They are a go-between between the community and the power structures whose role is to help identify issues, emphasise common objectives and focus discontent, and recruit and train indigenous leaders.[431] "A successful community organiser will eventually work himself out of a job in that community."[432]. This also is a specific role, with a time-scale and purpose, which can be useful and of great benefit to a community. I have used insights and principles from community organising in my own praxis.[433] There is a 'with' aspect in that an organiser will begin with the issues identified as concerns by the community, but also a 'for' aspect in that he is working for and on behalf of the community. However, while an ordinary resident could be a change-agent and help organise his community, this involves some tweaking of the usual definition and relationship, which is more along the lines of a worker

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[430] 3.3

[431] Linthicum sees Nehemiah as a Community Organiser. Linthicum, <u>Building A People of Power</u>, 118ff.

[432] Lyle E. Schaller, <u>Community Organisation: Conflict and Reconciliation</u> (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 45.

[433] 3.2. Salt and yeast are change-agents. Matt 5:13, 13:33.

and client.[434] In addition, the organiser as an outsider coming in will have to make contacts, build relationships and earn trust from scratch, as well as persuade people with little confidence or motivation to take on a project. An insider, using some of the community organiser's methods, has a distinct advantage. As with the Avec model, there is much in common here with the second stage of 'mission-with', that of 'project-praxis', but the initial 'presence-among' stage, and the integrity and depth which that adds, can be largely by-passed.

4.8 The Classic Missionary Model

We now move to a second group of models that include re-location as a first step. There is a long tradition in the Christian Church of missionaries going out to other countries, peoples and cultures, and while there are a number of variations, the basic model involves living as an incomer in a community for a period of time. I have referred[435] to Hudson Taylor's challenging of the accepted separatist approach of his contemporaries as he sought to identify more closely with the people he was working with, using the incarnation of Jesus as a model. This was the role-model used by Martin Gooder as he drew parallels between the overseas mission-field and the British inner-city. Vincent Donovan took a further step away from traditional methods by deliberately allowing the Masai people to form church around their culture, rather than making a Western model an inherent part of his gospel message. While these can be seen as 'mission-with' in terms of 'presence-among', and the parallel for any incoming praxis is

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[434] As in Batten, note 416.

[435] 2.4.1

useful, this is an incoming in a particular role with a specific intention of bringing a message 'to' and doing acts of service 'for'. The missioner is not present primarily as an ordinary resident.

4.9 Classic Pastoral Ministry

Alongside the classic missionary approach there is the classic pastoral approach to ministry, exemplified by the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches and their parish systems which clearly defines a local area and community to be a 'presence-among'.[436] Many church leaders, such as Martin Gooder, have made a commitment to living in the neighbourhoods and among the people they were seeking to serve, unlike other professionals visiting from 9 to 5 Monday to Friday. John Pridmore and Kenneth Leech are two from the Anglican Church who have written about their long-term service as parish priests living in inner-city parishes for many years.[437] While being an outworking of the missional 'cure of souls,' praxis is on a pastoral ministry basis, seeking to be and act 'with' the surrounding community through involvement in local organisations, advocacy, provision of services, as well as in personal ways with individuals.[438] However, while providing valuable service, often involving much personal sacrifice, due to being present in a context in an official capacity, there is a difference in role, expectation (locally and from the employing institution) and

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[436] This is not to exclude other churches, such as Methodist, which also operate on a geographical basis.

[437] John Pridmore, The Inner-City of God: The Diary of an East End Parson (London: Canterbury Press, 2008); Kenneth Leech, Doing Theology in Altab Ali Park (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2006).

[438] Leech specifically draws a distinction between ministry 'to' and 'with'. Leech, Doing Theology in Altab Ali Park, 50.

perception to those of being an ordinary resident, which is how I have sought to live in the area.[439] Additionally, due to minimum requirements for clergy housing and other considerations such as security, it is usual, while being situated in the neighbourhood, for the rectory, vicarage, manse, etc. to be physically different and separated from the other dwellings. Another difference is that in the cases of Pridmore and Leech, as with most clergy, they have moved in specifically to carry out a job and have moved out again, or retired to different areas, not necessarily in the inner-city, when that job has come to an end.[440]

A variation on the full-time clergy model is the introduction by the Anglican Church from the 1970s of several forms of "auxiliary" or "supplementary" minis-try – Ordained Local, Non-Stipendary/Self-Sustaining and Ordained Pioneer Ministers[441] – where the minister is self-supporting through other employment. In some cases (not the OLM which is an existing member of a congregation) this will involve being placed into a community, in much the same way as a full-time minister. While this can remove some of the distinctions between the minister and the other residents, for instance, through use of similar housing and perhaps a different form of presence through working locally,[442] there are still those that result from the official role and expectations, and for many, but not all, this still includes re-locating to carry out a job, and for as long as that job lasts.

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[439] Pridmore, due to the pressures of inner-city ministry advises – to "stay sane" – regular time out of the parish and, when back, "you must somehow maintain that distance inwardly." Pridmore, Inner-City of God, 137.

[440] It should be noted that there is an etiquette of leaving space for a successor when leaving a post.

[441] OLM, NSM, SSM, OPM respectively.

[442] OPM Revd Ben Norton works as a hairdresser in his community. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-19242525> <https://twitter.com/JohnSentamu/status/299162008849358850> Accessed 25/4/2013.

4.10 Church Planting, Emerging Church

Though all churches were 'planted' at some time, 'Church Planting' became prominent in the 1990s through a concerted but ultimately disappointing[443] effort to take church closer to people geographically. 'Emerging Church' – "… not quite the same as church planting, although planting is at the heart of it"[444] – has sought to learn from that previous experience. Instead of cloning existing church, it "begins with the people church is seeking to reach,"[445] taking church into networks, to include being closer culturally. It is a multi-faceted and disparate movement from which I shall concentrate on an instance that involves relocation into an inner-city context.

'Urban Expression' is a mission agency that "recruits, equips, deploys and networks self-financing teams pioneering creative and relevant expressions of the Christian church in under-churched areas of the inner city"[446] It challenges "the trend of some Christians moving out of the cities and encourage Christians to relocate to the inner cities."[447] High value is placed on building relationships

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[443] Moynagh notes "great hopes for church planting" in the early 1990s. "Some thought that 20,000 new churches could be launched in the UK by the end of the century. In the event, between 1989 and 1998 only 1,867 churches opened in England, while 2,757 closed." Michael Moynagh, emergingchurch.intro (Oxford: Monarch, 2004), 21.

[444] Moynagh, emergingchurch.intro, 21. Emerging Churches are defined by Gibbs and Bolger as: "… missional communities arising from within post-modern culture and consisting of followers of Jesus who are seeking to be faithful in their place and time." Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures (London: SPCK, 2006), 28. There are a number of other labels such as the Anglican 'Fresh Expressions of Church' which co-exist as a 'mixed economy of church' alongside existing parishes.

[445] Moynagh, emergingchurch.intro, 22.

[446] <http://www.urbanexpression.org.uk> Accessed 10/5/2013.

[447] <http://www.urbanexpression.org.uk/our-values/168-relationship> Accessed 10/5/2013.

from an incarnational base and a belief in "doing things with and not just for communities, sharing our lives with others and learning from others who share their lives with us.[448] Here is clear 'mission-with' praxis – 'presence-among' and working with. The difference to my experience is again in the intention behind the re-location, in this case to form a church (though it is more open-ended and flexible than the classic pastoral ministry model), and in there being a ready-made like-minded community within the community.

4.11 Missional Community

As what some might regard as a variation on the above, some expressions of what has been called the "New Monastic" movement, involve deliberate re-location to inner-city areas. These include Shane Claiborne's 'Simple Way' in Philadelphia,[449] and 'Urban Vision' in Wellington, New Zealand, who describe themselves as: "… not superstars. We are just ordinary Wellingtonians from different walks of life, trying to live together in a way that embraces those in our neighborhoods who are struggling, living out the good news we have found."[450]

An earlier variation on the above, Roman Catholic Passionist monk Austin Smith writes as a resident in an inner-city community, living in an ordinary house, rather than a presbytery or manse, with others as a missional com-munity. However, he is also a priest and member of a religious order so, as with

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[448] <http://www.urbanexpression.org.uk/our-values/168-relationship> Accessed 10/5/2013.

[449] "The inner city is our contemporary desert." Shane Claiborne interviewed in The Huffington Post, 19/12/2011. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-raushenbush/shane-claiborne-new-monastics_b_1156525.html> Accessed 13/12/2012.

[450] Jenny and Justin Duckworth, Against the Tide, Towards the Kingdom, xvi.

Pridmore and Leech, there are certain perceptions and expectations he has to work with. He writes of issues with getting beyond being defined by and restricted by his institutional role as a Christian minister and the assumptions that go with it. "I am part of the furniture of a 'Christian' society."[451]

These expressions are closer to but still not the same as being simply a local resident, intentional or otherwise, and not part of a community within the community.

4.12 Christian Relational Youth Work

I first came across this model when Urban Action Manchester began in North Manchester in 1991.[452] With workers encouraged to live in the same community, this is a holistic approach, enabling and encouraging young people to realise their own God-given worth and develop their potential.[453]

M13 Youth Project was set up in 1995 as a project of UAM by fellow long-term incomer, and member of Brunswick Church, Helen Gatenby. It covers an area of Ardwick, which includes Chorlton-on-Medlock and describes itself as a "community-based Voluntary Sector project, specialising in street-based detached youth work with young people often labelled 'hard-to-reach.'"[454] M13

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[451] Austin Smith, <u>Passion for the Inner City</u> (London: Sheed & Ward, 1983), 79.

[452] 2.11

[453] Other examples of this holistic way of working include Frontier Youth Trust .<<u>http://www.fyt.org.uk</u>> and Oxford Youth Works <<u>http://www.oxfordyouthworks.com</u>>.

[454] <<u>http://www.m13youthproject.org.uk</u>> Accessed 25/4/2013.

works from a clear Christian ethos, including working for *shalom*, with young people, seeking to enable them to learn.

> M13 create conversations, activities and environments with young people, that foster enjoyment, learning, action and transformation which make for well-being within young people, ourselves and the communities in which we all live.[455]

I was a trustee of M13 for a number of years and was influenced by these values, and Helen's determination for young people to be seen in a positive light, in what I sought to bring to the forming of Carisma.[456] Helen lives in the same community as the young people she works with, and encourages other staff to do the same (some staff have been and are local young people the project has worked with). This is unlike most other professional youth workers, and controversially subverts accepted notions of 'professional distance', but in eighteen years the value of this incarnational identification has been proven in the depth of the relationships built with young people, the reputation of the project locally, and the quality of its youth work, recognised by major funders.

'Mission-with' is evidenced here in the 'presence-among', both of workers and the organisation itself, and in a number of projects run with the young people which fit the 'project-praxis' part of the model. The difference with my experience is that where workers have moved in to the area, it has been in order to perform a particular role and, with a couple of exceptions, there has been no long-term commitment beyond that time.

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[455] <http://www.m13youthproject.org.uk> Accessed 25/4/2013.
[456] 3.2.1.1

4.13 Eden Projects

Eden is "… a network of church-linked youth and community projects located in some of Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods."[457] Eden teams live as "an intentional Christian presence with a particular emphasis on youth work in their communities."[458] This is an incarnational model, asking for a minimum commitment of five years.

> What might be different about us is where and how we choose to live. Instead of looking for the best house we can find in the nicest area, we are putting roots down in areas that most people avoid. We do this because we have sensed a call from God to do something more for the young people and their families in the toughest areas.[459]

Eden's is a self-confessed "hi-viz" approach,[460] which contrasts with the lower-profile 'mission-with'. From observation and speaking with members of early teams, there was an expectation that revival-type miracles would occur immediately and big changes in lives and communities would follow soon after, leading to some disillusionment when that did not happen. There were also issues with suspicion and hostility from the local people. Some hard lessons learnt with characteristic energy as the project has matured, and I now discern a softer, more humble and inclusive attitude. Miracles have not been ruled

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[457] The first Eden project began in Wythenshawe, Manchester in 1997. They are now in twenty-two locations around Greater Manchester and in six other cities around the country including London, Liverpool, Hull and Sheffield, forming what is now known as the Eden Network. <http://eden-network.org> Accessed 11/9/2012.

[458] Anna E. Thompson, "Holy Sofas: Transformational Encounters between Evangelical Christians and Post-Christendom Urban Communities," Practical Theology 5, no. 1 (2012): 47.

[459] <http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/news-events/news/news-from-the-diocese-of-york/01923.html> Accessed ¾/2013.

[460] Wilson, Eden: Called to the Streets, 88.

out,[461] but there is a more realistic approach to time-scale and the difficulties of the context, and a respect for and willingness to work with those who already live there. A 'with' mindset is now encouraged, over against a 'to' or 'for':

> If we adopt this mindset then we recognise that following Jesus is a journey that involves growing in companionship with all sorts of people, many of whom are not like us one bit. … as we pursue the mission of God in our neighbourhood, we open ourselves up to the possibility that we might learn from those we thought we'd be teaching, and may be blessed by those we thought we'd be blessing.[462]

Researching the experience of Eden team members, Thompson notes a "movement in self-understanding from missionary to neighbour"[463] as daily life in the urban community has challenged expectations and assumptions and learning and unlearning has taken place. With Eden's background also being evangelical, this is an interesting transition, moving the team members' self-awareness closer to what mine has been since the early years – that of being first a resident who is a Christian. Like them, I have had much to learn and can identify with fellow Christian incomers who, "through cross-cultural relocation, have had not only their culture but their theology called into question."[464]

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[461] Remarkable stories of changed lives are recounted in a recent book. Matt Wilson, <u>Concrete Faith: The Inside Story of the Eden Network</u> (Manchester: Message Trust, 2012).

[462] Wilson, <u>Concrete Faith</u>, 144. Some of Matt's early thinking on this was shared in an email: "It's really not acceptable for us to act as if the people in the communities we locate into are somehow generic human units that we can just 'do our ministry TO'. And actually neither is it really satisfactory for us to offer a whole bunch of stuff FOR people in the community – however easy it is to baptize such activity in the language of 'serving'. Our aspiration should always be to draw alongside people in the community as neighbours and friends rather than 'service providers' (in a 'paraklete' sort of way?) in order to work out together WITH them how we can all together live well and thrive in the light of God's hope and love." Email from Matt Wilson, 17/6/2010.

[463] Thompson, "Holy Sofas," 50.

[464] Thompson, "Holy Sofas," 60.

Despite this emphasis on making a deprived area 'home', and encouraging team members to see themselves as residents, a strong overtly missional element remains important. So, once moved in, team members will quickly be pro-active in getting to know local young people and setting up pieces of work with them.

While this model shares a lot in common with my experience, there are several differences. We are primarily residents in a single household, like those around us and not part of a community within the community, and we are not youth workers. A further difference is in how we have lived in our bit of urban context, which could be summed up as lower profile and missionally more responsive than pro-active.

4.14 Long-term Christian Incomers

While in some instances of re-location there may be an initial intention to re-main for a long period, this is not so much a model as a state which evolves as time goes by. It is hard to say at which point the phrase 'long-term' applies,[465] but it could apply to any of the models above that involves re-locating to a deprived area, whether with a particular role, project or time-scale in mind, which over time turns into a longer commitment, eclipsing the original purpose of the move.[466] It could also include a simple moving in to live there, not linked to a job or project – which was my original intention – and staying.

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[465] Overseas mission agencies define 'long-term' from a matter of months up to five years. Eden projects ask for a minimum five year commitment.

[466] John Vincent moved to inner-city Sheffield as a Methodist minister in the mid-70s (an example of 4.9 above) and is still there, in very active 'retirement'.

Bob Holman is an example of a long-term Christian incomer who moved to inner-city Glasgow in 1987, giving up his post as a Professor at Bath University to do so. He has worked mostly in Easterhouse, setting up FARE (Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse) and advocating and campaigning politically on behalf of the local communities. Holman's achievements – for which he was awarded, and turned down, an MBE[467] – are many, and he is an inspiring example of response to a call to incarnational living in a deprived area. Perhaps closest to my experience in terms of time spent and not being there in an official capacity, Holman has, however, worked in a more high-profile way than I do and taken much more of a leadership and entrepreneurial role in his community. This approach, also taken by a friend and fellow long-term incomer in Manchester who in recent years has set up the charity 'Healthy Ardwick',[468] is different to mine. While including strong elements of 'with' and empowerment, this is more of an initiative-taking 'mission-for' methodology, driving a specific agenda.

4.15 Conclusion

While there are elements in all of the models above that, to varying degrees, I can identify with and draw from, none are an exact fit to my experience as mission-practitioner. The closest are those which involve the missioner physically re-locating to the urban context and also use a 'with' way of working.

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[467] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/04/why-i-rejected-mbe-bob-holman> Accessed 23/1/2013.

[468] Healthy Ardwick began in 2005 as an NHS outreach in response to Ardwick's poor health statistics (see: 1.6.3). Nick Carr-Brown re-constituted it as an independent organisation under local ownership in 2009. <http://www.healthyardwick.com>

All the models involve a specific role or task or taking action or a way of doing and, in many where re-location is a part, are linked to or necessitated by that role or task. I, on the other hand, did not move into this community to 'do' anything, with any task in mind, or in a time-frame dictated by a project. I certainly did not come here because of an official role of any sort. A further important difference with some of the models is with a role being that of a salaried professional with implied pressure to show results. As indicated above,[469] though working for a Christian urban charity, I am not paid to live here or to get involved in local projects, which gives me a degree of independence others may not have.

Common to several of these models where re-location is involved is the notion of bivocational working.[470] The additional vocation, supported by the existing job or career beyond the context re-located to, is seen in terms of a role or task in the context, carried out by the bivocational worker as a resident. This would be pastoral ministry as a Non-Stipendary Minister or youthwork as an Eden team member.[471] I would see the vocation primarily as simply living there, emphasising being rather than doing.

There is a contrast between a pro-active methodology of many of these models and my more reactive – maybe verging on reticent – approach, which I have

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[469] 1.1. An exception is 'Carisma' for which it was agreed with the Urban Presence trustees to include a part of my time commitment in my work portfolio. See 3.2.1.1.

[470] 2.11

[471] Eden uses the term "urban tentmaking" after Paul in Acts 18:3. "The vast majority of our Eden team members work at some profession or career in order to pay the bills and give surplus time to work with the team, reaching nearby young people and their families." <http://eden-network.org/join-the-movement/urban-tentmaking> Accessed 8/6/2013.

called 'intentional passivity',[472] coming out of self-identification as a resident who is a Christian. If the missioner is moving into an area with a job to do or a specific project in mind, then he or she will want, or be expected, to get on with it. This is more of the usual 'mission-for' way of working, but, in an inner-city setting, there needs to be awareness of the dangers of creating dependence and reinforcing disempowerment. Perhaps the question should be asked, and the possibility added to the list of approaches, whether a process of waiting and watching and getting to know, while taking more time, would lead to projects emerging from the life of the community that are owned by and empower local people.

Thus 'mission-with' could enhance some of the models. Where the missioner's daily life is observable, and he or she is aware of the potential value of the ordinary, this can add to the credibility of their role, task or project – 'mission-with' personal praxis earning the right for 'mission-for' or 'mission-to'.[473] Part of that awareness needs to be that the effect can also be a negative. In an 'incoming' situation, especially to an inner-city community where a history of estrangement from the church can mean an initial suspicion – if not hostility – care, caution, humility and patience are vital. This can be exacerbated in a team or community approach to Christian incoming, common to several of the models, where an incoming group, at a certain size, can initially be perceived as a threat by local people. This approach can also be open to criticism as 'colonisation'. Our moving in, by contrast, was as an individual household, and members of a local church.

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[472] 2.13.1

[473] As noted in 4.13 this is something Eden teams have been coming to appreciate, though pro-active youthwork and events still play a major part in their mission praxis and are at the root of why they move in to begin with.

This chapter has briefly surveyed other expressions of mission that contain elements of, or have similarities with, 'mission-with', comparing them to my experience. In the final chapter I will review the research, assess strengths and weaknesses of the 'mission-with' model, and consider its application, significance and implications.

Chapter Five

'Mission-With': Review and Assessment

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I review the research, examining what I believe to be the strengths and weaknesses of 'mission-with', and offer some thoughts on the application of the model. Finally, I assess its significance and implications for Christian mission, the Church and personal discipleship.

From the research, a specific and discrete model of mission – 'mission-with' – can be described. 'Mission-with' requires close connection with a community, a 'presence-among', out of which arises 'project-praxis' with and alongside others. 'Mission-with' can be effective in communicating gospel-infused values and lifestyle, through attitude, demeanour and responses, as the missioner engages in everyday activities and shared projects among, alongside, in relation to and observed by, other local residents. Given a 'wide' definition of mission this is therefore missional.[474]

'Presence-among' and 'project-praxis' are the two 'mission-with' stages, rather than elements, as one develops out of the other. Shared projects, where there is equal partnership and *shalom*-building, can happen in other ways[475] but for my definition of 'project-praxis', the ingredient of shared concern through personal experience of the issue must be present, and for this 'presence-among' is necessary.

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[474] 1.3.3

[475] Working on an agenda determined by the people's felt needs is a strategy of Community Organising.

The reflection on my experience confirms that it is possible to live and raise a family in the inner-city whilst also engaging deeply in a relational and missional sense with such a community and to become an agent of the Kingdom of God and the building of *shalom*. This path necessarily involves being present in a neighbourhood long-term, and becoming bi-cultural[476] to the point of 'going native' to some extent.

A significant part of my story and experience has been re-location and becoming a Christian incomer in a deprived inner-city community with a cross-cultural dynamic, where particular social factors have been present, such as pluralism, poverty, injustice, gang violence, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, disempowerment and greater estrangement from Church and Christian faith than in, say, suburbia. This has provided the background to the praxis reflected on in this research, resulting in the 'mission-with' model. My experience of the inner-city has been important in challenging my middle-class evangelicalism, with its methodology, cultural assumptions and clear-cut definitions, and opening me up to seek a model of mission to explain the 'with' praxis I found myself doing.[477]

Even though re-location is not essential to the model, 'mission-with' emphasises the 'where' or 'with who' of calling, reflecting the incarnational sending and identifying aspects of mission.[478] It is possible, therefore, that adoption of 'mission-with' will lead to a review of 'where' and a questioning of the cultural assumptions that lie behind the tendency for Christians to move to or stay in the

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[476] 2.13

[477] The 'theological back-fill' referred to in 1.1.

[478] 2.15.1

suburbs.[479] Anyone conducting such a review prayerfully may discover a fresh calling to those places where the Christian 'presence-among' is weak and certain skills and resources are comparatively underdeveloped and in short supply.

What has been underlined to me through the current research, and at a number of key points in the past,[480] has been that the essence of our call is to simply 'be' here. Not in some disconnected 'zen' sense, but living a life, doing the ordinary things that people do – that we would be doing wherever we lived – fully engaged with the other people around also doing these things. Being part of a community, being a resident, being a Christian who is 'present-among'. The mission is first of all in that personal praxis, not in a role, task or project. Such projects that have come about have been born directly out of that shared life and a shared desire to take action on shared concerns.

What this means is that 'mission-with' does not require a qualification, official role, job interview, training or skill – as, say, a youth worker – or an entrepreneurial flair. In a sense, this is 'mission for the rest of us', but more than that, containing basic elements of mission available for all who are trying to follow Jesus.

5.2 Strengths and Weaknesses

5.2.1 'Presence-Among'

- Our decision to live here was based on a sense of call as a missional phe-
nomenon. A strength of 'mission-with' is a restoration of location (or "where")

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[479] 2.14

[480] For instance when considering moving to a bigger house. See 2.10.

as a vital part of calling and discipleship: being in the right place to serve.[481]

Being here has been the pre-requisite and starting point for any resulting missional praxis. We are, first, residents of an inner-city community, and second, missioners in any pro-active or overt sense of the term: but always both. A strength of 'presence-among' is in recognising that everyday actions and encounters, where we interact, serve, or are served, carry potential missional significance as an outworking of God's call, transforms them into something else, touching on the mystery of God at work in us and in our neighbours, fulfilling the *missio Dei*. However, a corresponding weakness is that as a resident without a particular role or task I run the risk of getting so settled into routine life in the community – taking 'going native' too far – that personal praxis ends up losing any distinctive missional edge. This is a danger generally of long-term, low-profile praxis without a specific mission event or activity running with a timetable, goals and expectations to look to for motivation.[482]

- A strength of 'presence-among', especially in multi-cultural areas or among people more distanced from the Church is its low-profile approach – 'intentional passivity'[483] – identifying, building relationship, earning the right to share faith. Some Christians, however, may criticise this approach as not direct enough or too slow or diluted. 'Mission-with' could in theory be abused by being used as a means or short-cut to another end, such as a more direct

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[481] 2.10.2, 2.15.1

[482] A related issue can be fatigue and lack of inspiration leading to withdrawal, a danger noted in the Eden model to justify "why we need to be in teams" as "… even for our veteran team members, there's always the temptation to gradually 'pull the shutters down' over time." Wilson, <u>Concrete Faith</u>, 117.

[483] 2.13.1

or overt form of mission or evangelism – the bait on the hook. Regardless of how sincere the motives, this can be a recipe for problems and negative outcomes leading to loss of trust and integrity, particularly in a multi-ethnic area like inner-south Manchester where great sensitivity is required. However, given that the missioner will be a member of the local community, and there-fore the first recipient of any reaction, it is to be hoped that they will have the integrity and wisdom to use 'mission-with' as an end in itself, and the patience to wait. If it is creating the 'fascination' that Kreider talks about,[484] mission of a more overt kind will follow naturally rather than being forced.

- A strength of 'presence-among', as I have experienced it, is in being an individual household among other households and not part of a larger group. This Christian incoming is not going into a place in any sense that could be perceived as 'mob-handed', as a community within the community, or with any risk of colonisation. The weakness of this approach is in the risks of iso-lation and lack of accountability, which is where the support of being part of a team or sub-community can help. In our case being part of a local church and being in contact with other fellow-incomers has been important.[485]

5.2.2 'Project-Praxis'

- Working with others on issues they see as important, as equal partners, de-velops relationships, trust and confidence. Achieving some success not only improves the lot of local residents, but also builds confidence and self-esteem

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[484] 2.15.3.

[485] 4.15

further – in some individuals, dramatically.[486] In a community where such things are lacking, this is a positive result, and manifests *shalom*. A weakness in 'project-praxis' lies in the risk of getting over-involved in the issue and neglecting the *shalom* aspect or the distinctive contribution Christians can bring.[487]

- As shown in the case-studies, it is possible for a project that is not explicitly Christian to nevertheless be influenced, through the involvement of individual Christians, in the development of its ethos, values and way of working.[488] It also demonstrates that Christians can be involved in a project for its own sake and as simply part of the group without having to be in charge or controlling the project.[489] This strength is mirrored by the potential risks of not being in control. I have referred above to situations where the project going in directions that a Christian cannot support was a potential problem.[490] Is such vulnerability, however, a negative thing or a necessary dynamic of equal partnership?

- Working with others of various faiths and none on projects aiming to improve the well-being of local people, everyone's action is *shalom*-building. In the light of the *missio Dei*, such praxis is missional, and not the preserve of the Church. However, there are still aspects that are dependent on Christian faith, such as awareness of serving God's purposes, and an understanding of the nature of problems as symptomatic of the deeper issue of estrangement from

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[486] 3.3.3.1

[487] 3.2.4.1

[488] Examples of this dynamic have been described above. For instance: the ethos and aims of Carisma, 3.2.1.1; policies of Carisma, 3.2.4; choices of Friends of Swinton Grove Park, 3.3.1.1

[489] 3.2.1.1

[490] 3.2.1.1, 3.3.1.1

God, and the gospel as a resource towards finding solutions.[491] Even with this proviso, 'project-praxis' is open to being mis-understood by fellow Christians, particularly by those with a narrower definition and theology of mission.[492] This could be expressed in a prioritising of other forms of mission, or a criticism that, if everything is regarded as mission, then nothing is.[493] Where spiritual impact is the primary measure of effectiveness, those advocating a form of mission that is much harder to quantify, could find themselves, with their model, on the margins of church priorities and mission praxis respectively.[494]

5.3 Application

5.3.1 Who and Where

If calling and mission is for all Christians,[495] that does not equate to advocating 'mission-with' as a model for everyone at all times. As I have experienced it and reflected on it, in an inner-city community, 'presence-among' ideally requires a long-term commitment. However, as no two communities are the same, that may not necessarily be the case elsewhere. Additionally, a number of factors may limit the ability to be 'simply' a resident, such as having an official role (e.g. a priest or a councillor), or a job that requires a lot of travelling – which was my

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[491] 3.2.4.1

[492] Being in the outer, *missio Dei* circle, of Ferdinando's four concentric circles of mission, and therefore furthest out from the clearly defined centre and operating at the edges of what could be seen as missional, involves some risks. 1.3.2

[493] 1.3.1, 1.3.2

[494] "Sure we have precious stories of transformation in the lives of our neighbors and in our own lives. But these don't usually match up to the big expectations of 'successful mission' and don't offer us positions of power or influence, even in the church." Jennie and Justin Duckworth, Against the Tide, Towards the Kingdom, 43. This has also been my experience: 3.2.5.1

[495] 2.14.2

situation for much of the first twelve years here.[496] In another context different forms of mission may be more appropriate, though attitudes of respect and humility, the importance of relationship, and praxis as *shalom*-building could apply anywhere. Similarly, a generous definition of mission that allows for the actions of others to be counted as *shalom*-building, even if they do not acknowledge it as such, is something that has a wide application.[497]

I have concentrated in this research on geographical community and in a particular inner-city area. In other types of community, such as sparse rural, suburban or dormitory town, the nature of 'presence-among' will be very different, and here other variations such as leisure-club chaplaincy and network churches come into play.[498]

5.3.2 Relating to 'Mission-For' and 'Mission-To'

'Mission-with' is not meant to replace other forms of mission, which I have summarised as 'mission-to' and 'mission-for' and are characterised as more direct and missioner or church initiated and led.[499] 'Mission-with' can be an effective complementary mission approach for local churches to put alongside those approaches. As they tend to be more episodic and project-led, 'mission-with', as an on-going, low-level praxis in the background can be a bridge to doing 'mission-to' or 'mission-for' with integrity built on a foundation of real

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[496] 2.6

[497] 1.3.4

[498] Exploring 'mission-with' principles in another area or different contexts such as work communities or interest networks, where it could be argued a missioner is 'incarnate' through role rather than place, is another study.

[499] 1.4.1

partnership and equality of relationship with the community, built over time and stemming from the praxis of church members living locally. It is not an either/or but a both/and. While both are of course of value, 'mission-to' is church initiated, hosted and controlled, and can by definition be done only by Christians, and 'mission-for', where partnership does exist, is usually with the church exercising power. In situations where those methods would be inappropriate, 'mission-with' can act as a preparation, earning the right to share the Good News with integrity built on trusting relationship, and hopefully 'fascination'. This is not a third stage to 'mission-with', but a transition into another form of mission.[500]

This can legitimately be seen as an expression of Christian mission, as it moves people and communities closer to God's desired shalom.[501] Though that activity is, and must be, an end in itself it can also become a means toward, or earning the right, to share gospel realities more overtly.[502] Activities initiated and run by the local church – or one of its members as an individual activist – will be more likely to be trusted and participated in if they are in a context of on-going 'mission-with', where that church or individual is seen as being 'one of us'.

5.3.3 The Role of the Local Church

A limitation of 'mission-with' is that it applies more readily to individuals than in a corporate sense, though there is a case for seeing a church with a long history of service in a community, based on a high proportion of members living locally,

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[500] i.e. 'mission-for' or 'mission-to'.

[501] 1.3.4

[502] Raymond Fung's Isaiah Agenda. See 4.6.

having a corporate 'presence-among'.[503] In terms of 'project-praxis' there will be issues for a church acting as guest rather than host and in partnering on an equal basis when a project is based on its premises. However, a church can recognise 'mission-with' dynamics through releasing its members to, say, volunteer at another organisation's youthclub (instead of starting its own[504]) or serve on a tenants and residents association, seeing those roles as just as important as running a church-based activity or being on the PCC.

Even more crucially, a church can come to recognise the importance of the day-to-day witness of its members as 'presence-among' in the local area. An individual Christian living in a particular place is very likely practicing 'mission-with' to some extent – almost definitely through personal praxis and maybe also in 'project-praxis' – but perhaps without realising it. The first step is to be aware of the nature of actions such as getting ten households to sign a letter to get a streetlight fixed, or lending a neighbour a spanner (or borrowing one) as being missional just as much, if in a different way, as inviting that neighbour to the Carol Service. The church can support this praxis. For instance, could the Sunday service feature the sharing of stories and prayers coming out of people's lives, jobs, concerns for neighbours, school-friends and workmates as a

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[503] Several of the church leaders interviewed (Appendix 3) spoke of the high regard their churches were held in by the local community, pointing to evidence such as lack of vandalism. A survey of local people by the PFI company asking them to rate facilities in the neighbourhood, gave Brunswick Church a 95% favourable rating: testimony to the many years of faithful ministry and service. (Brunswick Neighbourhood Regeneration Project, prepared for Manchester City Council by BMG research, June 2008).

[504] This may cause problems for those who think a 'God-spot' is a non-negotiable.

major part of the worship and not just a few lines in the Intercessions?[505] It is significant that none of the 'mission-with' praxis described in this thesis has been initiated by, or part of the programme of, a church. This points to a whole realm of missional engagement in the community by church members, which can be supported as such and built on by that church.

5.4 Significance and Implications

'Mission-with' is a way of conceiving and thinking about mission which has a number of serious implications. Whereas much mission praxis is episodic – a project, event or campaign – 'mission with' is an 'always on' model. As such it fits into a discipleship model where following Jesus impinges on every aspect of life and not just Sundays. It constitutes the missional aspect of daily living in a particular place alongside others who can observe our attitudes and responses.

It includes the praxis of others in aspects of the *missio Dei*. This is a significant departure from traditional thinking, especially in evangelical circles, where mission is limited to 'making disciples' and exclusively the task of the Church.[506] Although the commission of the Church to make disciples still stands, mission is a much richer phenomenon, stemming from God's missionary desire to reach out to, and relate with, his creation and bring *shalom*.[507]

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[505] I remember asking in my own church some years ago why we prayed regularly for a lady who taught in a school in Chile, but never for a congregation member who taught in a difficult inner-city school a couple of miles away!

[506] 1.3.2

[507] 1.3.1; 1.3.4

Accepting this requires a new way of thinking for the Church, not just about mission, but by implication about our role in the world and our attitude to others. This should be characterised by honesty and humility as part of a more realistic view of ourselves as "beggars showing other beggars where to find bread."[508] We should not be afraid to be transparent and vulnerable as redeemed, yet still fallible, humans, which will move us away from a compulsion to attempt to hide failure and sin from society's gaze when it inevitably happens.[509] Such a positive development moves us pastorally to a more honest praxis where the constraint to learn, mature and "not grow weary of doing good"[510] is balanced against God's grace and unlimited forgiveness. This would free us to recover from tragedy and disappointment in our own time and see struggle and doubt as part of the journey of faith rather than weakness. Missionally, the "holier-than-thou" and "do-gooder" stereotypes would be challenged and people would find it much easier to identify with, and relate to, Christians as like them, but, hopefully hinting at something more: the treasure in these fragile earthen vessels.[511] The potential significance for a much-needed shift in how the Church is perceived cannot be overstated.

When a neighbour asked me how the loss of our son had affected my faith, the question arose out of genuine concern and curiosity. My answer did not mini-

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[508] From D.T. Niles' quote on evangelism. <http://quotationsbook.com/quote/12792> Accessed 18/2/2013.

[509] "We will become truly incarnational, and echo the mission of Christ, only when we have the courage to lift our eyes from the needs of our churches and congregations to serve our whole communities – giving up control and working as part of them rather than apart from them. This will be costly. It will hurt, and it will make us vulnerable – and therefore more effective." Chalke, Intelligent Church, 114.

[510] 2 Thess. 3:13 (NASB).

[511] After 2 Cor. 4:7. This of course will be greatly facilitated by our living next door and sharing life's experiences.

mise the doubts and struggles, but I was able to speak of the positives. For me, this is an illustration of 'mission-with'. On the basis of a relationship between our families over many years, we were able to share with honesty and depth (a year later it was our turn to comfort her when her mother died). In contrast, someone cold-calling at her door with a leaflet from the church that meets in the community centre a couple of streets away, none of whom live in the area, is 'mission-to'. While it was undoubtedly a sincere outreach, the lack of relationship behind it begs the question 'who reaches her more deeply?'

At a personal level, 'mission-with' praxis causes a re-evaluation of our lifestyle as Christians who are 'present-among'. This will mean abandoning the praxis of mission solely as bursts of activity carried out from a safe and impersonal distance. Instead we will be open to scrutiny in seeking to bring missional intentionality to everyday life. While this does not mean that the Christian's everyday life did not have missional implications before, 'mission-with' means recognising that one's actions – all of them, all of the time – have missional significance. Will this result in "onlookers inspecting our lifestyle and wagging their heads as they find it no different than their own,"[512] or will it be a generator of 'fascination'? It may well lead to an honest re-appraisal as we begin to explore the implications, as well as identify and confront values that have led us to, in Sine's words, "work the Jesus stuff in round the sides" of our chosen lifestyles.[513]

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[512] Morisy, Journeying Out, 96.

[513] Tom Sine, "Cultural Values." Interview at Greenbelt Festival, August 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX3HWCpt51Q> Accessed 2/9/2010.

If, as Gooder says, the priority should be our calling and service of God, then other considerations, such as career, should be secondary.[514] In a conversation with someone who was applying for teaching jobs I asked if he felt called to stay in the area and at his church. He replied: "Yes, but being realistic, in today's climate, if I get a job offer in another city, I would have to take it." God may well lead people in this way, but the implication was that a job offer took precedence, while considering a call of God as a factor in where he lived was not "realistic." Of course, considering a call of God to teaching has to be weighed against this, but did thinking about it in any way other than economic even occur to him? Following Jesus is about taking a radically different approach to the "all these things" referred to in Matthew 6:33. Unrealistic? Idealistic? Foolish, especially "in today's climate"? It would not be the first time the message of the cross – the biggest reversal of all – had been called "foolish."[515] I know of Christian incomers with professional qualifications who have taken shop jobs and turned down promotions or job offers that entailed moving in order to stay *where* they felt called by God to be.

The issue is whether following Jesus actually works in real life. It is either impractical, ridiculous, unrealistic idiocy – and, by implication this teacher and his followers are idealists who are out of touch with the real world – or it contains something of the mystery and wisdom of God: gaining by losing, the message of the cross. There is only one way to find out if it is true and that involves faith, risk, possibly looking foolish, and reaching beyond our own resources. Vincent

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[514] 2.14.2

[515] 1 Cor. 1:23. Paul goes on in several Jesus-like reversals to contrast the foolishness and wisdom of God with that of the world, and how "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise." 1:27 (NIV).

calls losing one's life in order to gain it "the willingness to take the chance that the method of Jesus would actually work."[516]

This was what we began to do over thirty years ago, trying to respond to an imbalance of where Christians lived in Manchester, and to be missioners *with* local people. We have made mistakes and have tried to learn from them, made more mistakes and learnt again, tried to serve and be served, and had our share of joys and sorrows, successes and disappointments. But we do not regret coming here.

I have moved from a suspicion to the conviction that there is a different way to live, serve and witness as a Christian disciple. For over thirty-three years I have been living out an experiment in establishing what that looks like. It has led to this model of mission praxis called 'mission-with', arising out of our long-term 'presence-among' a community in a deprived area. Though this is still, like us, a work in progress, it has proved effective in building *shalom* with others in this context. Whether 'mission-with' is a model for the Church to place alongside others to widen and deepen its mission praxis will be up to others to judge.

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[516] Vincent, "Losing life, gaining life," 75.

Appendices

Appendix 1 DEPRIVATION IN INNER-CITY MANCHESTER

a. The Inner-City

Manchester's inner-city developed in early Victorian times when the city was at the height of its powers as 'Cottonopolis', the textile capital of the world, and the epicentre of England's Industrial Revolution. Rapid growth of the factories and mills drew in large numbers of people in search of work, initially from the surrounding rural areas, then from right across the country. In the 1840's many Irish came fleeing the Potato Famine, the first of a number of waves of immigration coming right up to modern times. It was a time of great prosperity and the making of fortunes for some, but concurrently, as is so often the case, of great poverty and hardship for others. "Economic vitality, however, came at a price: a widening gulf between rich and poor and ever more squalid living conditions amidst the accumulation of great wealth."[1] Fredrich Engels famously reported on the cramped and unsanitary living conditions in the "girdle ... around the commercial district."[2]

As industrial activity declined, and the city with it, through the first half of the twentieth century and war years to a low in the 1970s and through a partial recovery since, that geographical ring of comparative poverty has persisted,

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[1] Andy Davies, <u>The Gangs of Manchester</u> (Preston: Milo, 2008), 23.

[2] Fredrich Engels, <u>Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844</u> (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1892), 46. "And such a district exists in the heart of the second city of England, the first manufacturing city of the world. If any one wishes to see in how little space a human being can move, how little air - and such air! - he can breathe, how little of civilisation he may share and yet live, it is only necessary to travel hither." 53.

stubbornly holding for the most part to its Victorian location. The historical link between the city-centre commercial core and surrounding inner-city as a source for jobs, particularly unskilled and casual labour, meant that inner-city poverty was worsened by de-industrialisation and the virtual demise of manufacturing. The recent rise and re-invention of the city-centre commercial core has brought with it a resurgence of employment opportunities in the new influx of service, financial, information and leisure-based companies which are the base of the new economy.[3] However,

> in Manchester the consensus is that those who live in stigmatised inner-city neighbourhoods do not have access to this work (post-code discrimination) and those who are categorised as black, irrespective of skill or qualifications, find barriers.[4]

b. Deprivation

Manchester historian Alan Kidd describes this inner-city ring as a "poverty belt" and points out that deprivation "is more widespread than in any other UK city and many neighbourhoods display levels of social and economic deprivation substantially above the national averages."[5]

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[3] "... in place of manufacturing activities come service activities, servicing people and companies takes the place of the production of products, information and cultural capital replaces physical capital." Phil Mole, "Fordism, post-Fordism and the contemporary city," in Justin O'Connor and Derek Wynne eds., From the Margins to the Centre: Cultural Production and Consumption in the Post-Industrial City (Aldershot: Arena, 1996), 18.

[4] Rosemary Mellor, Changing Manchester (University of Manchester Department of Sociology Occasional Paper no.44, 1995), 12. Post-code discrimination is an often referenced but still persistent feature of life particularly, due to its reputation, in Moss Side.

[5] Alan Kidd, Manchester (4th edn., Lancaster: Carnegie, 2006), 247.

Despite a slight improvement from 2007, the 2010 IMD[6] rank Manchester as the 4th worst district out of 326 in England. 118 of Manchester's 259 LSOAs[7] are in the bottom 10% nationally, 66 are in the bottom 5%, and 19 are in the bottom 1%[8] (see map, Manchester IMD 2010).

To take one of the indices of deprivation as an example, on all measures of health, wards in the inner-city areas are consistently below the national figures and markedly worse than those in the least deprived suburban and city-centre areas.[9] Average life expectancy in Manchester is 76.6 years, four years less than the England average of 80.9.[10] Within Manchester:

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[6] Indices of Multiple Deprivation. IMD 2010 is based on seven domains of deprivation relating to: Income, Employment, Health, Education, skills and training, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment and Crime. David McLennan, Helen Barnes, Michael Noble, Joanna Davies, Elisabeth Garratt, Chris Dibben, The English Indices of Deprivation 2010 (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011), 117. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/ statistics/indices2010> Accessed 30/3/2012.

[7] Lower Layer Super Output Areas. These were introduced in 2004 as a smaller measuring unit (minimum population 1000, maximum 3000) to focus in more closely and also to improve accuracy of comparison between areas through problems with inconsistency of population size in electoral wards (from less than 100 to over 30,000), and across time with changing ward boundaries. For the 2011 Census there were 32,844 LSOAs in England and 6,791 MSOAs (Middle Layer: 5000 to 15000 population units). Office for National Statistics, Super Output Areas (SOAs), 2011. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/census/super-output-areas--soas-/index.html> Accessed 5/12/2012.

[8] McLennan et. al., The English Indices of Deprivation 2010, 86-88.

[9] For example: Manchester's highest AAACM (All Age All Cause Mortality) rate is in Harpurhey in the inner-north (1,102.6 per 100,000), almost twice the England average. The premature mortality rate from circulatory diseases in Hulme in the inner-south is over six times that of the City Centre. The Manchester Partnership, Manchester State of the Wards Report 2010/2011 (Manchester: Manchester City Council, July 2011), 55, 56.

[10] The Manchester Partnership, State of the City Report 2010/2011 (Manchester: Manchester City Council, July 2012), 73. Men 74.1, women 79.1. This is an increase of

The latest figures for 2005–09 show that there is a difference in life expectancy of 10.1 years for men and 6.4 years for women between the most and least deprived areas within the city. Recent trends suggest that there has been an overall widening of the life expectancy gap within Manchester for both men and women over the period 2001–05 to 2005–09.[11]

On child poverty (measured as families with incomes under 60% of median income) the Council State of the City 2011/2012 report notes that, at over 40%, this is more than twice the national average.[12] Of the five wards where the rate is highest, at over 50%, three – Moss Side, Hulme and Ardwick – are in the inner-south.

Despite many advances made by the city in recent years as an often imaginative Council has, with some success, sought to re-brand Manchester as a European city,[13] the persistence of deprivation has remained an embarrassment.

... we've achieved one of our major ambitions which is to be an international city ... it is probably the most successful city outside London, and we're now rivalling, truly, a number of European cities and American cities. But there is a downside to that which is that there are still not enough people from the city benefitting from the economic success.[14]

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4 and 2.2 years for men and women since 1995-7, but there has also been a national improvement, and in that time the gap for men has remained the same and has increased for women.

[11] Manchester Partnership, State of the Wards Report 2010/2011, 54.

[12] Manchester Partnership, State of the City Report 2011/2012, 54. Only Tower Hamlets and Islington in London have higher rates. Reported in the Manchester Evening News, 25th September 2012. <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1588554_special-report-scandal-of-hungry-children-in-poverty-hit-manchester> Accessed 12/12/2012.

[13] "... Manchester's future success rests on how it competes in particular with its peer cities within Europe (including Barcelona, Milan, Frankfurt and Lyon)." Manchester City Council, City Pride – a focus for the future (Manchester: Manchester City Council, Sept 1994), 8.

[14] Steve Mycio, Deputy Chief Executive, Manchester City Council. Interviewed by myself in 2006 for an 'Urban Spirituality' course run by Urban Presence.

Robson notes: "… for all such successes ... the economic and social challenges of reinventing the city have as yet been only lightly scratched"[15]

> … for the city the conundrum remains whether it is possible to privilege the economically driven entrepreneurial agenda and yet address the growing problems of social exclusion that are linked to joblessness, poverty, poor health, low educational achievement and the social malaise associated with deprivation.[16]

At the launch of a Centre for Social Justice Report[17] in November 2007, Iain Duncan-Smith commented: "On every measure of social breakdown, Manchester is well above the national average and scores significantly worse than many comparable big cities in England."[18] While written by a Conservative-based think-tank during a Labour government with suspicions of some sensationalising of the issues, the Report is substantially in agreement with just about every other piece of research,[19] and a similar conclusion is reached by Manchester

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[15] Brian Robson, "Mancunian Ways: The Politics of Regeneration," in City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester, Jamie Peck and Kevin Ward eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 48. As a mitigating factor Robson goes on to point out that in looking at the statistics account should be taken of the drawing of city boundaries which are less generous than for the centres of other concentrated urban areas. For instance, while Liverpool and Manchester are seen as similarly deprived, the statistics for Greater Manchester as a whole are better than those of Merseyside and compare favourably with the conurbations around Leeds and Birmingham. "Much of the city's prosperity continues to find its home outside its tight administrative boundaries – not least in Stockport, Cheshire and the Peak District – and this means that the prosperity of its economic functional area is less well reflected in the statistics for Manchester than is true of other core districts of the English conurbations." Even given that proviso, the statistics are not going to feature in any Manchester City Council glossy brochure.

[16] Robson, "Mancunian Ways," 49.

[17] Breakthrough Manchester: Ending the costs of social breakdown (London: Centre for Social Justice, 2007).

[18] <http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/default.asp?pageRef=202> Accessed 5/11/2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7084044.stm> Accessed 5/11/2008.

[19] Such as: Daniel Dorling, Jan Rigby, Ben Wheeler, Dimitris Ballas, Bethan Thomas, Eldin Fahmy, David Gordon, and Ruth Lupton. Poverty, Wealth and Place in Britain,

City Council in 2012, saying Manchester's position "remains consistently high across all measures of deprivation."[20]

Exemplified in Manchester, inequality in Britain is recognised in the opening words of a 2010 government report:

> Britain is an unequal country, more so than many other industrial countries and more so than a generation ago. This is manifest in many ways – most obviously in the gap between those who are well off and those who are less well off.[21]

Of course conditions of a level such as described by Engels are long gone – if still in living memory for some[22] – and standards have risen, but the discrepancies between different parts of Manchester continue. Writing in 2003 Hylton notes:

> The correlation between the worst housing, the greatest poverty and the shortest life expectancy is painfully evident from the statistics. The thresholds may have been raised, but the pattern is one that would have been familiar to James May or Frederich Engels, almost two centuries ago.[23]

1968 to 2005. (The Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007); Ending Child Poverty – Everybody's Business (London: HM Treasury, March 2008). With a somewhat different approach to Government policies.

[20] Manchester Partnership, State of the City Report 2011/2012, 26.

[21] The National Equality Panel, John Hills (Chair), An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel (London: Government Equalities Office, 2010, 1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/27_01_10_inequalityfull..pdf> Accessed 21/1/2013. "A large number of studies now document, in considerable quantitative detail, the scale of the 'social revolution' that has taken place in Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s, which has put into fast reverse the slow movement which had been taking place through the earlier post-war period towards a more equal distribution of wealth in Britain." I. Taylor, K. Evans and P. Fraser, A Tale of Two Cities – A Study of Manchester and Sheffield (London: Routledge, 1996), 163.

[22] In 1963 the Manchester Evening News reported on a group of houses with rooms with six feet of headroom, flagged floors, no baths or hot water, dangerous staircases and "lavatories in the middle of the street" which were not due for demolition for another six years. Manchester Evening News, March 7, 1963.

[23] Stuart Hylton, A History of Manchester (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003), 232.

The comparative affluence of the next ring outwards of nearby suburban areas, particularly to the south, has not gone unnoticed in the inner areas.

A view often heard from Inner City community leaders is that the more prosperous parts in Britain owe a great deal to these areas where wealth was created in years gone by and then moved to the south.[24]

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[24] Memorandum submitted by the Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Rev'd Stanley Booth-Clibborn, on October 14, 1980 to the Home Affairs Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration. Extracted from Fifth Report of the Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons entitled Racial Disadvantage, published by HMSO (HC - 424), July 1981.

Appendix 2 AN OBJECT LESSON WITH HINDSIGHT IN ENGAGEMENT VERSUS SEPARATION.
Unpublished Article, 2007 (edited)

"Let's go and eat somewhere else – the Christians are in this week." This was a comment I overheard on the steps of the Student Union building during the Christian Union's tri-annual spring-term mission. I should first of all state that this was Northern Ireland in the 70s, and a particular brand of conservative evangelicalism was dominant in the CU at that time, so this is probably an extreme case. However, it does illustrate the importance of engagement to mission.

During the rest of the year members of the Christian Union would go into the Student Union building one evening a week when they had hired a room for the regular meeting. Some would go into the Refectory for lunch and sit together. Their table was easy to spot – it was the one where the occupants would pause briefly to rub their eyebrows just before starting to eat. Few if any went up a floor to eat in the Snack Bar, though there was a 'Snack Bar Witness Team' – a few brave souls who, after an earnest prayer, would venture in to accost students trying to eat a burger in peace, with opening lines such as (and I can remember it precisely from my one week as a member): "Do you know what sin is?" None went to the two Licenced Bars. During mission week however, Christians were all over the Student Union like a rash – giving out leaflets, putting up posters, hiring rooms for daily lunchtime and evening meetings, trying to persuade people to go in. Few did, and many, such as the two who I overheard, just gave the Union a wide berth all week.

This mission took place during my first year as an undergraduate. By the time it came round I had already sampled the Christian Union and been put off by its lack of involvement with student life; it seemed to be a little sub-culture of it own … except when it went into 'mission-mode'.

Not through any great spiritual revelation, but instead the need for supplementing our income, in our second year a friend and I took part-time jobs in the Student Union. We ran the Late Night Catering stand. This sold snacks and soft drinks to students in the evening through to the early hours when the two bars emptied. Through this work we got to know all of the Union staff, such as the porters, refectory and shop workers, and the student officers, plus of course our 'regulars'. While we didn't hide the fact that we were Christians we also didn't broadcast it blatantly – we just got on with our work and kept it friendly to all and good-natured with the tipsy.

One day we were summoned by the Manager of the Union – a permanent non-student post – who wanted to know why for the first time in his experience the Late Night Catering was operating at a profit! Quite simply it was because we were running it honestly. We told him we were Christians so 'losing' a few pounds of the takings or 'borrowing' a tray of Cokes for a party were not the sort of thing we did. Word spread. During our time working in the Union we had prayer requests, such as from a porter whose wife was ill, and a number of long conversations with people who were relaxed and on their own territory. Plus a bit of banter from the drunks along the lines of "if you're a Christian you should *give* me a burger!" Looking back, it was a formative experience.

During my fourth and final year, Christian Union mission time came round again. Independently of the CU, I was able to use my contacts in the Student Union to stage two lunchtime concerts, actually *in* the Refectory and Snack Bar. No problems trying to invite people in – they were there already! Our home-grown band went down well, though a few objected, and that started a lively debate which featured on the front page of the Student Newspaper. I was later told this was the first time the CU mission had ever had an editorial mention in the newspaper.

As an unintended by-product of needing a job, this was an early lesson for me about the potential difference in effectiveness between a hit and run mission approach and a positive witness built up in a natural and relational way through a contrast in attitude and practice in a context of working alongside others.

Appendix 3 SURVEY OF LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

a. Introduction

In 2010 I conducted interviews with leaders representing twenty-four local churches in the inner-south area. My aim was to find out more about the reasons behind their various degrees of involvement with PeaceWeek as an indicator of their wider engagement with the local community. How 'local', in the sense of attenders and members being drawn directly from the local community, were these churches and what effect did this have on their engagement? Were there other factors such as theology or busyness? Was the movement of Christians away from the inner-city having an effect?

Despite that movement, many local churches still meet in inner-south Manchester. At the very least, each inner-city location is geographically within both an Anglican and a Roman Catholic parish, and so, in theory – even if in practice not much used – there is a place to go for rites and services. Other churches also function across the area, and a list of over one hundred and twenty local faith-groups, community groups and organisations that Carisma used to issue invitations each year to get involved with PeaceWeek, includes more than fifty separate Christian congregations. Interview requests were sent to twenty-nine leaders representing thirty-two churches. These had either taken part in PeaceWeek in the past, or it was felt had or should have a significant role in the local community, or were churches where I either already knew the leader or

minister or had some relationship or history with the church.[25] Twenty-one leaders responded positively – with some leading more than one congregation, to give a total of twenty-four churches. Thirteen of these have had a degree of active involvement in PeaceWeek – over half the sample, but around a quarter of all the churches invited to take part each year.

b. The Need for Data

Having observed a wide variation of involvement with PeaceWeek on the part of local churches, and formed some theories based on my knowledge of many of the churches, I was curious to find out more about the reasons behind these responses to this particular community initiative. Also, in a more general sense, I wondered how were they responding in other ways to the gang violence issue which was troubling the community and had generated the 'Gunchester' label, as well as reinforcing the 'Moss Side Myth' and negative stereotyping of local young people?[26]

A phenomenon that can be observed in Carisma and Peaceweek is that of a significant number of local people showing initiative and taking action. In a context where people tend to have low levels of confidence and often show symptoms of the passivity bred by 'dependency culture', this, in my experience, is

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[25] I was helped in the selection process by a small group consisting of Dr Marijke Hoek (Christian incomer, Wythenshawe), Derek Purnell (Urban Presence), Claire Trivino (née Barlow, former Carisma support worker).

[26] See also: Carisma: The First Ten Years. <http://www.carisma.me.uk/Carisma10.pdf>

unusual,[27] and surely something positive and life-bringing to be welcomed and encouraged.

To put it another way, given that motivating local people to take collective positive action to improve their situation is a major measure of success in Community Organising, I was – perhaps naively – expecting the churches to be eager to support a clear expression of that very thing. Linthicum states that:

> Participation in community organisation provides the church with the most biblically directed and most effective means for bringing about the transformation of a community – through the assumption of responsibility by the community's residents to corporately solve their own problems.[28]

As one church leader reflected back to me during his interview: "I know certainly in some of your earlier emails I used to hear probably frustration from yourself in terms of, 'My goodness, the community are engaging, why isn't the church doing anything?'!"[29]

The denominational breakdown of the twenty-four churches, numbered from 1 to 24 is as follows.

- African Pentecostal: 2 (1, 6)
- Assemblies of God: 1 (7)
- Baptist: 1 (24)
- Church of England: 7 (5, 10, 14, 15, 20, 21, 23)

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[27] Also unusual was the fact that the project developed here was to last for a good length of time; short-lived and unstable tenants' groups are almost the only examples of local people formally working together.

[28] Robert Linthicum, Empowering the Poor (Monrovia: Marc, 1991), 109.

[29] A perceptive comment. However, being aware of my desire for local church involvement, I was careful during the interviews to not express my own views.

- Church of the Nazarene: 1 (19)
- Methodist: 3 (11, 16, 17)
- Multi-faith chaplaincy: 1 (18)
- Non-denominational/independent: 3 (2, 4, 8)
- Roman Catholic: 1 (22)
- URC: 2 (12, 13)
- West Indian Pentecostal: 2 (3, 9)

Total: 24.

The interviews took place between April and November 2010.

c. Methodology

Walliman defines three basic types of interview: structured, which uses closed and precise questions similar to a written questionnaire, open, or non-structured "if you need to explore a situation and wish to get information which you cannot predict"[30] and semi-structured which "falls between the two, achieving defined answers to defined questions, while leaving time for further development of those answers, and including more open-ended questions."[31]

In trying to find a method which would suit not only a wide range of church backgrounds, but also my relationships with the interviewees, ranging from having met once or twice, to working with on a number of occasions, to long working associations and even friendship, semi-structured seemed to be the best option. It would give the structure of a more formal interview, but be flexible en-

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[30] Nicholas Walliman, Your Research Project (London: Sage, 2001), 238.
[31] Walliman, Your Research Project, 239-240.

ough to allow what would invariably be a more informal session with those I had a closer relationship with. It also allows scope for asking follow-up questions and getting further into views expressed which the respondent might feel to be important and relevant. It is a better vehicle for qualitative rather than quantitative responses.

Kvale describes the semi-structured interview's focus:

> The interview is focused on particular themes; it is neither strictly structured with standard questions, nor entirely 'non-directive'. Through open questions the interview focuses on the topic of research. It is then up to the subjects to bring forth the dimensions they find important by the theme of the inquiry. The interviewer leads the subject toward certain themes, but not to specific opinions about these themes.[32]

I undertook the research as I was disappointed with the overall level of response to PeaceWeek from the churches and I wanted to find out why this was the case. It is fair to say that I held assumptions that PeaceWeek was a good thing and was the sort of community activity churches should be involved in, and as such should be a priority. I was aware that being asked about awareness of and attitudes towards PeaceWeek could increase the levels of awareness and affect those attitudes. With that as a given, my hope was that these changes would be in a positive direction.

This is neither an exhaustive nor precise survey: the wide variation of types, size and make-up of church and churchmanship together with the flexible na-

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[32] Steinar Kvale, Doing Interviews (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 12.

ture of the semi-structured interview technique meant that the lengths of answer – to the same questions – varied considerably. Some of the most interesting insights came about when the conversation deviated from the original topic into relevant but sometimes lengthy detours, or when a more free-ranging conversation developed, sometimes after the questions had been asked and answered.

This sometimes caused a time problem, leading to some questions, especially towards the end of the list, not being asked. On reflection I should have been better at bringing the respondent back to the next question, and more aware of time constraints. There were also a few occasions where I got so caught up in the answers being given and asking follow-up questions that I lost my place in the script and a listed question was omitted and only spotted when reviewing the recording. Where a leader was answering for two churches there were a few times where I forgot to get them to go back and answer specifically for the second church.

Given these variables and errors, I still feel that the method was effective in gathering relevant data and broad comparisons can be made on a number of pertinent subjects.

d. Reponses, Correlations and Reflections

As introduction, and to settle the interviewee, questions one to eight established the church's name, denominational affiliation, how long it had been meeting in the area, its size (members and attenders), any trends in terms of growth or decline, and a rough age breakdown.

With the exception of the two recently arrived churches (1, 6, 2007 and 2009) all of the churches have been meeting in the area for over twenty-five years – in most cases much longer.

Church sizes varied from memberships of over five hundred to nine and main Sunday service attendances from up to nine hundred (over two services) to fifteen to twenty. Only one church leader reported a decline in members and attenders; the rest were a mixture of "steady" or varying degrees of growth.

The questions then moved onto the crucial areas of community engagement and mission.[33]

For the purposes of making comparisons when analysing the survey results, I have put the twenty-four churches into broad theological categories. These are based on their self-description in the interviews, on their publicity, and on my observations and knowledge of many of them,[34] and are as follows:

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[33] Tables recording the answers given by each church leader to questions nine to twenty-five can be found in Appendix 4.

[34] Some examples: "We have a strong emphasis on sound Bible teaching and outreach activities." A 'conservative' church website (4). These churches' websites are far more likely to have statements of faith.

"The tradition in this church is … probably more liberal-minded compared with many churches. In other words, we're pretty laid back and pretty inclusive. We would not see ourselves predominantly as almost flashing Jesus in the community and getting converts." 'Liberal' church interview (16).

"…a community of people who share a common hope – that we will follow Jesus and live our everyday, ordinary lives in the light of the resurrection, here and now. We are hopeful for the present and future transformation of our lives and the communities we live in. No matter who you are or where you're from, no matter where you've been, you

- 'Conservative': (or evangelical) characterised by an emphasis on spiritual welfare and sharing the Gospel verbally: 9 (1 to 9)

- 'Liberal': with an emphasis on social action and physical and mental welfare: 7 (10 to 16)

- 'Other': the remaining 8 (17 to 24) did not fit neatly into either of the above, containing elements of both. Their approach could be said to be 'holistic', ministry to the whole person – and in some cases this was specifically mentioned.

Such categorising is a rough way of grouping the churches and, as with any classification of a number of groups of people, some fit better than others. However, I believe it will be helpful in tracing and showing correlations in responses between, for instance, degrees of community engagement and theological and missiological positions. Additionally, as my own background is evangelical, I wanted to identify how churches from that tradition fare in comparison to others when it comes to engagement with urban communities.

d.1 Involvement in PeaceWeek

On involvement with PeaceWeek over its ten years, of the twenty-four churches surveyed, thirteen have given active support, either consistently – involved most years – (15, 19, 23) or occasionally – one to three years – (7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 22, 24). Seven of the remaining eleven have had no involvement (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 16, 17), leaving four who have given a degree of passive support – such as mentioning events in notices (3, 8, 9, 21).

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are welcome to discover with us how to follow Jesus as part of our community." A 'holistic' church website (19).

Five of the seven churches that have not got involved are 'conservative' (1, 2, 4, 5, 6). Other 'conservative' churches make up three (3, 8, 9) of the four who gave passive support. Reasons cited for non-involvement include prioritisation and busyness:

> …it was just down to prioritising to be honest …we didn't feel as a church that we could give the time to it. (4)

> ..in all the priorities, in all the burdens and the things that you feel you have to give your focus to it hasn't yet made it to that place that we've said, 'This is something that we feel corporately we've all got to focus in on.' … I don't think there's any theological reason not to support peace. (2)

> …there's a lot going on, and you sort of think, 'Yes, that's a really good thing', but you haven't just kind of got there yet. (5)

This means twelve of the thirteen churches who have given active support are from the 'liberal' (10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) or 'other' (18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24) categories.[35]

The likelihood of PeaceWeek involvement also correlates with a higher proportion of local people in the congregation. Of the thirteen churches with consistent or occasional active involvement, nine (10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 23, 24) regard themselves as local, and eight (10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 24) have at least half of their congregations drawn from the local area.

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[35] These numbers reflect the situation at the time of the interviews in 2010. They can be verified by observation, responses to the annual invitation letter to faith-groups and checking PeaceWeek programmes, In the two PeaceWeeks since the interviews, and probably influenced by their taking place, one previously uninvolved church (not part of the sample) has joined in and two (11, 24) that had taken part once or twice in the early years have got involved again.

Of the churches that have been actively involved in PeaceWeek, four (15, 20, 21, 24) spoke of benefits to church life or their standing in the community.

> … anything that draws people together around a common cause tends to be really healthy. So, I would say probably we have [benefitted], in ways that are maybe not very tangible, but again I think, in terms of our commitment to the community, to be seen as a place where we proclaim peace is quite significant. (24)

> .. one of the nice things about the way we do it, with the sort of music, and the openness, and people drift in … and they, people are saying, 'Can we do it for other things now?' (15)

> … they like to feel that there's something they can be involved with that's actually going to make a difference, do you know what I mean, because there were so many years where it felt like things were, you know, careering out of control, really, and there are so many people whose lives have been affected by this, you know, very directly, that I think it not only gives a good message to the wider community of Manchester, but it also gives people a focus for their own need to be doing something. (20/21)

d.1.2 Proportion of Local People. Matching the three church categories to proportions of local people shows the 'conservative' churches tend to be those with the lowest numbers of local members and with more travelling in. Four of the five with no or very few local members are 'conservative' (1, 2, 6, 7) as are five of the eight who see themselves as area or city-wide rather than local (1, 2, 3, 5, 7). Six of the sixteen who see themselves as local are 'liberal' (10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16) and six 'other' (17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24).

In six churches (8, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24), there was a clear sense of identification with the community shown through many years of service and, apart from 23, a high percentage of members living locally, creating what could even be considered as a form of corporate 'presence among' in the community.

> I would say they have a good relationship [with the community]. I think partly because the people who are members of the churches live in the community! … people are very active in the local community in all kinds of different ways, you know, local councillors and members of community groups and, you know, residents and all the rest of it, they're very involved. (20/21)

> … over the years we've invested heavily in just being present in the week, and I think there's some really solid healthy relationships. (24)

> … we have the favour of the local community and that again is evidenced by very little vandalism, theft, building is respected. Probably as a result of the youth work from early days in people's psyche. A lot of people have a real sense, this is their church. (23)

d.1.3 Geography of Mission. On the question of the geographical area regarded as the area of mission, seven of the 'other' group (17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) and all seven of the 'liberal' group (10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16,) made up fourteen of the eighteen who answered "local." Four of the five who saw their patch as Manchester or Greater Manchester, or the parts of it that they drew people from, with no particular emphasis on the local area where they met are 'conservative' (2, 3, 6, 9). The fifth was the chaplaincy, and so a non-typical case.

d.1.4 Response to Gun Crime. With regard to the response to the gun crime issue, independent of PeaceWeek, there was again shown to be a correlation between the proportion of local people and local focus. All ten who have responded in some way regard themselves as local (8, 9, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24); and seven of them are in the higher two groups of numbers of local people (8, 9, 13, 19, 20, 21, 24). This means that the fourteen who did not respond includes five of the six who cover a larger area or are city-wide (1, 2, 3, 6, 18) and six who have a minority of local people (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 12).

d.1.5 Conclusion. The data would appear to indicate that higher levels of local presence and local focus correspond to more active responses to local issues and positive community engagement. This suggests that having at least a core of local residents involved in activities is an important contributory factor. While not a surprising finding, it raises questions about the apparent lack of concern expressed about local people moving away that will be noted below, given that this will have a weakening effect on community engagement. There also seems to be a correlation between local presence, involvement with local issues and theology in the 'liberal' or 'other'/'holistic' spectrum. This is a broad classification so there are exceptions in either direction, but on the whole the 'conservative' churches seem to have less local presence and therefore lower levels of community engagement, certainly in terms of social issues. Again this is not a surprising finding, that an emphasis on social welfare over against spiritual welfare will produce this result. Taking a conservative 'mission-to' emphasis and the nature of contact and relationship with local people that may result, together with a lower proportion of local members, it is worth considering if one may be a cause of the other.

My conviction that a community-initiated activity such as PeaceWeek is the sort of thing a church should be involved with remains, but this piece of research gave me a greater appreciation of the pressures and various agendas church leaders face.

d.2 Partnership Working

The differences between the three categories of churches are also evidenced in partnership work with other agencies on social provision in that all five of the churches who do not partner with any other agency are from the 'conservative' group (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). This speaks of the "spiritual" being given priority over the "social" (although social action does appear somewhere in all the churches' activities) and a preference to own and run their own programmes. Maybe this avoids possible problems of compromise, seemingly not as much of an issue with the 'liberal' churches:

> … we better serve the community through partnership with different agencies. Now I guess we're quite easy to work with because we don't do the God thing with a big flag. (14)

There seemed to be some interest from the 'conservative' churches in doing more social action and developing partnership links:

> …our longing is to do more, to do something that might connect in with something that the council might be looking for. (5)

Among the 'liberal' churches the priority could be said to be "social" over "spiritual"

> Being a resource to try and meet the needs – some of the needs, you can never meet them all – of people in the community. (10)

But there was evidence of a desire to be more overt about the faith. One leader spoke of:

> …our failure to say that this gentleness, this generosity, this welcome is … because God treats us the same. We haven't been able to communicate that in a way that enables people to say to people, well, come to church on Sunday. (14).

Could it be that those who would claim to have the clearest overt expression of the Christian message and those with the clearest expression of practical Christian care – resulting in better community engagement – could each learn something from the other?[36]

Unfortunately, however, it appears that the occurrences of practical partnering with other local churches are few, and where it does exist it is between churches of like theological mind or within a denomination. The churches gave far more examples of partnership working with other agencies than with each other. The only clear reasons for this that emerged were caution about doctrinal compromise expressed by several of the more conservative churches (so making working with other agencies 'safer'), and, in several comments about a failed Churches Together group, that there seemed to be no particular purpose in meeting. A relationship with an agency on the other hand will be to do with a specific project or piece of work with clear roles in the partnership established.

Looking at the details and levels of partnership with other organisations, where it does occur, it comes from a church taking the initiative and being the leading

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[36] "The current divisions between 'evangelical' and 'liberal' mean that there is a danger of two separate and distinct gospel messages being proclaimed. One is a message primarily of personal salvation and the other a message focussed on a social salvation. Our division along these lines tragically undermines the Church's witness because both sides are undernourished by the division. The truth is that neither narrow evangelicalism or woolly liberalism are good news for the city." Jon Kurht, "What Does Salvation Mean in the Urban Context?" in Andrew Davey ed., Crossover City (London: Mowbray, 2010), 75. While I agree with the main point, it needs to be noted that few churches in my survey fitted the "narrow" or "woolly" labels neatly and there was openness, from both sides, to grow and develop. Presumptive stereotyping is also not good news for the city, as it may reinforce divisions that, with some effort, could be overcome.

partner, through, for instance, hosting the activity in its building. This is a perfectly valid way of working, but is characteristic of 'mission-for' rather than 'mission-with'. It could be that, due to considerations of responsible use of plant and resources, a form of partnering that involves equality or even being a minor partner, or joining in another's initiative, is less likely for a church as an organisation. There were, however, several instances of church leaders being members of groups such as school governing bodies. This is could be seen as a 'mission-with' type of equal partnership on an individual basis.

d.3 Movers and Incomers

With regard to the Christian presence in the local area, not including the chaplaincy and the two churches who had recently moved into the area, the majority of the churches had seen people move away from the local area, with seventeen having a number of ex-locals among those who travelled in. Though some instances may be for other reasons, there was clear evidence of 'Redemption and Lift'. No comments were made that suggested any questioning of this phenomenon:

> … people are moving up the social ladder, buying houses. (9)

> … pretty much most people have started here, then they've moved out. They feel part of this church and so they stay. (5)

> … more and more we're becoming a church where people sort of travel to. Why they do that is probably, well is a big question, maybe it's because they've had a connection here in the past and have moved away, or they've had some other family or other connection with the church … (15)

> ... people with a bit of oomph raise their head above the parapet and quite quickly move and move on. … those with get up and go get up and do just that. (23)

This last answer went on to indicate that economic reasons should be added to the "God-given ones" as an incentive for staying. Was this a piece of realism or an attempt to accommodate both "God and mammon"?[37]

> if we can create and enable [this area] to be a place where people actually want to stay and put down roots, for economic reasons, not just for God-given ones … you know, this is a place where you can come in and make a difference. But actually to get economic reasons why people might want to do that … you can live near the city, you can have a house, part-own it yourself, shared-ownership and if … we work towards the betterment of this area, we will all benefit and probably your house price will go up as well, you know, rather than it being the place that you need to get away from as soon as possible.

In question ten interviewees were asked if they had any in their congregations who had deliberately moved in for missional reasons: re-locating as Christian incomers. Six were aware of such people, though in one case it was a denominational preference being exercised (4, 5, 8, 17, 19, 24). In another case it was young middle-class couples moving to the area near the church building from non-child friendly apartments in the city centre:

> … and there's a desire to move in to the area. So we've had some people who've started in the City Centre, in some of the apartments in the City Centre. And I think, two couples, and they're married couples but no kids and then the children have come and so they've moved into the local area. (5)

But this is only until children approached school age, at which point they moved further out. This again was accepted without question:

> … so couples, people may come as students, marry, meet here, marry, live locally, have a child, and then the child begins to grow up and they begin to think where am I going to get the child educated? And some people have said you know, some have moved out … (5)

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[37] Matt. 6:20 (New King James Version).

Another did not seem to understand the concept. ("What's local and what's an incomer?" A further clarification from me was met with silence), even though I personally know of members of this church who see themselves as Christian incomers. From the few that did give further comment on this question there seemed to be a reluctance to even ask members to consider moving in closer and be a part of the local community:

> We encourage local involvement but we don't ever preach about where you live. We wouldn't give any direction in that area. (8)

Two however affirmed that they do encourage people to move in:

> Yes. At the same time without making people feel guilt if they just can't do it. (24)

> … we've put quite an emphasis on trying to be as incarnational as we can be. (19)

It is clear that most parts of inner-south Manchester remain areas that people aspire to move out of. Be it for reasons of education, housing, neighbourhood, job or simple improvement, the perception is that these things are 'better' else-where. How that assessment is made and a conclusion arrived at, how 'better' is defined, what other factors are omitted, what the cumulative effect is on the area and people left behind, are some of the pertinent questions that could be asked of such decisions. It seems not to be the case that they are thought through in the light of a Christian calling to mission, service and sacrifice. From this survey there appears to be little evidence of any questioning or challenging of aspirational lifestyle assumptions in the teaching of the local churches: just acceptance that this is the way it is: "…they started here and they just sort of moved out."

Through this survey of local churches I have investigated involvement in PeaceWeek as an indicator of community engagement and identification, concluding, among other things, that the degree of local membership is a crucial factor. I have also noted acknowledgement and widespread experience of the tendency of Christians to move away from inner-city communities, and how this seems, for the most part, to be accepted as a given. This serves as a local instance of the dynamic of 'Redemption and Lift'. As this also means that the main basis of effective community engagement is weakened when local members move away, this acceptance and the apparent lack of questioning of the phenomenon is a concern. Duncan warns:

> If we in local churches do not think about the neighbourhoods in which we live, how we relate and engage with them, then local congregations have signed their own death warrant.[38]

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[38] Malcolm Duncan, <u>Kingdom Come: The local church as a catalyst for social change</u> (Oxford: Monarch, 2007), 24.

Appendix 4 CHURCH LEADER INTERVIEW TABLES

Additional comments for clarification in the tables are in square brackets. Three of the interviewees were responsible for two churches: #12 & #13; #16 & #17; #20 & #21, so sometimes their answers applied to both. Questions one to eight were introductory – see Appendix 9 (4).

Q9: Do you see this church as a local [1 mile radius] or neighbourhood [immediate area] church? What proportion of your members/attendees live within walking distance (1 mile)?[39]

#1	Couple of mile radius. Quite a few students.	Very few.
#2	"We would describe ourselves as a city-wide church.."	Not that many.
#3	"…most of the members, at the moment, are in a two-mile radius of the church."	"About 50%."
#4	"…more travel in than come from the local area."	minority
#5	Local focus, but pockets of people from further afield.	55% in the local area.
#6	Wider area, Greater Manchester.	About 10%.
#7	Wider area. 5 mile radius; some up to 10	25%.
#8	Mostly local. Some come in from further away.	75-80%
#9	"Predominantly adjacent."	majority
#10	"Very local." Neighbourhood.	80%
#11	Local plus travelers.	50%
#12	"There's only one or two people who live close by, the rest travel in."	Very few.
#13	"Most people are quite near."	Most.
#14	Mostly local. One or two travel in.	"…the majority of the members are people who live locally and walk to church"
#15	Neighbourhood. "very much a local church."	50%
#16	"…predominantly local…"	

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[39] Taken from the Audit Commission definition of a person's 'local area' as that being within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance of their home. It also defines a smaller area of 'neighbourhood' which can be the immediate block of streets and houses. <www.local-pi-library.gov.uk/.../TechnicalGuidanceOnCommunityCohesionIndicators.doc> Accessed 3/9/2009.

#17	"…predominantly local…"	
#18	Mostly local	"…most is walking distance."
#19	Local core, some from within 4 miles. A few from further afield.	Over half.
#20	Neighbourhood/Local area.	90%
#21	Neighbourhood/Local area.	90%
#22	Local, plus people coming from other areas.	50%
#23	Neighbourhood focus, but draws from wider area.	Over a third.
#24	Neighbourhood: immediate area.	Over half.

Q10: What proportion of your members/attendees would you describe as local / ex-local (i.e. have moved away but travel back in for services etc) / incomers (live locally but have moved into the area)

#1	no ex-local , no incomers
#2	Thought not a relevant question (eclectic nature of church; building not in a residential area).
#3	Some moved in from further afield to within 2 miles. Some moved out from immediate to [nicer] areas within 2 miles.
#4	Small percentage of ex-locals. One family looking for a house locally
#5	"…quite a lot of people will start local and will still stay in the church. There are some who move in to, not exactly [local area], but you know would travel in, but pretty much most people have started here, then they've moved out. They feel part of this church and so they stay." "…people may come as students, meet here, marry, live locally, have a child, and then the child begins to grow up and they begin to think where am I going to get the child educated? And… some have moved out to Sale and sometimes we see them disappear or even Cheadle, to places like that."
#6	"…we have a very small percentage of the church living locally, but when they move away they still come back to church." No incomers.
#7	About 8% ex-locals. Incomers: "not too sure."
#8	Most who travel in are ex-local. 18-20 have moved in. Asked if this was due to teaching or emphasis in the church. "We encourage local involvement but we don't ever preach about where you live." "We always complement people who stay in the area, make a point of saying how great we think they are. Some people could move out and don't, because of commitment to church. It's left up to the individual. We wouldn't give any direction in that area."
#9	"Not many." [But see response to Q11]
#10	Only a few ex-local. No incomers
#11	Quite a few ex-locals or children of travelling in from the suburbs: declining. Some incomers from other parts of urban Manchester, in rented accommodation, and partly to be nearer job but not from the suburbs.

#12	Mostly ex-local travelers. No incomers.
#13	Mostly local, with some travelling, but not from that far. No incomers.
#14	Mostly local, few travelers. I think misunderstood question and talked about Afro-Caribbean immigrants. No incomers.
#15	About half ex-locals: 35% fairly close, 15% further away "…people who lived here as children, and then have moved away, but now they worship here again." No incomers.
#16	No ex-locals.
#17	No ex-locals. A few incomers, expressing denominational preference.
#18	Not applicable.
#19	"... we've got quite a few who I think began on the estates here, and then have moved out." But not far. Some incomers, more wanting to. "…we've put quite an emphasis on trying to be as incarnational as we can be." "Several of us tried to move in locally, but because we were working we couldn't get council housing, and we couldn't afford the houses that were for sale, ironically, and so we live as close as we could buy and still be within walking distance. But it's not the same."
#20	Two families moved in the slum clearances in the 60s still come back.
#21	Two couples travel in.
#22	Travellers are not ex-locals. Some incomers, but due to ethnicity and availability of housing as much as coming to the church.
#23	Quite a few ex-estate. Some have always travelled in. "I think the sense of community's not so much where you live, it's where you spend a considerable amount of your time." [Misunderstood incomer concept as about people travelling in each week to services and] "buying into the ethos, I think people are aware of what we're trying to do within the immediate local community and they're also perhaps happy with the deal that means, I don't know, if you do live out in Heaton Moor or whatever, chances are you're not going to get the vicar on your doorstep at the first port of call if there's a crisis…" [Didn't respond to follow up re-phrased question.[40]]
#24	Very few ex-local. Some have tried or considered 'incoming' but only the minister has done it so far. "incarnational living" encouraged in the teaching.

[40] Did speak later about physical re-locating. "... people with a bit of oomph raise their head above the parapet and quite quickly move and move on. You know it's back to that whole, sort of, those with get up and go get up and do just that. And for me … back to the health and wholeness thing in terms of long-term strategy that I would be working and praying for and us as a church doing so, is that actually if we can create and enable [this area] to be a place where people actually want to stay and put down roots, for economic reasons, not just for God-given ones … you know, this is a place where you can come in and make a difference. But actually to get economic reasons why people might want to do that … you can live near the city, you can have a house, part-own it yourself, shared-ownership and if … we work towards the betterment of this area, we will all benefit and probably your house price will go up as well, you know, rather than it being the place that you need to get away from as soon as possible."

Q11: What changes or trends have you noticed in where your members/attendees live in the last 5 years?

#1	Not asked [church only meeting here for 3 years]
#2	Not applicable.
#3	Some movement further out from Trafford to Stretford [nearby 'better' area].
#4	None
#5	Families moving away at school age. "…I'm quite pleased with the number of students that stay on for instance, but you also get young professionals who come and they stay on for a few years and then they go, and the other turnover for us is there is no school that is easy to get into in the area, and that's a big problem at the moment. Schools, you know, primary schools are where you would have some sort of Christian teaching. There's one not very far from here.. but that's oversubscribed at the moment, so then the alternatives are against schools, which are predominantly Muslim and not English speaking so that's a bit of a problem…"
#6	Not asked [church only meeting here for 18 months]
#7	"…definitely more local people coming in recently."
#8	Not asked
#9	"I feel people are moving from the Moss Side area to Chorlton, Whalley Range, Stretford, over the last five years, moving out. I think the reason for that is people are, you know, moving up the social ladder, buying houses."
#10	None
#11	Less travelers (audit 7 years ago 62%, now <50%), more local people. "the new people we've got coming are all living within five minutes' walk"
#12	Stable.
#13	Not asked.
#14	Stable majority local congregation so not asked.
#15	No recent change. Church was far more local 50 years ago.
#16	Not asked.
#17	Not asked.
#18	Not applicable.
#19	Big influx in immigrants – mostly African, some Latin background.
#20	Not asked.
#21	Not asked.
#22	Not asked.
#23	Not asked [but I have observed an increase in local people].
#24	More local people.

Q12: Does your church have a Mission Statement or Vision Statement? What is it?

#1	Articles of faith, as part of main denomination.
#2	"No, we have this "Making Jesus Famous," it's kind of a slogan..."
#3	No. "…if you go to church right now they'll have a lot of that, but I refuse to get into it, I think my Bible provided me with a mandate that was sufficient rather than having a mission statement."
#4	"We don't have a mission statement, as such, no. I mean, the unwritten one would be the Great Commission, Matthew 28, which we all abide by, and that's the motivation for what we do."
#5	"'Seek the Welfare of the City', and to Attract, Disciple and Deploy."
#6	"Our mission statement is sounding the trumpet, making mighty men and women of valour, and taking territories."
#7	Yes. Referred to a Statement of Faith.
#8	Yes, but couldn't remember it.
#9	Yes. "We the members… make it our responsibility, and count it a privilege to be, members of God's family, ministers of God's grace, messengers of God's love, magnifiers of God's name."
#10	Yes – in 1989. Still apt. "On Sundays we meet to worship – in praise and intercession, and sharing bread and wine in communion. The other six days of the week our church is open as a centre for people of the local community whose needs we seek to serve. … In all that we do, we affirm with joy the rich diversity of our community."
#11	Yes. Using the basic denominational statement.
#12	No. But then mentioned his "job description" with 3 areas of focus.
#13	Yes. "…five marks of mission... telling, teaching, treasuring, tending, transforming."
#14	No.
#15	More a motto: 'In this place will I give peace'. "It's perfect."
#16	No.
#17	Yes. "proclaiming Christ and serving the community."
#18	Yes. "We are called by God to be a community which..." 12 goals.
#19	Yes. "…basically it's People, Not Programs, that's been our big thing in trying to show Jesus to the community. And we've had an emphasis for years in trying to be welcoming, inclusive and caring for the marginalised, so those are the kinds of things that we've emphasised, but we're not really a big mission-, vision-purpose-driven kind of place."
#20	No. "…they're not really mission statement kind of churches… they know very clearly what they're about, but it wouldn't make any difference… to put it down in a sentence."
#21	No. As #20.
#22	Yes. To evangelise and bring Christ into the community, be welcoming to all people, be a resource and presence in the area. Mission Policy - written down, but also lived out: not just a piece of paper.
#23	Yes. Under headings of worship, growth, witness "wherever God has placed us" and service "helping all people to experience life in all its fullness."
#24	Yes, "being intimate with God with each other and with our community."

Q13: What geographical area do you regard as your area of mission?

#1	"In the times we are in I believe the church has moved on from where it is parish, strictly parish-based, and the congregation drawn from local well-defined geographical boundaries… So our congregation members are drawn from far and wide really."
#2	City-wide. "…our area of operation is defined as Greater Manchester and beyond."
#3	"…we see Manchester as our field, our 'parish' as it were..."
#4	Local area: "where we're placed."
#5	Local area, plus a nearby church plant and city-centre ministry.
#6	Manchester.
#7	In this locality, but going out to a 5 mile radius.
#8	Local area.
#9	Greater Manchester, as part of a denominational group of 4 churches. In practice, the inner-city areas.
#10	Well-defined local area, between major roads.
#11	Local area.
#12	Not really defined. "…because they don't live there it's quite hard for them to do anything locally…"
#13	"…mainly very local around the church."
#14	Local area; some blurring with neighbouring church, but no issues.
#15	Local area.
#16	Local area.
#17	Local area.
#18	"it would be pretty much contiguous with the university campuses…" "I believe any gathered church model should still have a mission to its local community." "…we don't have a sense of a local identity, and rootedness in this place. Universities aren't usually good at that, and we're not any better, so I think that's wrong, and I'd love to see local community members worshipping with us, because I think we should be more rooted than we are."
#19	Local area primarily.
#20	Local area.
#21	Local area.
#22	Local for outreach but also drawing people in from a wider area.
#23	"…according to the Mission Statement that's anywhere that God has placed us." But "there is a distinct focus… to the local community."
#24	Immediate area.

Q14: Are there other ways in which you see your mission focus?
(e.g. members' places of work)

#1	None.
#2	"…we want to recognise that we're all the church, and we're the church when we gather corporately and we're the church when we're scattered in our communities and our workplaces, so really we want – we see as a massively important part is discipling and equipping one another to be ambassadors of Christ, wherever we are. So, we recognise the importance of doing corporate stuff, but see equally, if not more important, is the fact that most people spend most of their time in work, or in their neighbourhood, or at the school gate.."
#3	No.
#4	Workplace, and "encouraging people who don't live in the [local area] to live as Christians and to influence their neighbours and friends with the Gospel…"
#5	"…if there are members who are are doing things in their work places, or want to do something, we'll send out teams to help."
#6	Praying for the community; supporting members when required.
#7	"If in your neighbourhood see that you care, you understand, you wanted to talk to them, share with them, and not just talking about, in the sense of preaching the Gospel but also, whatever in the practical sense."
#8	Overseas mission support in several countries. Main facilitator of local Christian Radio station (4 week licence each Easter).
#9	"…we have people who work for the National Health, we have people who work for the local authority, and they are affiliated to the church and, you know, if they need emotional, or psychological, or spiritual support, the church is here to give them that, and we do consistently support them in that context."
#10	Mental Health work based at the church. Congregation involved and very supportive.
#11	Sunday evening group, young adults – a sort of Fresh Expression. Little overlap with largely elderly Sunday morning congregation.
#12	Support of a mental health project based in the building. Concerned that this is seen as the only expression of mission.
#13	The building hosts a long-term youth project (some concern that this is not seen as the only mission expression). Also supports several members who have key roles in local provision or organisations.
#14	Support for members working in NHS. Environmental care emphasis.
#15	"…equipping people for the week ahead…"
#16	Through the church-run community centre.
#17	"…probably not overtly, but it's certainly gone on, certainly we recognise people in their place at work..."
#18	"…one of our main roles is to help people integrate faith and work."
#19	"…that's exactly what we've tried to do, is to re-imagine what 'mission' looks like and try and help people where they're placed."
#20	Support for members in workplace, away at university.

#21	Support for members in workplace, away at university.
#22	Teachers at local schools, chaplaincy to schools. Missions in schools. Some work in the hospitals, chatting with staff.
#23	"…overarching [value] of 'Life in all its fulness'. And that holistic life, a recognition that we are physical bodies, spiritual bodies and bodies that need community, which … I would say almost all our church activity now falls within that remit…"
#24	Encouraging people in their work or weekly lives (not many have jobs).

Q15: What do you think mission is? What do you think the task of the Church is?[41]

#1	" …teaching, in order to establish the people so that they can live a life that is fulfilling and a life that actually glorifies God."
#2	"The whole thing of mission being obviously the root: being sent, and that being the same as 'apostolic'… so we talk a lot about being an 'apostolic' or 'missional' church, meaning that in everything we do, we are here because we are sent."
#3	"Primarily, winning people to Christ. … leave the church to do what it's called to do… evangelising the community."
#4	Mission: "…to connect with people, to share the Gospel with them. …to simply be witnesses for Christ where he's placed us." Task of the church: "primarily evangelistic… we lay great emphasis here in expository preaching."
#5	Not asked (early interview).
#6	"I'd say a church is called to prayer"
#7	"…our definition is to present Jesus of course as Lord and Saviour… the fundamentals that he came and died on the cross for lost humanity and therefore we feel we're obliged on the basis of what the Bible says to preach the Gospel and to share the good news with people." Church's role to encourage people working on a personal level, to witness. "And to be helpful and practical too on a personal level, in the neighbourhood where they live, concerning lonely people, hurting people, sick people, needy people."
#8	"Making people aware of who Jesus is, what he came to do, and then offering to disciple them."
#9	"Presenting Christ to the world, presenting Christ to our community… the task of the church is bridging – acting as a bridge between the community and the Kingdom."
#10	"Being a resource to try and meet the needs – some of the needs, you can never meet them all – of people in the community."
#11	"The ethos of Christianity is to share and care and be compassionate and understanding and generous."
#12	[answered elsewhere – minister of two churches]
#13	"…the idea of good relations and building up the community relations is very important."

[41] This is an extra question introduced after the first two interviews (#5 & #14).

#14	Not asked (early interview). But elsewhere spoke of the church as ""…here to serve all people in the community." And of care for the environment "…all churches need to have this as part of their mission."
#15	"showing God's love in action, being Christ in the world." "…I'm not all that comfortable with evangelism in a direct or active way, but they are comfortable with mission, and I'm comfortable with mission… we as a congregation minister together, we're confident in ourselves that mission is evangelism… by being God's presence, and Christ's body in this community, we are witnessing, and the church really has a 'Presence In Engagement'."
#16	Not answered directly. Mission very much tied in with the community centre. "… our buildings have never been just worship centres."
#17	"…more liberal-minded compared with many churches … the mission is much wider than just converting people to Jesus. It's about serving the community, it's about building up the community, and… building the Kingdom of God here… Now sometimes that can be through direct evangelism, in other words, we are Christians, we don't need to apologise for the fact, we can do nothing else. We are Christians. But sometimes it's not just throwing Jesus in the face of people or going around with our banners…"
#18	"I would just say the mission is God's, and rather than us trying to defend or rationalise what we do by invoking God's name, instead I think the church seeks to be a part of God's blessing." "Church is not just an 'action team' … it's a space opened in the community for all, and it's a public space in which God's life and vision is shared and is sort of incarnate, or lived."
#19	"…we hang out with people a lot without being declarative, or conversionist, and that's a huge thing, I think. Theologically too, I mean, where does your responsibility lie in proclaiming Good News alongside being Good News? And the tension plays out, I guess, in everything that we do."
#20	"…it's everything that we do. It's what we exist for as a church. I think that if we are about communicating the love of God that's what we should be doing." "…the task of the Church is basically to help other people to understand God's love for them and to have a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus… And it's not about hitting people over the head with the Bible…"
#21	As #20
#22	"Mission is going outwards, outward looking. Getting the people to take responsibility for spreading the Good News in their own way." "…we're here to give the Gospel but then we're here to serve the community we're in as well." Church: "to bring people to know Christ and closer to God. Whichever church. The whole thrust is to be out there, be a positive presence, you could be the only gospel people read. We each effect the balance of good and evil in the world."
#23	"…it's a three part gospel…" as demonstrated where Jesus heals the lepers… "God's concern for people as physical beings… that whole community element… giving praise to God. And so its enabling people to experience, to discover and to keep on life in its fullness."
#24	"…reaching out…with the love of Christ and the message of Christ, living the life. Well, we're talking about incarnational living. It's just not just going door to door but it's the whole living your life in the community, trying to meet needs of people."

Q16: How would you describe your church's relationship with the local community around where you meet?

#1	Answered about networking with other churches and social action. Bringing in people to the church from the local environment.
#2	Didn't really answer. Spoke more of having impact on the local area: of work on nearby estate and with homeless.
#3	"We've had a very good relationship with our neighbours over the years."
#4	"pretty good, that people know we're here."
#5	"…we're just trying to work better at that actually." Hence church plant and a number of evangelistic events.
#6	Didn't answer directly. "... we've worked very hard at building good strong links."
#7	"As a church that's well established and has been down the years, then I think the relationship with community is very good."
#8	"increasingly good." "We made a positive contribution to the neighbourhood by cleaning it up cos it was such a mess. That… got us a lot of brownie points really."
#9	Didn't answer directly. Spoke of being "accommodating" and working with the local community on certain causes.
#10	"Ask them! They hold the church in high esteem, a lot of it due to the fact that we have stuck with it for so long. Many people are in and out of here and many more see people coming in and out, so that is a visible thing. There is a feeling that this is their church. There has been very little vandalism or graffiti – a sign of ownership and respect by the community."
#11	"pretty good" "…The local people cherish it and it's like "why?", because if anything goes wrong, they're at the door for something, you know. They just feel it's their church. Now, I have to be very careful talking about that because we're talking about the remnant who are white and sort of indigenous English people, that I think symbolically they see the church as something important, because it helps them to hold on to who they are in a 75% Asian area – well over 50% anyway."
#12	"…the relationship of the building to the people around is a very positive and strong one, so people are quite happy from all different faiths and backgrounds to come to the church for... activity. But that is nearly all related to the project, and what's happened, although the church set up the project twenty two or three years ago, gradually over the years the number of church people involved has got less and less."
#13	"…I think it's… the building, it's hosted lots and lots and lots of people for many years. The project is the, sort of, normal face of the church, and that needs to, sort of change, so the church inhabits it more, and does more things."
#14	Good. A lot of goodwill generated by attached community centre.
#15	"…it is good, there's a great respect in the local community for the church, we get very little vandalism compared with other churches."
#16	"affection" through the 30 years of the community centre.
#17	Church "looked upon fondly but with a bit of an unknown" as the building is usually closed. Trying to develop use of buildings more.

#18	"I'd say it's pretty poor. …our relationship is really, and it should be, primarily to the university and to students, and… in some ways it is a community, but it's a bit like a community up on stilts… it's not in the world, as I think it should be."
#19	"Varied." 10 years running youthclubs. …"we've invested heavily in just being present in the week, and I think there's some really solid healthy relationships."
#20	"…at both churches I would say that it's very good. I think partly because the people who are members of the churches live in the community!"
#21	As #20.
#22	Good. "The church is the people, not a building. I hear the feedback from the different things the people go out and do."
#23	"Exceptional." As evidenced by a recent local survey as part of a PFI consultation. "…we have the favour of the local community and that again is evidenced by very little vandalism, theft, building is respected. Probably as a result of the youth work from early days in people's psyche. A lot of people have a real sense, this is their church."
#24	Good. Positive response from Council consultation a few years ago.

Q17: Do you feel a responsibility to the local community, and if so, how is this expressed?

#1	Yes. See previous. Also Saturday maths classes, recent ministry to the homeless.
#2	Work with city-centre homeless.
#3	Only as an individual, not as the church.
#4	"definitely" "... our main feeling of responsibility is for the welfare of their souls, their spiritual need, over and above the practical things which have been important."
#5	Not asked specifically - answered in previous. Outreaches, plus Mums 'n' Tots - local mums and coming in from Didsbury!, Kids Clubs. Holiday Clubs, Church Lads & Girls Brigades, marriage preparation courses.
#6	Yes. Exploring how to be involved, networking, link with local charity.
#7	"Well, number one, as I've said, to present the truth of the Gospel about Jesus Christ, also, where there are needs on a social line, to try and help."
#8	"Yes, I think we've got a long way to go in doing that, but you can see that all of our committed members, they've all been working flat out for the last ten years."
#9	Yes. Re-iterated taking up issues. Integral part of the church's mission.
#10	Yes. Core activity is the mental health provision. Building used by local community groups based around single issues or ethnic minority groupings and others.
#11	Yes. Jumble sales attract 100's; film nights, local Music Festival via an attached "Fresh Expressions" Live At Home scheme, new Macmillan Solutions project. "So the possibility for significant contact with people who are not part of the church is quite great really."
#12	Yes, expressed through the mental health project and a Peace Garden.
#13	"…there's a real heart for to overcome racism and the other things in [the local area]

	that traditionally, over a long period of time, have sort of got people down."
#14	"Absolutely, yes." "…here to serve all people in the community."
#15	Yes. By involvement in local school, Neighbours Day, street party etc.
#16	Through the community centre.
#17	Not answered directly, but spoke elsewhere of serving the community, good responses from members to shootings and other incidents.
#18	"Yeah, I feel a huge sense…" but frustrated by inability to express it.
#19	Yes. "…we feel a responsibility for it being a healthy place of creativity and goodness, and that we try and work towards that however we can in a sustainable way. So we're here for the long term…"
#20	"Absolutely." Members good at visiting and welcoming.
#21	As #20.
#22	Yes. Visiting sick, work with homeless, lunch club, youth club.
#23	Yes. Youth work, building in use all week for classes etc.
#24	"Definitely."

Q18: In what ways do you relate to, partner or work with other churches in the area?

#1	Salvation Army. Part of Upper Room Group on Mondays, and part of North Manchester Christian Leaders. Link with Methodist Chaplaincy. No joint working.
#2	"…, in terms of close, actually knowing – building really strong relationships, that's happening more with churches of a similar sort of city-wide…" Some work with 2 nearby churches "fizzled out." Aware of local Christian youth project. No current joint work. "…slightly turned off by some of the … church unity stuff." "aware of all the politics that starts getting involved."
#3	Some good partnerships in the past. Now limited.
#4	Outreach with two "churches of like minds… theologically we'd be in the same area, so we tend to work together, perhaps more than we do with some of the other churches in the area"[42]
#5	Shared project with city-centre churches. No mention of anything with local churches.
#6	"…we've made initial introductions, but we don't have any tangible project ongoing."

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[42] Developed later as a digression in the answer about reasons for non-involvement in PeaceWeek: "…if it was a purely evangelistic event, which was strongly ecumenical, then we would have serious issues with that… you've got to be able to work with people and have the same basic beliefs and understanding of what the Gospel is, what the Church is, what conversion is… but I think where we're talking about a genuine concern to work even with Muslims against whatever – you know, they hold similar views to Christians in some ethical and moral issues … I would imagine that we'd never have any problems just working to promote peace as a general concept as peace-loving people regardless of faith…"

#7	"Not that much actually…"
#8	Sporadic; mixed blessing. Some co-working on the radio station, but there were issues.
#9	Struggled to think of anything local; gave one half-remembered example of joint fund-raising. Mentioned Christian ministries that other churches also support.
#10	Supposed to be linked to a couple of other churches, but in practice no joint working.
#11	Meaningfully, only with one. Local Churches Together has folded.
#12	Some meetings and meals with a few other church leaders after collapse of local Churches Together. "…'work with' is a loose term."
#13	Nothing local. Part of a loose city-wide denominational network.
#14	Shared service with local RC; shared Carol Service with another church. Would like to do more. Churches Together "as good as non-existent."
#15	Some sharing with 2 or 3 local churches. Trying to encourage more.
#16	Used to have a good relationship with one. Now on "low burner."
#17	Some "tentative" approaches,
#18	"really involved" in Churches Together group. Annual Walk of Witness.
#19	"Hit and miss." "We get along well with other local leaders… At the church level, we don't do much now. You know, we used to do joint services a decade ago, probably, but they were just lethal, weren't they."
#20	Churches Together – has been stronger, currently struggling. Hard to meet. Shared Easter and Christmas events such as Lent Bible studies.
#21	As #20.
#22	Churches Together meets every 6-8 weeks, though hard to fit in. Shared Easter and Advent activities such as a Walk of Witness.
#23	Sporadic efforts in the past with local or denominational. Nothing practical currently.
#24	Some past support from churches outside the area. Locally, bits and pieces. Referred to local joint meetings and services some years ago but these "became hard work… like adding onto something rather than being a blessing."

Q19: (a) Which other organisations and groups (statutory, voluntary, other faiths) do you relate to in this area? (b.) have a partnership arrangement with in this area? (e.g. for a specific activity or piece of work)

#1	None in this area.
#2	Meeting with Islamic centre next door, but no partnership. Been to ROC meetings. Building used a lot as a venue by others - Christian organisations, LAP, police, businesses, university.
#3	Involvement with a day-care centre. Nothing on church premises.
#4	"not really." Discussions with one group wanting to use the building, but did not work out.

#5	"No. We're thinking of links with the council…" Link to football club through their nearby training ground. Previous chaplaincy roles to police and football club.
#6	Contact with police and local charity. Sees need to engage with Muslim community.
#7	Only spoke in terms of Christian organisations e.g. Street Pastors.
#8	Support of local Street Pastors. Some event hosting, limited by lack of caretaker. Social action activities all church run – no partnerships.
#9	Mustard Tree (Christian charity). Health Service, asylum seekers, single mums. Learning Direct project (now closed)
#10	Several partnerships: e.g. Social Services, PCT, MCC Youth Service.
#11	Local Community Centre, Chinese Community Association, Macmillan Solutions project, Help The Aged (Live At Home scheme).
#12	Some via mental health project. Used to be more.
#13	Local mosque; statutory services via the youth project.
#14	Lots through the community centre, statutory and voluntary e.g. Faiths for Change, Neighbourhood Management, Energy Saving Trust.
#15	Through the school. Good relationship with liberal mosque (one of 9 mosques in the area).
#16	Community centre: Social Services and other statutory sector.
#17	Some contact with other faiths and a Muslim teaching centre. Some use of building e.g. by health service.
#18	"We're big with other faiths." – e.g. Muslim chaplaincy. ChangeMakers, Church Action on Poverty, Access SUMMIT
#19	Use of building and through attached community centre.
#20	Good relationships with local house mosques. Founder church of Mosscare housing: still involved. Local PCT, residents groups, MP surgery. Other connections though building use.
#21	Local PCT. Ran local community centre for 12 years (recently closed).
#22	Schools. Involved in setting up local boxing club. Social Services ring with requests to visit. Police call in. Informal.
#23	Lots through building and minibus use during the week. SureStart, Police, Leisure Services, various local charities and organisations: ESOL, Job-Club, Youth Drop-in, Keep-Fit etc.
#24	Lots through building use in the week: local charity based there running Keep-Fit, Job-Club etc., ESOL, Christians Against Poverty, City Council Regeneration and local Action Group, local school and Asda.

Q20: Have you as a church responded to the 'gun and gang problem'?
If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

#1	No direct input. Not explored in terms of strategy.
#2	No. "…we're aware but not actively engaged, other than through people trying to reach people in their own communities, but not in a corporate strategy."
#3	"…not as a church. I want my members to be involved, and I would provide all the support for them, rather than taking the church and planting it and saying, 'This is what we're about.'"
#4	"We've certainly prayed about it… and… I'm almost sure that some of the people in our congregation have been on the marches that have been held.."
#5	No. "…it's a good thing that just hasn't just got developed … there's a lot going on."
#6	Prayer.
#7	"As a church, we've not got anything set up to deal with that." Personal involvement with affected families by members.
#8	Yes, but not a lot. Prayer on a regular basis. Conducted short open-air services and prayed on the streets where incidents have taken place.
#9	Meeting with Councillors and Police - 5, 6 years ago. No involvement since. Street Prayer Walks, Gangstop [might be conflating these].
#10	"No. Too busy. I prefer to stick with what I've been doing. Working with young people is not my thing."
#11	"No. not in a specific way, no."
#12	"It's talked about it, and it's tried to support some of the Peace Week activities, but because of limited capacity we've not done a lot."
#13	Individual responses e.g. attended a community meeting.
#14	No. "…the short answer is 'no' in that as a congregation we haven't."
#15	Yes, through PeaceWeek for a number of years. Prayer.
#16	No.
#17	Support of individuals who are involved. Have passed on information.
#18	"…apart from what I've organised, no."
#19	Yes. "Through the youth work, we certainly would do a lot of anti-gun, anti-drug... we don't allow gang signs or insignia or things like that, and we would discourage it."
#20	Yes. Through local politics and community groups.
#21	Yes, particularly through use of community centre by several local organisations responding to the issue. Also through youth work.
#22	Not In the sense of practically. We have a prayer room open every day - people come in from the community to intercede. Also youth club: "gets kids off the streets and show another form of life."
#23	"Yes. I'd like to think so. I don't know if the motivation was because it was a gun and gang problem, the motivation is because it's part of our community and the needs of health and wholeness and employment and all the rest." Supporting youth work, Carisma and PeaceWeek, also through funerals, involvement with regeneration, Job-Club etc.
#24	"We try and bring it into our teaching with kids and younger people."

Q21: Have you heard of 'Carisma'? If yes, how would you describe what Carisma is and what it does?

#1	Don't know.
#2	"... it's a kind of a mix of Christian and non-Christian people in the community saying, 'We want to tackle...' and because we're not a single community-focused - I think if we were in that community we might feel the urgency more."
#3	"I would describe it as a group of people who are very concerned about the problems in the community and are seeking ways and means of resolving the issues we are faced with."
#4	"…it's an organisation that's concerned about... encouraging peace in relationships between people in the south Manchester area and especially where there's been violence and… the gun crime which has been a major concern."
#5	"…it's a Christian-led organisation that sort of operates in relationship to the churches in order to being about a shalom, I suppose, in the area."
#6	"…it's a charity that is working with young people, you know, along with crime reduction, inclusion, and promotion of peace."
#7	Not that aware. "…more of a social thing helping out in the area."
#8	Not primarily a Christian organisation, it does contain people who are Christians. It's an across-the-board organisation. It's a group of people with a high percentage of Christians, but with a lot of mothers who've been affected by the street violence, making a movement and a stand to reduce street violence.
#9	"I can't even remember the definition of Carisma now, I did at one time... But Carisma was born out of... the need for... I'm not even sure I'm right, Mothers coming, getting together [confusing with Mothers Against Violence] that gun crime had to stop, and it has grown, hasn't it, to recognition now that it's got the full support of the government." "I think they're trying to achieve a state where they can become a voice to the second and third generation that there are different ways of dealing with issues, there are different ways of lobbying the local authority, there are different ways to handle problems beside the gun and the knife."
#10	"I've seen it as an initiative by local churches to help young families and youngsters to look at issues around violence, and how to channel their gifts in a more positive."
#11	"... essentially, a group of believers – not entirely, because I'm aware that you're working in a multi-agency kind of way – who are using the ethos of love and care and compassion for a locality to bring a sense of community, a sense of love... and are energetic in trying to make that happen. … I see it as a very positive public act of care and love, and behind that I know there's a lot of believers."
#12	"…it's about community regeneration in the south of the city… I associate Carisma mainly with Peace Week." Aware of some other work such as with Mothers Against Violence and PeaceFM.
#13	[answered elsewhere – minister of two churches]
#14	Heard of but not that familiar. Based in a different borough: "a barrier."

#15	"I'm not as aware of Carisma as I am of Peace Week."
#16	Did not answer for this church.
#17	Aware. "…it's been fantastic in building up community cohesion."
#18	"I would describe it as a organisation committed to... bettering the community, especially in Moss Side, in inner South Manchester, as specifically working around issues of gun, gun and gang crime, and probably specifically with, well at least in Moss Side, with people of West Indian or African descent. And, I would say also, works, makes an effort of working with the police."
#19	Awareness is seasonal. Carisma is about raising awareness, conscientising the city towards a particular issue. Almost a brand.
#20	"Carisma has focused the thinking. I think it's probably brought together quite a lot of people from different, disparate organisations, so to a certain extent it's a bit of an umbrella organisation."
#21	As #20.
#22	"A kind of an amalgam of Christians coming together to do something with respect to being a positive presence in the community"
#23	Long-term awareness of Carisma, right back to the GangStop march in 2002. Agrees with Carisma ethos of positive attitude to young people.
#24	Aware but a bit vague; only as behind PeaceWeek."…it's all about improving inner-city life and regeneration, get rid of gun crime, gangs."

Q22: Have you heard of 'Peace Week'? If yes, do you know when Peace Week occurs? What do you think the purpose of Peace Week is?

#1	Involves social action - gleaned from looking at programme of events.
#2	"PeaceWeek is a Carisma thing, so I think the same answers."
#3	"Peace Week would be for me a time when we are focussing on the community and our need to work together for the betterment of our community under the peace... understanding of togetherness, resolving community issues that are divisive and all that."
#4	"…an opportunity to concentrate and focus on that for a week's series of activities and things… do you have a march every year?"
#5	"…works through the underage group in order to transform their views about what they feel about themselves, and what they feel about the community… it's Christian led, and.. it's actually got Christian principles of they're made in the image of God…"
#6	"Organisations are encouraged to do things that promote peace, you know, come together, hold joint events."
#7	"I think it's what it says! You know, to create a sense of unity and peace, on the basis of churches and so on, you know… integration, to show a caring aspect, and to be involved."
#8	"To put a Christian presence on the streets. I always think of that one as primarily Christian, but it might well not be."

#9	"Peace Week comes across that peace is better than war... and peace in the community. Again, personally for me peace can only come about when implicit or otherwise God is in the detail."[43]
#10	"An offshoot of Carisma, trying to bring people together, raising awareness,"
#11	"…to bring peace, care, compassion, community back to the forefront of people's minds for that period, to say, 'Look, these things are important.'"
#12	"…it's about raising awareness of the issues... It's about engaging with people and trying to get them involved with peace activities."
#13	[answered elsewhere – minister of two churches]
#14	"I understand it to be inspired by a response to the loss of life and the loss, the destruction through the gun and gang. …it's about making a statement, joining together with people from different churches, different traditions, so witness is important."
#15	Very aware and involved each year.
#16	Did not answer for this church.
#17	Confused it with another event.
#18	"…it's about giving a different message about what Manchester is, and fighting the prejudice that still lingers about Manchester…particularly about Moss Side and Longsight. I'd say it's about being proud of our community and celebrating it rather than slagging it off, for local people especially, and that it's about having networks in place to fight gun crime."
#19	"Peace Week is a lot more visible to us, I think, than Carisma would be, partly because it's regular, so it's part of our kind of church calendar now, and partly because I think a lot of people that we connect with 'get it'. You know, it's a very visible, obvious message, and people are interested in that message."
#20	"…same again. I just think if it brings people together that's a really good thing."
#21	As #20.
#22	"To show an alternative angle to what may be the conventional way of looking at things - drugs and guns and crime and so on… It has its impact in the community - this is something positive that there is a different way and a new way. And with Christ there as well and people coming together with a Christian vision, has a very positive impact"
#23	Long-term awareness of and support of PeaceWeek.
#24	Vaguely aware of it for some time, occasional involvement.

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[43] I asked the respondent to enlarge on this: "Well, if we can recognise each other as human beings being made in the image of God, and respecting each other, respecting the sacredness of life, implicitly that's what Peace Week is about." I asked if the church had a role in that. "I think constantly that's the church's role, and I don't think we, the church can sit back and leave it to the world, that's what the church is here for. But I think the church has relegated that responsibility and has become somewhat lukewarm, become liberal." This is then contradicted by the answer to Q23.

Q23: Has your church been involved in PeaceWeek?
No. / Yes. In what ways (Prayer / Joined in PeaceWeek activities or events /
Have put on our own linked activities or events / other).

#1	None
#2	No. "Peace Week comes around each year and we've never managed to really, meaningfully make any kind of significant contribution. I've seen an email, typically from yourself… and I think, 'Oh no, we really ought to do something for that...' So… there's a niggling sense of: 'it would be good to do something… but I'm not sure what we would do that would fit the bill'. And we've lots going on, it just kind of slides by."
#3	"Well, yes, we have attended things… So we will go to church and announce where they're having things and, yeah, some of my people will turn up at various things all over the place. …we'll have a prayer meeting and we would make it a prayer issue, but no particular activities other than that."
#4	No.
#5	"…not since I've been here."
#6	"Not really."
#7	Prayer. Has hosted a PeaceWeek event on 2 or 3 occasions.
#8	Some have gone on the walks. We put the posters up.
#9	No. Apart from prayer. A few individuals have gone on the marches.
#10	"We were for the first two or three years, but not since then. I'm afraid I find it was diminishing returns. I mean, we participated with some enthusiasm in the first one. Our art project helped with sharing skills about lantern-making and stuff like that."
#11	Not really. Made some lanterns one year; have advertised, prayed.
#12	Lantern Parade, lantern making, Own linked events in recent years.
#13	Lantern Parade and making. Hosting PeaceWeek planning meetings. Linked Peace Sunday Service shared with local mosque.
#14	"…we supported PeaceWeek… when it came into [this area]." Lantern Parade
#15	Prayer, joined in Lantern Parade; own events.
#16	None.
#17	Very little. Some publicising.
#18	Brought students to events for several years. Occasionally held own linked events.
#19	Yes. Joining with Lantern Parade. Advocacy for it. Own events: building open for prayer, vigil, bracket PeaceWeek with emphasis in both services.
#20	Yes. Encouraging people to come. Hosted Lantern Making and other events fro time to time. Daily morning prayer linked in that week.
#21	Yes. Encouraging people to come. Peace themed evening service.
#22	For a while but not recently [got involved again in 2011 – hosted events].
#23	Yes. Prayer, publicising, attending events, hosting events, holding own activities and events such as peace-themed Sunday services.
#24	Occasionally. Joining Lantern Parade. Hosted workshop and other events.

Q24: What reasons do you have for your involvement / non-involvement?

#1	"The emphasis is not social action, its about teaching, preaching the word, establishing the people in the faith to live a holy life and be light and salt in theor immediate community. I can see the opportunity within the peace week but in terms of capacity we may not be able to.. It wouldn't be the main priority for us."
#2	"…in all the priorities, in all the burdens and the things that you feel you have to give your focus to it hasn't yet made it to that place that we've said, 'This is something we feel corporately we've all got to focus in on.' I think, theologically, I don't think there's any theological reason to not support peace, I think maybe the only thing that could be remotely called theological about it is the apprehension of "are we going to get ourselves entangled in something that's going to become a frustration." [reference to caution about working with other churches]
#3	"…because we are part of this community, and everything that happens in it affects us." "I don't live in the community, but lots of the people I am responsible for live there, so I can't simply say it has nothing to do with me."
#4	"…prioritising… we just felt that's something that we could encourage people to attend and get involved in, but we didn't feel as a church that we could give the time to it."
#5	Current priority on looking inward. "…getting this place functioning in ways that are attracting, we really are drawing people in, our disciples are really working, and then… we are actually sending people out so that we've got a sense of mission as well… a sense of mission I think lifts our faith levels, and then our eyes should be out to looking at what else is going on in the city."
#6	[Only recently moved into the area.] "…in the future we need to explore maybe holding joint services with other churches that could be at our venue, it could be at other places, as well as encouraging our members to participate in the various activities that go on, during that time."
#7	Busyness and would like more notice. "…there are so many events going on, so much that we get involved in that it's round before, you haven't organised anything." Possibility of publicity not being passed on.
#8	"Primarily because it's local, it's a problem that affects people on our patch - or used to - we feel responsible really."
#9	"I think the easy way out is to say because we weren't sent information in that regard." [they were!] [When prompted:] "If the leadership was very interested and keen and engaged the people, you would have the majority going. So it's because we didn't actively engage in it."
#10	[Reasons for initial involvement] "I suspect it was because a number of, probably my youth club members, had been affected directly by violence. And it was a very, very current issue. There was no difficulty in persuading people that that was a worthwhile thing. And I think in some ways it is a measure of the success of strategies all around, I think if you asked any on the community, on the estates they would agree that life is, I mean I'm not saying the gangs have gone away or the problems have gone away completely, but they're far less acute than they were." [And subsequent non-involvement] "I think there was a sense of, it became oh this again, when we were you know, yet again turning up with our lanterns to walk from Platt park."

#11	"…we have talked about it, but we do feel on the extreme edge of that movement, geographically." "I did have a big, big intention to get involved this year, but it kind of crept up upon me, and before I was with it it was gone."
#12	"I think it's at the heart of the gospel message: that sense of peace and reconciliation. I think it's the church's belief that we should all be involved in that sort of work."
#13	Not asked – out of time
#14	"What can we as a church do through something like being part of PeaceWeek to then go on to have other conversations, that we might in some way be a resource both through physical space or through working with partners like Peace Builders to enable further work to go on. I think that's.. I'm clear that Jesus is, that's what he's asking Christians to do, to be part of those conversations, so I will be part of that wider community activity in order that I might find ways to have other kind of conversations"
#15	"…slight[ly] selfish.. in that it is about getting the church recognized… it's publicity… because, at the core of it, is just having the church open as an oasis, and an opportunity to pray or think or be aware, but we quite like the thought that other members of the community see that…"
#16	Personal busy-ness with several churches to look after.
#17	Bad internal communications. Personal busyness with several churches to look after. Tendency within congregation to leave it to others.
#18	PeaceWeek involvement has been a way of putting flesh on a desire to link better with the local community.
#19	"…it's a local issue that's real. It's something we're aware of, especially those of us who work in the community." Fits our justice ethos. Christians need to be peace-makers.
#20	Part of congregations' involvement in local community anyway.
#21	As #20.
#22	"I was very impressed with the vision and what you were about. But then it seems to have just kind of drift apart or whatever you know and that's partly I suppose my fault in a way too in that you know you have so many other things or trying to fulfil needs or whatever."
#23	Comes out of the church's long-standing youth work tradition. We know and have grown up with local young people some of whom get caught up in the gangs.
#24	The intention is there, but busyness and priorities have been an issue. Was told off publically by a member for not being involved!

Q25: Do you feel your church has benefited from involvement in Peace Week? If so, in what ways?

#1	n/a
#2	n/a
#3	"Peace Week is one of the means by which I am able to keep my church focused on community, you know, and what is going on there."
#4	n/a
#5	n/a
#6	[Asked as hypothetical] "…our congregation members will be able to meet new people, make new friends, and new contacts, as well as increase the number of local activities, and issues on the ground, which might be leading to some of them taking out volunteering roles where they could apply transferable skills back to us."
#7	"Well, it certainly did." But didn't say how – changed subject.
#8	"Anything that informs the church of what's going on in the area and highlights it is good."
#9	n/a
#10	Not asked – out of time.
#11	n/a
#12	"…to underpin that sense of peace and reconciliation as a concept that you have to engage with and do something about if you can."
#13	Not asked – out of time.
#14	See answer to Q23b.
#15	"Yes, because one of the nice things about the way we do it, with the sort of music, and the openness, and people drift in, and they, people are saying, 'Can we do it for other things now?'"
#16	n/a
#17	n/a
#18	"Yeah, I think it's of benefit, certainly to the community. It hasn't quite caught on in the university in the way I wish it would."
#19	Never evaluated as such: "that is not why you'd do it …anything that draws people together around a common cause tends to be really healthy. So I would say probably we have, in ways that are maybe not very tangible, but... in terms of our commitment to the community, to be seen as a place where we proclaim peace is quite significant."
#20	Yes. "…they like to feel there's something they can be involved with that's actually going to make a difference." Gives a good message to wider Manchester, but also gives people a focus - important.
#21	As #20.
#22	Yes, Especially with the younger kids at the Lantern March realising there were so many more people. Broadened their vision.
#23	Asked with previous question and not addressed in the answer.
#24	Not asked – ran out of time.

Appendix 5 HOME OFFICE STATISTICS: HOMICIDE

Table 1   Offences currently[1] recorded as homicide: Greater Manchester Police, 1977 to 1995[2]

Year[2]	Total	method = shooting	circumstance = faction fighting or feud	method = shooting and circs = faction fighting or feud
1977	23	0	0	0
1978	26	0	0	0
1979	37	3	0	0
1980	22	0	0	0
1981	31	0	0	0
1982	26	2	0	0
1983	28	3	0	0
1984	34	1	0	0
1985	29	3	0	0
1986	33	0	0	0
1987	49	3	7	0
1988	49	3	0	0
1989	44	10	0	0
1990	29	1	0	0
1991	53	9	4	0
1992	54	3	0	0
1993	42	8	0	0
1994	35	4	3	2
1995	40	4	1	1

1. Data for 1977 to 1994 are as at 10 May 2007. Data for 1995 are as at 9 October 2006.
2. Offences are shown according to the year in which they were initially recorded by police as homicide. This is not necessarily the year in which the offence took place or the year in which any court decision was made.

Table 2
Offences currently[1] recorded as homicide: Greater Manchester Police, 1996 to 2007/08[2]

Year[2]	Total	method = shooting	gang-related[4]	method = shooting and gang-related
1996	44	7	..	..
1997	42	7	..	..
1997/98	43	5	..	..
1998/99	52	1	..	..
1999/00	78	7	..	..
2000/01	53	11	..	..
2001/02	69	11	..	..
2002/03[3]	220	6	..	..
2003/04	53	9	..	..
2004/05	56	7	..	..
2005/06	52	5	..	..
2006/07	56	4	..	..
2007/08	49	6	0	0

.. denotes not available
1. Data for 1996 and 1997 are as at 12 November 2007. Data for 1997/98 to 2007/08 are as at 4 November 2008.
2. Offences are shown according to the year in which they were initially recorded by police as homicide. This is not necessarily the year in which the offence took place or the year in which any court decision was made.

3. Year 2003/04 includes 172 victims of Dr Harold Shipman.
4. The additional circumstance of 'gang-related' was introduced only in 2007/08 financial year.

'Breaking Down Barriers – Building Bridges'

Community Meeting

Saturday July 6th 2002, 7pm – 10pm

@

Moss Side Millenium Powerhouse
Raby Street, Moss Side

The meeting will look at some of the issues that have been identified through recent meetings in our community about the 'guns and gang violence' and is being supported by local churches, 'Mothers Against Violence' and the leaders of the 'Gangstop' march.

These are:-

*Core values in our community*

The education system and young boys

Working with the authorities e.g. police, councillors, schools, local authorities etc

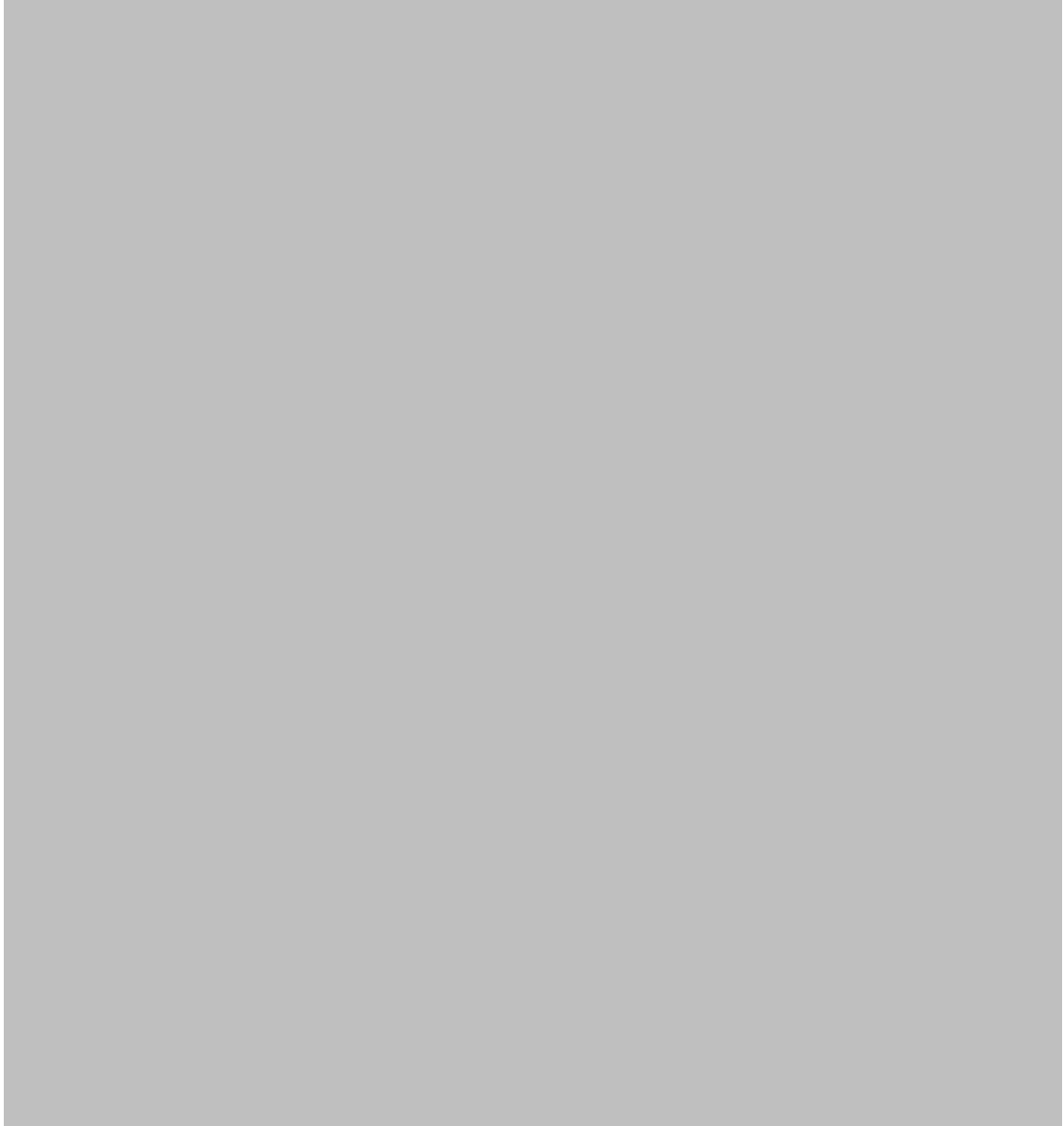The outcome of the meeting will be to find a strategy to address these issues.

Chaired by Rev. Les Isaac, Ascension Trust

Make A Difference In Your Community The Change Begins With You

Appendix 7 POSTER FOR CARISMA LAUNCH
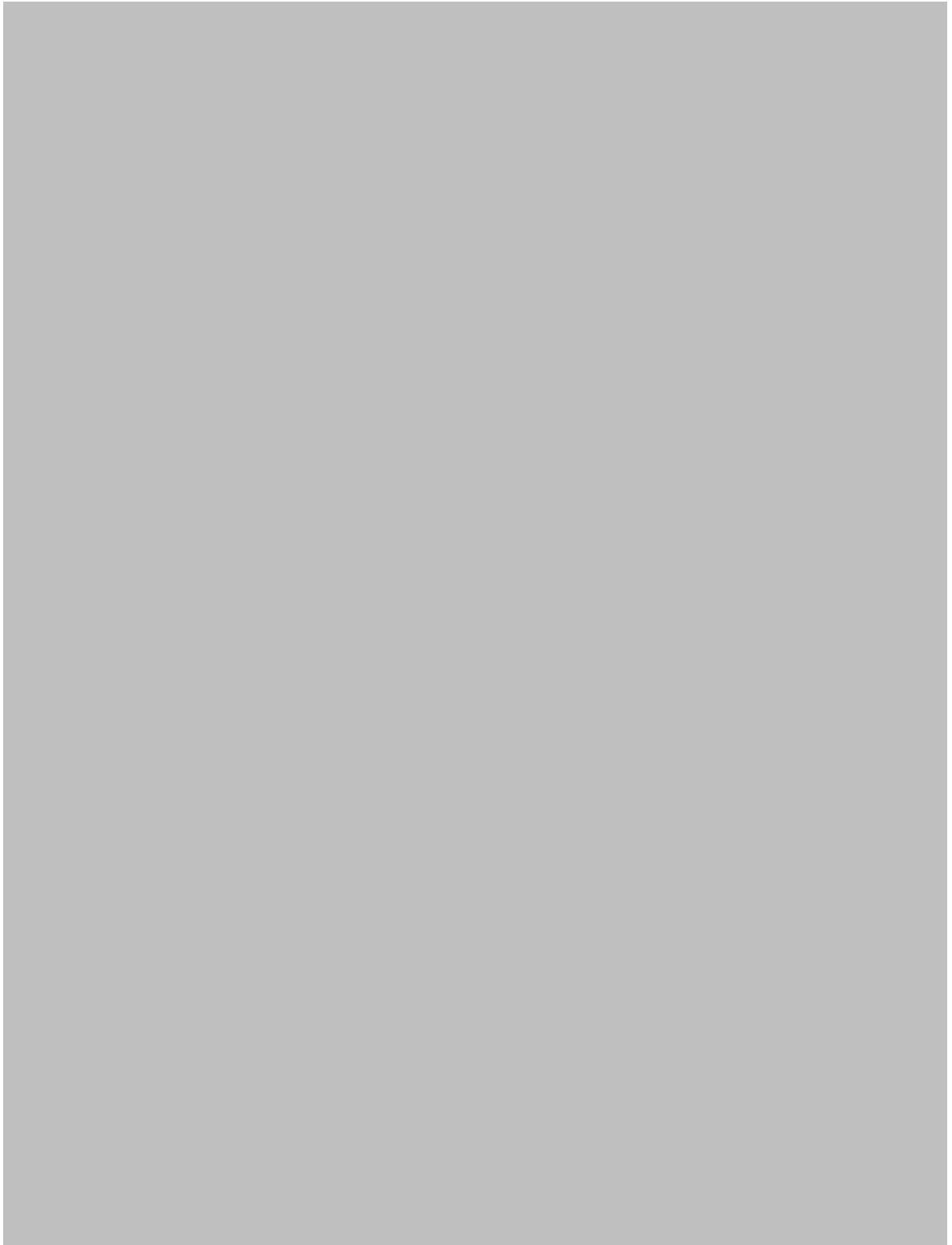
Appendix 8 CARISMA PUBLICITY LEAFLET, 2003.

(Showing temporary office and website arranged through Urban Presence.)

Text:

CARISMA has been formed as a result of a series of community meetings that followed the 'Gangstop' march in the summer. With 14 young people killed through gang- related violence in the last three years the march was an expression of local feeling that 'something must be done'.

The statement of purpose for Carisma is: **"life-chances for young people in the community."**

This would include not just young people directly but also families, the wider community, schools, employers - anyone who could positively affect young people, this generation and the next. We would also have a concern for the health and growth of the wider community in itself as a well- functioning community will provide a more positive and supportive environment for young people to grow up in.

It would also include issues such as under-achievement in education, discrimination in education and employment, perception of young people in the community, role-models, parenting, health issues - anything that can contribute towards creating 'life-chances' that are viable and attractive alternatives to what draws them to the gangs and street crime.

We recognise there is a lot of great work going on already towards these ends - voluntary and statutory, small and large groups and projects. Initially we want to:

• find out what is already happening locally to create life- chances for young people, how well it is being accessed, and how effective it is being.

• link together existing local groups and the community to provide a united voice to Council, Government, Media, Funders.

• find out what local people's needs are and ensure they are aware of existing provision.

• increase the capacity of existing provision and, where there may be gaps, see new initiatives begun.

• An important part of all of this will be listening to the young people themselves.

We do not claim to be experts or that the situation can be changed overnight. We're local people concerned to see a better future for our young people.

life-chances for young people in the community.

Appendix 9 INVITATION LETTER FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Dear

I am writing to invite you to a Manchester Church Leaders' meeting regarding a significant opportunity for the Church that has opened up through the follow up to the 'Gangstop' march that took place earlier this summer. Please take the time to read this letter through - I believe it is very important.

You may have heard of the 'Gangstop' march which happened on June 1st. This was a superb event where local people in two of the areas in Manchester currently blighted by drugs gang-based violence came together to say 'no more' and to express a desire to do something - not just about the gangs but the social and economic problems of which they are a symptom. Particularly encouraging was the involvement of local Christians in the initiating and organising of this event. The march also attracted much positive attention from the media, and from both local and national politicians who recognise that a 'bottom up' movement such as this, being of and supported by the local community, has far more chance of achieving something than any number of 'top down' initiatives.

Two months on there have been a number of follow-up meetings in Longsight and Moss Side and a strategy for long-term action is beginning to emerge. These have been facilitated by Les Isaac of Ichthus who heads up the Ascension Trust based in London. Les has been instrumental in working with churches and communities in Jamaica setting up projects in response to gang violence there. His visits to Allan Simpson's church in Moss Side earlier this year with some of the Jamaican workers provided much of the impetus behind 'Gangstop'. With the support of local people, organisations and politicians that is being expressed it has become widely recognised that there is a window of opportunity open to do something positive and worthwhile in these hurting and deprived communities. Building trust and self-esteem, creating life-chances for young people as realistic alternatives to 'gangsta culture', dealing with economic, educational, employment, racial and law and order issues. Etc, etc. (See also Luke 4 v18-19)

With the involvement of Christians from day one there is also a unique opportunity for the churches to take a leading role, not just the local congregations, but with real support and practical involvement across the city. But we need to move fast and use the impetus that exists. The question is already being asked "where is the Church"? as people and agencies have so far been quicker than we have to see that the Church has a role to play here. If we don't... there are other groups that could move in, such as the Nation of Islam. If we don't... the gang-violence problem will get worse and the spread into other areas (which is already beginning) will increase. This was the case in Jamaica, and is what is happening in parts of London. If the Church can't be instrumental in helping bring wholeness to needy communities, and modelling

unity and relationship, what are we doing here?

With all this in mind Les Isaac is keen to meet with local and other key church leaders here in Manchester as soon as possible to share more fully. Les and I know each other from way back and he has asked me to help set this up. I needed no persuasion as I am already committed, not least as a local resident, to supporting Gangstop, and was unaware of Les' involvement until meeting him at one of the follow-up meetings a few weeks ago. I can commend him to you as a man of God, passionate to bring the Kingdom into these areas of our city. This is why I am writing to you to invite you to a meeting with Les on Saturday September 21, 2pm which will be hosted by Pastor Allan Simpson at the Church of God of Prophecy Christian Centre, Moss Lane East, Moss Side.

PLEASE make it a priority to be there.

If you'd like to know more please contact me at xxxxx, or email: xxxxx. Or if you would like to contact Les personally his email address is: xxxxx, or phone xxxxx.

Thanks for reading.

Paul Keeble

(on behalf of Urban Presence, Manchester Prayer Network, Brunswick Parish Church)
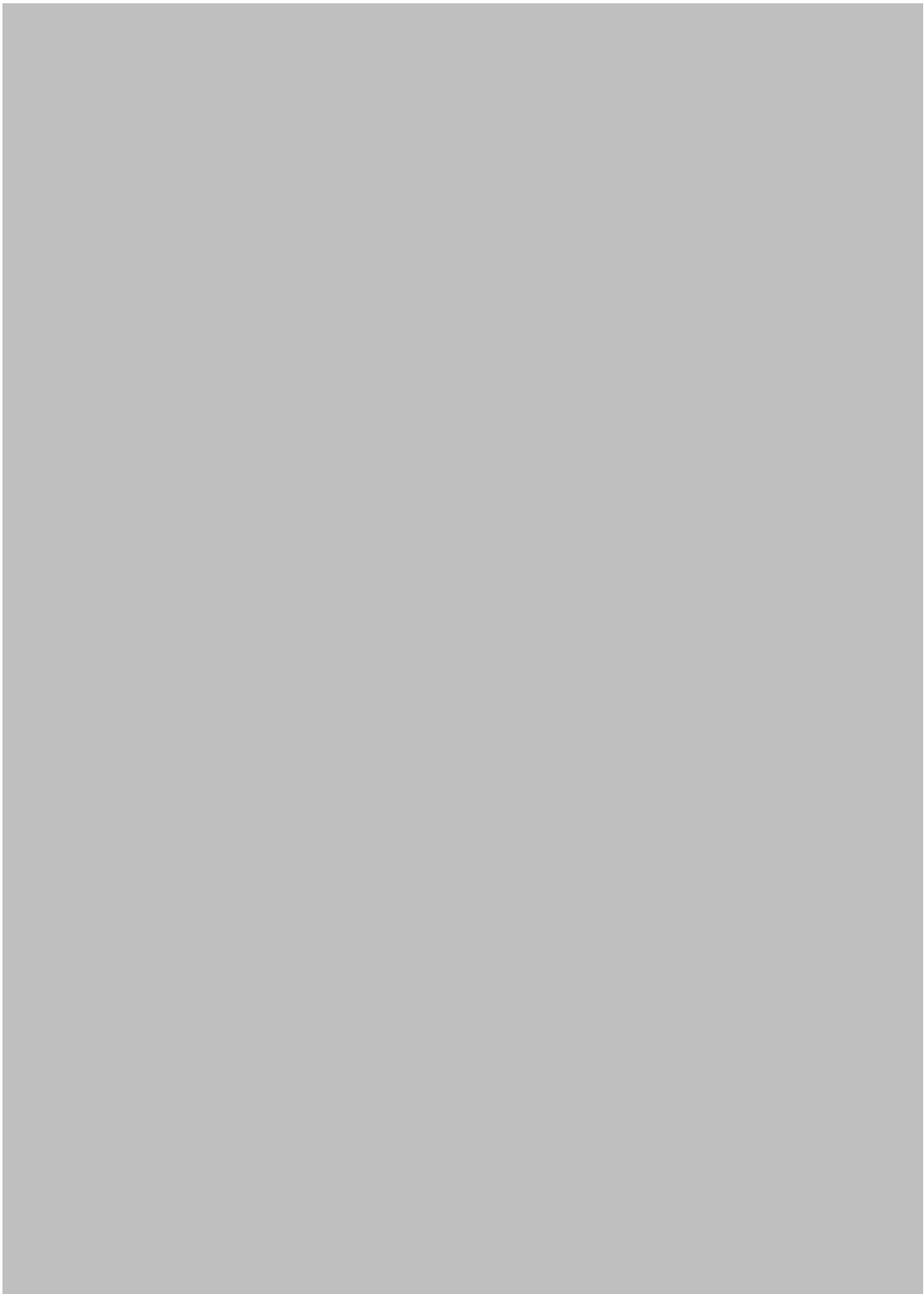
PS: Manchester Prayer Network has offered its full support to Gangstop, which will, among other things, feature in the Prayer Network meeting on 25th September. Les Isaac's co-worker David Shosanya will be attending.

Appendix 10 PEACEWEEK 2008 PROGRAMME LEAFLET

Front/back

Inside

Appendix 11 EMAIL TO LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS AND CONTACTS

Date: Friday, September 16, 2005 7:13:46 pm

Subject: Fwd: Community response to Hulme shooting

Hi

Sorry if you've had this message already by another means, but I wanted to make sure the local churches were aware of this event and able to respond.

Here is another opportunity for the people of God in this area to express their support for and commitment to the wider community in a very simple, visible and practical way. Please announce this meeting and walk at your Sunday morning service and encourage your people to attend.*

Our presence will be noted.

Our absence will also be noted.

Thank you.

> Begin forwarded message:
>
> Greetings,
>
> Following the recent shootings in the area a number of people have expressed that there should be a response from the community.
>
> We will be meeting at the Saltshaker on Bedwell Street, Moss Side at 7.30pm on Sunday 18th to pray then walk to Hulme to lay flowers.
>
> All are welcome
>
> Yours
>
> Claire

*I know for some churches this may clash with your Evening Service, but maybe you could prayerfully consider what a potential act of witness it could be for one Sunday to ask people to attend this meeting instead.
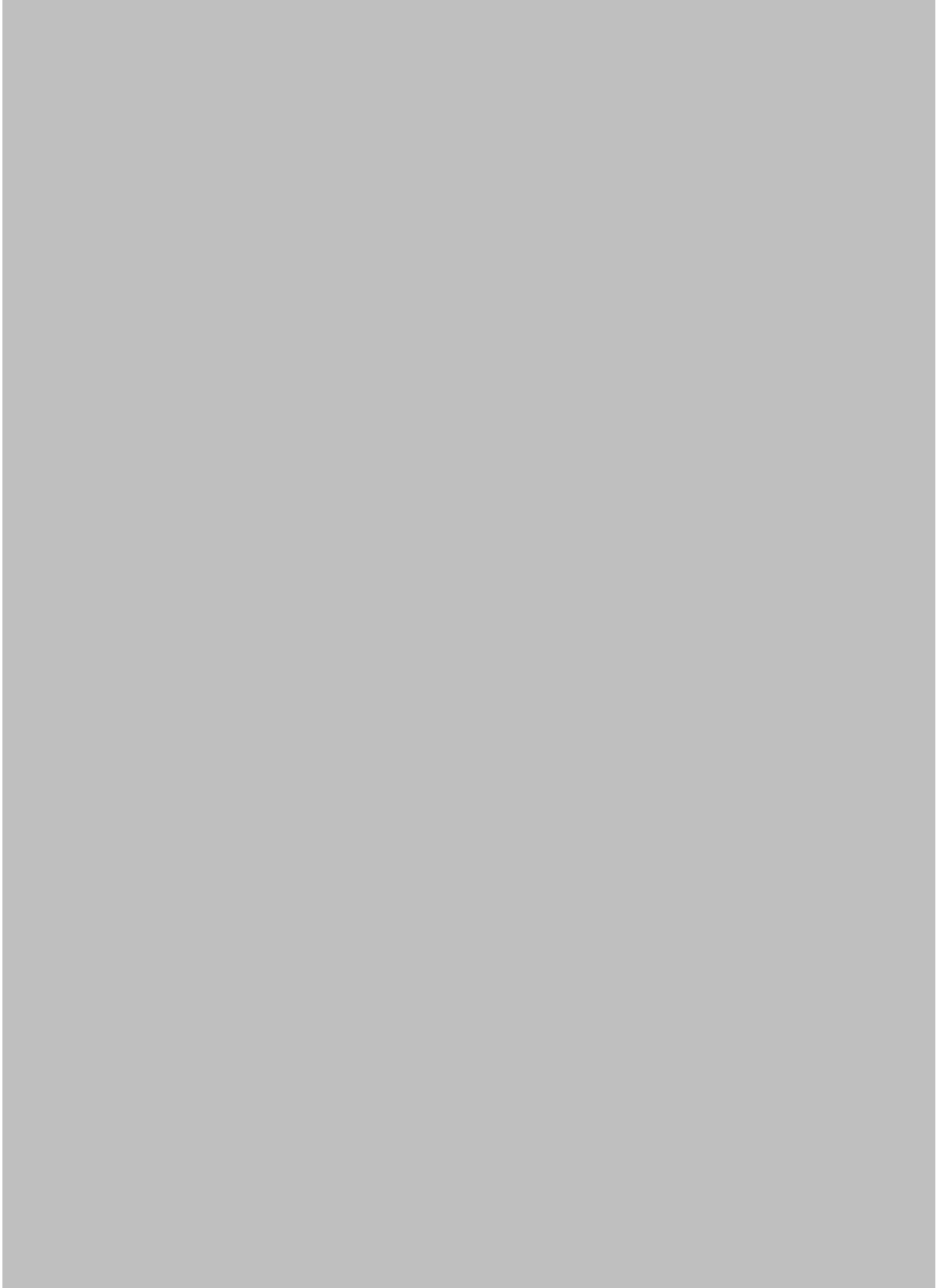
yours

Paul Keeble

CARISMA

Community Alliance for Renewal, Inner South Manchester Area
Life-chances for Young People in the Community.
info@carisma.me.uk
www.carisma.me.uk

Appendix 12 FUN DAY LEAFLET

Appendix 13 CAR PARKING SURVEY

Appendix 14 NEIGHBOUR'S DAY LEAFLET

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