Living in two worlds: A study of the variety and characteristics of church life and policies in selected Church of England parishes

Thesis

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LIVING IN TWO WORLDS:

A study of the variety and characteristics of church life and policies in selected Church of England parishes.

A thesis submitted to The Open University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Interdisciplinary Social Sciences) by Colin Hill, B.Sc. on 29th February, 1988

VOLUME 2
( of 4 volumes )
Chapters IV to VI
Chapter Four

DEFINITIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Diagram 4.1
1. Introduction

There has been pressure on, and from within, the Church urging two quite different stances towards the 'new situation' referred to at the end of the last chapter. The pressures seem to result from a basic dichotomy of opinion. Ferris contrasts the perception of the church as an "organisation for worship" with demands that the church "be relevant" through social action. (Ferris (1962) p.9) Berger contrasted those in the church who "maintain a supernaturalist position" with those who swallow modernity "hook line and sinker" (Berger (1969) p.31f and p.34). Habgood uses less colourful language, but makes the same distinction between "resistance" or "accommodation" to secular values and patterns. (Habgood (1983) p.65 - following Gilbert (1980) p.133) We note, in passing, that a conclusion in our discussion about secularisation in Chapter Three was that one way of accommodating pressures was to become more exclusively religious. Similarly, the church may resist modern expectations by refusing to confine itself to matters associated with the supernatural. The point remains valid, however, that there appear to be two alternative responses to the modern situation.

Towler and Coxon point to the responses to the publication of "Honest to God" (1) as illustrative of the polarisation of thinking. The two emphases could, however, be traced well back into the history of Christianity. Bishop Stubbs wrote in 1873 of the contrast between "sacredotal" ministry and the role of clergy as community leaders. (Stubbs (1873) p.307f) Bailey points to the distinction between 'orantes' and 'laborantes' in the Medieval church (Bailey (1983) p.233), the context from which the distinction between
'secular' and 'religious' clergy also arose. (2) This can be seen in the Biblical tradition: in, for example, the story of Martha and Mary (3) (4) and the divergent strands of prophetic and cultic religion in the Old Testament. Thus the debate about differing emphases is not just the result of modern secularisation: rather, like secularisation itself, roots can be traced back to the earliest parts of the Judeo-Christian tradition. (5)

There have been many who have been quite clear that the church should be the institution concerned exclusively with religious affairs (Martin (1980) p.25), and not become an amateurish and unnecessary social-work agency. (6) (7) Its concerns should be with 'spiritual matters'. (8-15)

This is how the local church and its clergy often seem to have understood their role. Researches into attitudes of clergy in the Dioceses of Ripon and Sheffield showed clergy as being remarkably consistent in their choice of religious priorities. (16) Other studies of attitudes within and towards the church have produced similar pictures. (17-23) In all of this there is an emphasis on personal, other-worldly religion, which might be thought of as modern pietism. (24) Winter sees this clearly as the predominant form of religion in the contemporary residential community (Winter (1963) p.16): a version of the privatised religion referred to in the last chapter of this study. (25)

On the other hand there have been writers urging the church in quite the opposite direction; namely to become more involved in, and committed to, humanitarian causes. This would mean moving away from its preoccupation with the strictly religious: allowing the "world to set the agenda for the church". (26) A wide variety of Christian leaders and writers have
There are pressures from outside, as well as within, the Christian community for the Church to fulfil this secular role. Claire stresses the importance of the socio-economic role of religious organisations. (Claire (1965) p.30) Perkins stresses the churches' part in building up of communities. (Perkins (1965) p.15) Other writers make similar points. (40-42) This is a particular expectation of the Church of England. As an established church, it has been felt by some to have a special obligation to be involved in secular caring. (43-46) Despite this perception of the historical commitment of the Church of England, there have been radical changes of established patterns (47) (48); clergy have been deployed in quite new ways (49-51) and church buildings used in different ways. (52)

These two apparent strands, one urging more concentration on religion and the other more engagement with this world, are perceived by Perman as quite divergent: "they can no longer be thought to be within hailing distance of each other" (Perman (1977) p.227). A number of labels have been used to try to identify the two camps: "pietism" versus "servanthood" (Winter (1963) p.20); "puritans" versus "anti-puritans" (Towler (1969) pp.112-115); "pietists" versus "activists" (Trublood (1970) p.17); "particularists" versus "universalists" (Milson (1975) pp.91-100).

This polarisation in part represents the two logical alternatives which face the church as a separated-out institution (53): it either accepts the role which confines it to things religious, or it fights to retain its concern for, and involvement with, secular life. Care must be taken, however, not to assume that there is a radical opposition between these two emphases, an
opposition which might not be present at a local level. What partisan writers assume to be a polarity need not necessarily be such. From this point on, this study will be preoccupied with attempting to show how the local church does actually behave as a separated-out institution. Does it accept or reject confinement to religious matters, or is there a mixture of both acceptance and rejection? To examine this we need to define the terms which will form the basis of our analysis.

2. Definitions of Concepts used in this Study
(a) Available terms
It is apparent from the previous section that a variety of terms have been used to describe two emphases in the life of the church. These different pairs of expressions do not have exactly similar meanings, but indicate similar areas. There are at least three major problems in adopting the labels such as "pietism/servanthood" quoted above: firstly, they tend to retain packages of meaning associated with the emphasis of the writer using them; secondly, some contain specific historical connotations (e.g. pietism); and thirdly, some have judgemental overtones (e.g. anti-puritans). For our purposes we need clear unambiguous concepts to use as the basis for the construction of a model of the local church.

We have already defined our use of the word religion. We shall continue to use such expressions as 'narrowly religious' to describe the other-worldly activity of the local church. Yet the adjective 'religious' has too many shades of meaning in common use to be suitable for our purposes.

'Holy' is a term which might have been employed if it did not have such a strong value content in how it is often used. In writings on religion
'holy' usually implies superior and highly desirable from the point of view of believers. 'Holy' refers to "things set apart by a peculiar emotional attitude, usually of respect and awe ..... reserved for special occasions and set about with taboos". (Davis (1949) p.520) Thus 'unholy' is also an emotionally charged expression, implying contamination as well as subordination to the holy.

The word chosen for use here is 'sacred', which we define in sub-section (b) below.

The antonym of 'sacred' is 'profane', but like 'unholy' this word implies uncleaness. 'Profane' is used by Davis as a term which includes both 'ordinary' things (items not charged with emotions or restricted by taboos) and the 'unholy'. Hence he regards it as an ambiguous term which is of little use in sociological analysis. (op.cit. p.520) (54)

The use of 'sacred' and 'profane' together must always imply that the latter is contaminated and of less value. Durkheim writes that sacred things "are naturally considered superior in dignity and power to profane things". (Durkheim (1976 edn.) p.37)

The term chosen for use here is 'secular'. Please note that 'secular' and 'sacred' do not refer to categories which are necessarily totally exclusive of each other. If antonyms were used, some judgement would be implied about a necessary mutual exclusiveness between the two areas. This could pre-judge the outcome of this research. The terms are used to distinguish two areas, but not necessarily to imply any opposition between them.
(b) 'Sacred orientation' and 'Secular orientation'

The word 'sacred' is used here to mean that which is set apart by association with the supernatural. Thus sacred orientation means: directed towards a supernatural entity or entities.

This does not coincide entirely with Durkheim's use of the word 'sacred', which entails the sacred having some special power (55), but the overlap with Durkheim's usage is substantial. (56) To define 'sacred', Durkheim writes that it is sufficient to understand that the sacred is to do with the "ideal and transcendental world", as opposed to the material world (Durkheim (1976 edn.) p.39).

The word 'secular' is used here to designate that which pertains to this world. Thus secular orientation means: direction towards this worldly objectives and capable of rational justification without reference to the transcendental.

(c) Sacred and Secular Orientation in the Local Church

Sacred orientation and secular orientation are terms used to distinguish between different features of the life of local churches. Things which are sacred orientated include the devotional life of the local church; direct evangelism; worship and preparation for worship; prayer groups; Bible study groups etc. These activities are the church being the specialist religious organisation, since they are activities which are exclusive to a religious group.

Secular orientated features of the life of the church are things like community care and social welfare; personal (not 'spiritual') counselling.
(57); supporting other caring organisations; maintaining contact with local
government and other secular groups; and purely pastoral (not evangelistic)
visiting. In these areas the church is doing things that don't need any
theological justification, and in which other groups can, and do, engage.

There are then some aspects of the life of the local church which do not fit
so clearly into either category. These include the care and maintenance of
the church buildings; involvement in the wider church (through synods etc.);
administration and some fellowship groups and events which are a mixture of
building up 'spiritual fellowship' (kolnonia) and people simply enjoying
their time together. The occasional offices of funerals and weddings are
also ambiguous in this regard. They are religious services with a clear
other-worldly reference, but the participants may see the services in
entirely secular terms. Information about these ambiguous areas is not
sought, so that they are excluded from the study and the clear distinction
between 'sacred' and 'secular' preserved.

(3) Research Questions

(a) Concerning activities of the Local Church

The first research questions posed for us are about what the local church
does. We shall want to consider the extent of both its sacred orientated
activities and its secular orientated activities. The key to this exercise
is to devise a research instrument which will yield appropriate and
meaningful data.

Subsidiary to this are issues about what I shall call the 'well-being' of
the local church. It could, for example, be found that 60 per cent of local
churches had high levels of secular orientated activity and low levels of
sacred orientated activity. From this we might conclude that the church was predominantly secular in orientation. If, however, it happened that all of the above 60 per cent of the sample were small and weak churches, declining in membership, then the picture of the total 'local church' would be quite different. Thus, although this research is not principally a survey into the numerical state of the Christian religion in England, attention will have to be given to issues of church strength. Hence we shall be examining size of, and changes in, attendance and membership, and how these relate to other factors.

(b) Concerning priorities in the Local Church

(i) Function and purpose

The theoretical distinction has been noted in Chapter Two between the function and the purpose of religion: namely between what the religious groups does and what it intends to do. (58) In order to retain this distinction as we look at the life of local churches, we shall distinguish between activities (what the church does) and priorities (what the church intends to do).

There may be a whole host of features leading to a disparity between priorities and activities. (59) It could be that the life of the local church is determined by external factors such as the local context. A number of contextual influences such as New Town and housing age are prominent amongst the factors taken into account. Other elements of the social environment will be considered at the interview stage of this research. Regional variations are also eliminated at the interview stage. It is not, however, our purpose to conduct a detailed analysis of all possible external influences of each of the 144 churches which were
subjected to postal survey. In the larger of the samples we anticipate that the idiosyncrasies of local context would be 'averaged out' across the sample.

(II) **New Towns and priorities**

One major feature of how much correspondence there is between priorities and activities could be expectations derived from the past. It is commonplace amongst local church leaders to attribute the style of church life to the constraints of the past: "We've always done it like this"! It may be that these constraints will be much less powerful where new churches are built in new housing areas. A clear opportunity exists in New Towns for pre-determined priorities, rather than local precedents, to direct the life of the local church. (60) (61) It is for this reason that the sample of parishes examined will contain a proportion of New Town parishes. Not only will it be possible to compare what is happening in New Towns with what is happening in other areas in general, but further comparisons will be made between New Town parishes and those non-New Town parishes with a high proportion of new housing. Thus the sample will be divided between New Town parishes; other parishes with high levels of new housing and other parishes with low levels of new housing.

(iii) **Influence of the Clergy**

So far we have written about the local church and its priorities almost as though the local church were either a sentient being with its own mind, or else a group with clearly agreed and stated corporate priorities. The former is clearly not true and the latter may not be assumed.

Following the pattern of previous research in the Dioceses of Ripon and
Sheffield (62), initial data about priorities will be derived from the clergy. Subsequently we shall consider priorities expressed by lay leaders in the local church, but only in a sample small enough for these leaders (churchwardens) to be interviewed.

Two things arise from this: firstly that, initially at least, 'priorities' will actually mean 'clergy priorities'. Secondly, there will be some examination of the role of clergy in relationship to the local church. This was the reason for the excursion into consideration of models of leadership in section 4 of Chapter III of this study.

(c) Strands in the research and possible axes for modelling
To summarise the above, the following elements are being investigated and will either be incorporated into the modelling process or serve as a commentary on the research results and model:—

(i) Secular orientation
(ii) Sacred orientation
(iii) Nature of local church activities
(iv) Factors associated with church strength
(v) Priorities
(vi) Distinctiveness of New Town churches
(vii) The role of the clergy

The two principal concepts that we shall use will, however, be SACRED AND SECULAR ORIENTATION and PRIORITIES COMPARED WITH ACTIVITIES. The sacred-secular axis will facilitate consideration of the effect of secularisation on the church, which was discussed in Chapter Three of this study. (63) The priorities-activities axis will take into account the
distinction between function and purpose, which was raised in Chapter Two and discussed earlier in this chapter. (64)

This research is not an exercise in empirical hypothesis testing: it is substantially reflexive in nature. There are, however, a number of hypotheses implicit in the foregoing list of seven elements. These illustrate the questions that are around as we look for a conceptual framework to help us to understand local Church of England churches. These implicit hypotheses are:

I Local Anglican churches may be described as of one of two types: namely, those which are predominantly involved in secular orientated activity and those which are predominantly involved in sacred orientated activity.

II The general priorities, for either secular or sacred orientated work, which are held by the clergy correspond to the orientation of activities within the parish.

III Church life in New Towns is significantly different from that in other areas in that activities of the church are more directly determined by priorities.

IV Factors relating to the background and predisposition of the incumbent clergyman largely determine the activities in which the church engages.

Consideration of hypotheses I and II above will form a substantial part of the discussion about an appropriate analytical model for local churches in chapters six and ten. Hypotheses III and IV are dealt with respectively in the subsidiary areas of inquiry to do with the distinctiveness of church life in New Towns, the influence of the clergy and the numerical strength of
the local church; these constitute chapters seven, eight and nine.
Chapter 4 - Notes

2. See Deansley (1954) p.28.
5. See Chapter III, section 2(a) of this study.
8. Reed (1975) p.16.
14. Russell's allegorical tale 'Zahatopolk' describes the way in which the religious group tends to ritualise previously secular understandings. (Russell (1954) p.81 et seq.
15. Even article 19 of the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England seems to insist that the Church's concern is only with religion.
16. Percentages of clergy expressing first priorities in their work:
   Daily worship - 35%
   Preparation for Sunday - 19%
   Visiting - 10%
   Study of scriptures - 8%
   Encouraging community involvement - 3%
   Instigating community involvement - 1%
   Liaison with other clergy - 0
Liaison with other professionals - 1%
(Hill (1977) p.46)

17. Musgrove (1974) p.121f) discovered that church members were less concerned about acute social issues than were others.

18. Blackstone and Hadley (1971) found a negative association between Christianity and community activists.

19. A survey by "Now" magazine showed a general inclination for the Church to be less involved in politics. ("Now" (1979) p.24)

20. Howell-Thomas (1974) p.90) reports on the increasing tendency for the church to be perceived as a religious "island in a secular sea".

21. Edwards (1978) p.219) describes the churches as specialist religious "shops".

22. Perman (1967) p.219) writes of the upsurge of the "new puritans".

23. Jagger (1978) p.131) raises the issue of how modern liturgical trends led to an "over-concentration upon what was done in church".

24. "Pietism" was the term specifically used for the movement within the Lutheran Church in the seventeenth century and associated with Spencer. The movement called for personal spiritual devotion.


35. C.I.O. (1985) ("Faith in the City") - urging the Church's outward looking involvement in urban priority areas. (p.75 et seq.)


37. Webster (1979) p.78.

38. Butler (1972) p.27.


41. Hinings (1968) p.28: quoting research into general community expectations of the church.


44. Habgood (1983) p.128f) quotes the debate about the use of the Book of Common Prayer as illustrating the Church of England's role in wider society.

45. Taylor (1979) p.17) discusses the dangers inherent in the development of team ministries within the Church of England.

46. Jagger (1978) p.31) quotes Bishop de Condole's concern that liturgical changes in the Church of England might have led to an emphasis on worship at the expense of social action.

47. Harman (1968) p.44 urges a complete replacement of the parochial structure of the Church of England.

48. Wiesal (1966) p.154) points to the problem of "archalizing" in religion: seeing all truth as necessarily being "old truth".

49. Appleby et al (1973) suggests totally new ways of deploying stipendiary clergy: to minister to 'sectors' (youth etc.) rather than parishes.

51. Nankivell (1979) p.108) described clergy as having an important role as "auxiliary social workers" in New Towns.

52. Ede (1968) p.42) described some experimental forms of church design as integrating sacred and secular in bricks and mortar.

53. See Chapter III, section 4(d) of this study (page 68).

54. JG Davies draws attention to the literal meaning of profane as "outside the temple" as he writes of the way in which the distinction between sacred and profane ceased to have any meaning for the early church. (Davies (1968) p.4)

55. Durkheim's use of "sacred" is very similar to Weber's "primary charisma" (Weber (1964 edn.) p.2). Indeed Parsons declares the concepts to be identical (in Weber (1964 edn.) p.xxxiv). Although the emphasis does seem to be different: Weber is more concerned with the "power" in charisma, whereas Durkheim is primarily concerned with the separateness of the sacred.


57. The word 'counselling' is widely used in some evangelical parts of the church to describe prolonged discussions between a church member, usually a minister, and a non-member. The object, from the member's point of view, is to persuade the other person into some form of Christian commitment. I denote this as 'spiritual counselling'.

58. Chapter II section 2(b)(iii) (page 19).

59. Previous research did indicate a substantial disparity between what clergy thought was important and what the parish was doing. This did not seem to be because a new vicar had arrived and hadn't yet made his mark on the life of the church; the disparity was more evident in
parishes with longer serving clergy. It could have been that, either clergy were not influential in determining policies, or that policies were not implemented, or that clergy chose to set policies which were at variance with their own priorities! (Hill (1977) pp.18-21)

60. By 'New Towns' I mean those towns designated under acts of the British Parliament: e.g. New Town Act of 1965 "If the Minister is satisfied, after consultation with any local authorities who appear to him to be concerned, that it is expedient in the national interest that any area of land should be developed as a New Town by a corporation established under this act, he may make an order designating that area as the site of the proposed new town". (Chapter 59, schedule 1)

61. See the case argued by Jones for the church identifying its policies, aims and goals in New Towns. (Jones (1970) pp.89-111)


63. Chapter III, section 4 (page 64 et seq.).

64. Chapter II, section 2(b)(iii) (page 19) and this chapter, section 3(b)(l) (page 88).
Chapter Five

POSTAL SURVEY

Diagram 5.1

Outline of Research Process

General Observations
and Census/Sheffield Survey, (I)

Existing
typologies
and models, (II)

Discussion of
Theory

Secularisation (III)

Research (IV)
Questions

Primary
Questions

Secondary
Questions

Postal (V)
Survey

Preliminary
Modelling (VI)

Sample
Screening

Interviews (VI)

(1) New Town Parishes (VII)
(2) Role of Clergy (VIII)
(3) Well-being of Congregation (IX)

FINAL MODEL (X)

(Roman numerals in
brackets indicate
chapter numbers)
V POSTAL SURVEY

1. The Survey
   (a) Purpose
In any research theory must determine what is regarded as relevant fact. (1) Our theory is concerned with the local church's response to modern secularisation and in particular, with concepts of sacred and secular orientation. From the discussion at the end of the previous chapter it will be seen that there are primary and secondary areas of investigation, as follows: (2)

Primary areas of investigation:
   (i) Sacred and secular orientation of local church life.
   (ii) Priorities of the local church as compared with its activities.

Secondary areas of investigation:
   (iii) The distinctiveness of church life in New Towns.
   (iv) The role of the clergy.
   (v) The numerical strength and well-being of the local church.

Despite the space taken here to record the results of the postal survey, the survey is of limited significance in the main task of constructing a model. It was not designed as an exhaustive and definitive research into the primary areas of investigation: rather, it had two specific functions. The first was to yield exploratory data about both primary and secondary areas of investigation. Almost the whole of this chapter is concerned with setting out this exploratory data. Most of the discussion of the significance of particular results is left to Chapters Six to Ten. Basic statistics will be used in interpreting the data, but the exercise is exploratory and not definitive; especially as it leads to a subsequent, and more detailed, series of case studies. (3)
The second function of the postal survey is to act as a screening procedure for the selection of the sample of parishes in which interviews are to be conducted. This involved ensuring that the small sample for interview contained parishes with different levels of sacred and secular orientated activities and priorities, and also different amounts of new housing. Information about these features of particular parishes was yielded by the postal survey. Details of how the screening was accomplished can be found in Appendix II of this study. (4)

The questionnaire was sent out to, and completed by, clergy, rather than lay officers, for the following reasons:

(i) clergy are the executive officers of the local church, and thus the only people who could reasonably be expected to complete the questionnaire.

(ii) views of lay leaders in the local church are taken fully into account during the interview stage of data collection, when they are interviewed without the clergy being present.

(b) The Sample

In Chapter Four we noted the reason for examining New Town parishes, other parishes with high levels of new housing and other parishes with low levels of new housing. (5) The selection of particular areas was determined by a number of practical considerations relating to access to the parishes and support from diocesan authorities. Details of the precise way in which the sample was selected are to be found in Appendix I. (6)

The New Town parishes chosen were from the deaneries of Edgmond, Wrockwardine, Telford and Telford Severn Gorge in Telford; Bromsgrove in
Redditch; Frodsham in Runcorn and Milton Keynes. Excluding expanded towns (such as Northampton and Peterborough) and Washington and Skelmersdale, this contained all parishes in second and third generation New Towns in England.

That part of the sample from outside New Towns, and which included parishes with varying amounts of new housing, was from the Lichfield Diocese and the deaneries of Rugeley, Himley, West Bromwich, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Wednesbury. All of these parishes are within the West Midlands conurbation and overspill area, and thus most comparable with the New Town parishes in Telford and Redditch (which were the New Towns used for the interview sample).

All of this resulted in the questionnaire being sent to 144 parishes from 13 deaneries.

(c) The Questionnaire

A crucial part of this research is the development of a research instrument appropriate to exploring the primary research areas. When conducting research in the dioceses of Ripon and Sheffield a questionnaire had been developed through a pilot study and then used in the research itself. (7) This was substantially revised and enlarged and used for a pilot study to this present research, after which it was refined for use in the postal survey. Further details of this, together with the text of the questionnaire may be found in Appendix I. (8)

The assumption behind the questionnaire is that a pattern of responses would be produced and that these, transposed onto various nominal and ordinal scales (9) would disclose something of the phenomena under investigation.
This assumption is based, in part, on experience of using earlier forms of the questionnaire, as mentioned above.

The questionnaire was in eight sections as follows:

A. Questions to monitor variables such as demolition or building of houses, and pastoral reorganisation, as well as the length of time the clergyman had been in the particular parish.

B. Questions about sacred orientated activities of both clergyman and local church.

C. Questions about the priorities of the clergyman.

D. Questions about secular orientated activities of the local church.

E. Questions about religious and non-religious charities supported by the local church.

F. Questions about church membership and attendance.

G. Questions about type of area and age of housing.

H. Questions about the level of ecumenical activity in the parish.

In addition to data supplied by response to the postal questionnaire, information about clergy and parishes was obtained from other sources:

(i) The Theological College of the clergyman: the theological college at which each of the clergy were trained was identified from Crockford's Clerical Directory. With the help of two former Chief Secretaries of the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry, the colleges were categorised as being of different traditions of churchmanship.

(ii) Years in Orders: the date of ordination of the clergy in the sample was also obtained from Crockford's Clerical Directory.
(iii) Parish populations: estimates of the populations of the parishes were obtained from the handbooks of the five dioceses involved. (11)

(12) (13)

(d) The Mechanics of the Survey
Appraisal and support for the research were obtained from the Bishops and Rural Deans responsible for the parishes involved. This was not simply a matter of courtesy, but also a way of trying to maximise the return rate of the questionnaire. (14) Again to maximise the response rate, first class postage with pre-paid reply envelopes was used. A system of telephone reminders was also employed. This proved very effective in encouraging the return of completed questionnaires. (15) 83.33% of the questionnaires were completed and returned: of the 144 sent out, 86 were returned prior to the telephone reminder and 34 after the reminder.

Details of the scoring procedure are set down in Appendix I. (16) This resulted in the devising of 32 variables for which scores were sought for each of the parishes. These are listed and briefly described in Table 5:1 below.

Analysis of the data was undertaken using the Interactive Data Analysis (IDA) program in the form of the "IDA(STATS-LIB)" package. (17)

The result of all this was a data matrix of 32 variables for 144 parishes.
2. **The Analysis**

(a) **Limitations**

The primary purpose of the analysis of the postal questionnaire was not to empirically test hypotheses. The purpose was, as noted above, two-fold:

(i) To yield exploratory data on the five areas of investigation: sacred and secular orientation of local church life; the priorities of the local church as compared with its activities; the possible distinctiveness of church life in New Towns; the role of the clergy; and the numerical strength and well-being of the local church.

(ii) To provide a way of selecting a small sample of parishes in which in-depth interviews could be conducted.

Consequently, although statistical methods are used, they are only used to a level appropriate to this function. For example, the interaction between several variables is sometimes examined in order to see if the relationship between two variables is attributable to the influence of a third variable on them both. Sophisticated techniques of multi-variate analysis are not used, however, since they would be inappropriate to the limited purposes of the postal survey. (18)

The following description of initial results must be seen in the light both of these comments and of the fact that further consideration is given to the interpretation of the results in subsequent chapters.

(b) **Basic Data**

(i) **The Variables**

32 variables were assembled from the scores of the completed questionnaires and the data from Crockford's Clerical Directory and the diocesan handbooks.
The variables are listed and described in Table 5:1. The distribution table for each variable is set out in Appendix I. (19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference No. of variable</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nature of variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of years clergyman has been in parish</td>
<td>Number in range 1 to 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Whether or not a &quot;significant&quot; amount of demolition had taken place in parish in last 3 years</td>
<td>Yes or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Whether or not a &quot;significant&quot; amount of new building had taken place in parish in last 3 years</td>
<td>Yes or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Whether or not there had been a major share of pastoral reorganisation affecting parish in last 3 years</td>
<td>Yes or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Level of corporate sacred orientated activity</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Level of clerical sacred orientated activity</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Proportion of time of clergy spent on sacred orientated activity</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Clerical and corporate sacred activity score</td>
<td>Score in range 5 to 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Score for number of sacred charities supported</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Total score for level of sacred orientated activity</td>
<td>Score in range 6 to 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Level of corporate secular orientated activity</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Score for number of secular charities supported</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Total score for level of secular orientated activity</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference No.</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Nature of variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Score of priority given to sacred orientated activities</td>
<td>Score in range 167 to 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Score of priority given to secular orientated activities</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Frequencies of occurrence of any five &quot;clusters&quot; of top priorities</td>
<td>One of 5 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Nominal church membership level</td>
<td>Number in range 22 to 612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Size of average church attendance</td>
<td>Number in range 16 to 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Change in nominal membership size in last 3 years</td>
<td>% in range -219% to +335%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Change in average attendance in last 3 years</td>
<td>% in range -45% to +333%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Whether parish described as urban, suburban or rural</td>
<td>One of 3 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>% of housing of parish built since 1960</td>
<td>% in range 0 to 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Index of level of ecumenical activity</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Whether or not parish in a new town</td>
<td>Yes or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>If in a new town, then which one</td>
<td>One of 5 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Which deanery parish is in</td>
<td>One of 13 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Whether questionnaire returned and if so with or without reminder</td>
<td>One of 3 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Theological college attended by clergy</td>
<td>One of 32 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Year of ordination of clergy</td>
<td>Number in range 32 to 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Official population estimate for parish</td>
<td>Number in range 40 to 38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>&quot;Churchmanship&quot; (&quot;low&quot; to &quot;high&quot;) of college attended by clergy</td>
<td>Score in range 0 to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>&quot;Churchmanship&quot; (&quot;moderate&quot; or &quot;extreme&quot;) or college attended by clergy</td>
<td>One of 2 categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The application of statistical analysis to the data produced figures for either the association or correlation between most possible combinations of two variables. Because of the variety of the nature of the variables (categories, ranked categories, scores and continuous variables, both normally distributed and otherwise), several different statistical tests had to be used to produce meaningful results. (20) Table 5:2 is a chart indicating where either statistically significant associations or correlations were discovered, or else where the results of the tests, while failing to demonstrate statistically significant relationships between variables, gave every indication of some association being present.

It will be apparent that because of the methods used to arrive at many of the composite scores, the simplification of data during analysis and the fairly basic statistical tests employed, there is a rather greater chance of 'type 2' errors (that is, significant relationships between variables going undetected) than 'type 1' errors (chance associations appearing to be statistically significant). Thus slightly less weight can be given to the absence of associations between variables than to associations being demonstrated.
(iii) The most 'Active' Variables

Table 5: 2 shows that some of the variables are more frequently involved in associations than are others. Having eliminated associations between variables which are computationally related, then the 10 most 'active' variables, in rank order according to numbers of associations, are as follows:

- Whether parish is in a New Town) - equal first
- Level of church attendance) - equal first
- Number of years of clergyman in that parish.
- Corporate secular orientated activity score.
- Size of church membership.
- Score for number of sacred charities supported.
- Total secular orientation score.
- Score for number of secular charities supported.
- Change in level of church attendance.
- Score for clerical and corporate sacred orientated activity.

It is striking that whether or not a parish is in a New Town seems to be so heavily associated with other factors. This phenomenon is examined below.

(21)

There are four variables relating to the numerical strength of the local church: three of these appear in the list of ten most active variables (membership, attendance and change in attendance). This suggests that church strength is neither entirely a matter of luck nor entirely a matter determined by factors outside the scope of this inquiry, unless, of course, such factors also determined all those variables associated with church strength. The associations of the church strength variables are again
examined below. (22)

(c) Sacred and Secular Orientation

(I) Relationship between Sacred and Secular orientations

A major function of the postal survey is to provide information for further investigation of this primary area of interest. It is possible that there is a simple polarity between sacred and secular orientations: that is, churches are either secularly orientated or sacred orientated. If this is verified by the postal survey, then this polarity would need to be prominently represented in the model of the local church; as is implied in the comments of writers reported in Chapter Four. (23) For this simple model to be justified, negative associations would be required between variables measuring sacred and secular orientations. Table 5:3 below shows that this is not the case.

Table 5:3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sacred variables</th>
<th>Secular variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sec. act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Corporate sacred activity</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Clerical sacred activity</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Clerical sacred time use</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Clerical and corporate sacred activity score</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Sacred charities</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Total sacred score</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+/− = association, according to direction,

(+)/(−) = trend towards association, according to direction.
There are, it will be noticed, no negative associations, or even trends towards association, between secular and sacred variables; whereas there are a number of positive associations and trends between them. Thus there is no evidence of dichotomy between secular and sacred orientations, indeed there is every indication that levels of sacred and secular orientated activity are positively associated with each other.

As will be seen below, there is some indication of higher sacred priorities of the clergy being associated with low levels of secular orientated activity, and vice versa. (24)

The viability of the model of sacred versus secular orientation was explored and produced the same result: that there is no justification for assuming a simple polarity between sacred and secular orientation. (25) This means that any model developed will need to provide for levels of sacred orientation and secular orientation to increase at the same time or to decrease at the same time.

(ii) ‘Outward’ and ‘Inward’ churches

We have already noted that a large number of writers point to a polarity between sacred and secular orientation, which we cannot substantiate. (26) Discussing the Church of England report "Faith in the City" (27), Gladwin writes of the "local, outward-looking, participating and ecumenical church". (Gladwin (1986) p.6f) Habgood (1983) (p.122) writes of the "church for everybody" and (p.145f) of an openness associated with ecumenical commitment. The sixth report of the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England (28) reveals that its survey work shows ecumenically committed local churches giving more than other churches to
both sacred and secular overseas charities. This suggests that there are some churches which are 'outward-looking' and some churches which are 'inward-looking'.

To explore the viability of this model, variables which might indicate an 'outward' or an 'inward' church were identified. These variables were membership (as opposed to attendance), support of charities, secular orientated activities (as opposed to sacred orientated activities), ecumenical activity, secular (as opposed to sacred) priorities of the clergy and positive response to the present study as indicated to speed of questionnaire return.

Three models were examined so that their viability might be assessed. The model of an 'outward church' scored highly and seemed to be justified for further exploration. The model of an 'inward church' was less well justified as there was only weak evidence for its viability. Since the churches being considered all belong to the established Church of England, it is not really surprising that less evidence is found for the 'inward' type, which resembles the sect. The polarised 'outward versus inward' model was not supported at all by the evidence. All indications were that this model, like the 'secular orientated versus sacred orientated' model, did not represent the reality of the local church situation.

Thus, in searching for some evidence to indicate what kind of model of the local church might be worthy of further investigation, most results were negative. The only strong positive indication was of the 'outward' type of local church. This type might then be considered for inclusion in the eventual model.
(d) Priorities

(i) Expectations

In previous work (Hill, 1977) there had been evidence of a marked lack of association between the priorities of the incumbent and the actual policies being pursued in his parish. This was quite contrary to the rather obvious expectation that parishes would tend to do more of the things the vicar thought were important, and fewer of those things which he thought unimportant.

In the study mentioned, which involved a one-third sample of all parishes in the dioceses of Ripon and Sheffield, the actual scoring of priorities was rather crude and produced such a narrow distribution of scores that it was difficult to interpret the precise meaning of the results. In the present study a different, and much more sensitive, question was used in the questionnaire so as to illuminate the significance of the previous results.

(ii) Priorities versus Activities

The correlation between the total score for sacred orientated activity and sacred orientated priorities is only 0.027, using Spearman's rank correlation. (30) This means that a parish with the highest sacred activity score is not especially likely also to have a high sacred priority score. This confirms the results of the Sheffield/Ripon study, namely, that there is no apparent association between an incumbent having high sacred priorities and the parish engaging in a large amount of sacred orientated activity.

When the secular orientated priority and activity scores are compared, however, a different picture emerges, as is seen from Tables 5:4 and 5:5
The two tables above demonstrate clearly that there is an association, not easily attributable to chance, between an incumbent setting a high store by secular orientated activity and his parish having a large amount of such activity. Furthermore, Table 5:6 below shows the possibility of a negative association between the priority given by clergy to sacred orientated activity and the total level of secular orientated activity in the parish.
Table 5: Total Secular score v. Sacred priority score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sacred Priority Score</th>
<th>Total Secular Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 3.616 (p = 0.0572)

The association in Table 5:6 is below the 5% significance level, and the Spearman rank correlation coefficient (on the uncollapsed table) of -0.209 is not, taken alone, a very dramatic correlation. Taken together, however, the figures do seem to suggest a negative association between sacred priority scores and total secular scores.

These results do not confirm the results of the Sheffield/Ripon study, and it was not possible to explain the difference in terms of either the much larger numbers of rural parishes in the older study or any difference in wording of the two questionnaires.

(iii) Consistency between Priorities and Activities

Table 5:7 summarises the associations between the priorities held by the clergy and the orientation of activities within the parish. It shows that there is a consistency between priority and activity, particularly between secular orientated activities and priorities. There is, however, little to indicate that clergy priorities determine levels of sacred orientated activity: thus, patterns or midweek services, prayer groups and the amount of time spent by clergy in preparation for worship are determined by
something other than the priorities of the clergy.

Table 5:7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sacred Priority Scores</th>
<th>Secular Priority Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerical sacred score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical sacred time</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate sacred score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred charity score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp. and clerical sacred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sacred score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate secular score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular charity score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total secular score</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+/− = statistically significant associations, according to direction.
(+)/(-) = strong association, falling short of 5% significant level, according to direction.

(iv) **Top Priorities**

In investigating the priorities held by clergy, 15 activities in the working life of a clergyman were selected and respondents asked to indicate the importance of each of these activities on a scale from "Relatively unimportant" to "Absolutely vital".

As well as providing for the calculation of priority scores for sacred and secular orientated activities, this enabled the identification of those activities which were given highest priority by the responding clergy. The
following frequency table (Table 5:8) was constructed from a simple count of those activities which alone, or with other activities, were scored highest by each respondent.

This information was not amenable to statistical analysis, since one respondent could show up in more than one place (that is, could have two equal highest priorities). The information is diagrammatically represented in Diagram 5:2.

Table 5:8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Encouraging laity to be involved in Community activities.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Having good liaison with other clergy.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>Saying Daily Office and/or celebrating a daily Eucharist.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>Supervising the care of the fabric of church buildings.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e)</td>
<td>Evangelistic visiting.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Having good liaison with other caring professions.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g)</td>
<td>Playing a full part in the life of the deanery and diocese.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h)</td>
<td>Preparation for Sunday worship.</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Instigating and/or supporting community projects.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j)</td>
<td>The private study of scripture.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k)</td>
<td>Counselling those with emotional or domestic problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l)</td>
<td>Keeping well-informed about a wide variety of matters through general reading, informal discussion etc.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>Private prayer.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>Efficient administration.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(o)</td>
<td>Encouraging the use of the church's resources to meet people's social needs.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p)</td>
<td>Developing prayer and bible study groups.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(No information available from 42 respondents)
The most striking feature of Table 5:8 and Diagram 5:2 is that the three top priorities, by a large margin, are sacred orientated activities, namely, "private prayer", "preparation for Sunday worship" and "saying Daily Office or celebrating a daily eucharist". The top scoring secular orientated activity, "encouraging laity to be involved in community activities" comes a very long way behind in fifth place.

Further analysis of these results was carried out by counting the various combinations of activities given highest priority: that is, clusters of priorities.

(v) Priority Clusters
The association of priorities with each other in clusters could have had implications for the model of local churches. The five priority clusters identified were as follows, occurring with the following frequency:
Table 5:9

Frequency of various clusters of top priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Priority Cluster</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in community activities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on exclusively private prayer</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer with some corporate dimension</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on study of scripture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping well informed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(No information available for 53 respondents)

The number of respondents for whom information was not available was so high and overall numbers so low, that no real conclusion could be reached other than that priorities involving corporate worship and private prayer seem to be equally dominant. This does not seem to be information which is likely to be helpful in the construction of a model.

(e) New Town Parishes

(i) Associations Involving the New Town Variable

One of the secondary areas of investigation is the possible distinctiveness of church life in New Towns. A brief glance at Table 5:2 shows a larger number of associations against item 25 ("New Town or not") than against any other variable. Before beginning to look for any kinds of patterns in these associations it may be helpful simply to list them; this is done in Table 5:10.
Table 5:10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Code</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nature of association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Years of clergy in parish</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Whether demolition</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Whether new building</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sacred corporate activity</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Clerical and Corporate sacred score</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Number of sacred charities</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Total sacred score</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Secular corporate activity</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Secular charities (-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Total secular score</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Membership size (-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Growth in membership (+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Growth in attendance</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Urban parish</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ecumenical activity</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+/- = associations, significant at 5% level, according to direction.
(+)/(-) = trends towards association, according to direction.

(ii) Church Attendance and Membership

There is only one clear association between whether or not a parish was in a New Town and church strength factors, and that shows New Town parishes to be increasing in attendances more than average. This might be expected since New Towns contain large areas of new housing and, in many cases, church congregations are building up from nothing. Increases in attendance, particularly if measured in percentage terms, might be expected to be
greater than average. What is of particular note, however, is that this phenomenon was not found to be associated with a preponderance of new housing in non-New Town parishes. Table 5:11 below summarises the figures.

Table 5:11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Parishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. New Town or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Whether significant new building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. % of post-1960 housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 3.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: -0.252 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 1.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: 0.253 (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 6.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: 0.205 (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Membership change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Attendance change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-N.T. Parishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Whether significant new building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. % of post-1960 housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: 0.070 (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* pbis: -0.223 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: 0.073 (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Membership change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Attendance change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N.T. Parishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Whether significant new building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. % of post-1960 housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 1.1691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: -0.107 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 2.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: 0.262 (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci: 2.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pbis: 0.364 (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Membership change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Attendance change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ci = chi square value
pbis = Point biserial correlation co-efficient
s = Spearman Rank correlation co-efficient

sign indicates the direction of any associations or trend (in brackets)
If the increased congregations in New Town parishes were simply a matter of new houses being built, and therefore new residents joining the local church, the non-New Town parishes with large amounts of new housing would also show increasing congregations. Table 5:11 shows that they do not; indeed the indications are that they have congregations growing less than the average congregation! The mean membership change of non-New Town parishes without a significant amount of new building since 1976 was +14.14% whereas the mean for non-New Town parishes with a significant amount of new building was -6.95%.

The explanation for this may be in the different ways in which building developments can take place in New Towns as opposed to existing areas. New Town housing developments usually take place on 'green field' sites, whereas in established areas, older property may have to be demolished first.

This is easily explored by examining the relationship between the demolition, new building and percentage of new housing, together with membership and attendance. This is done in Table 5:12 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5:12</th>
<th>Demolition against various factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>0.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c = chi-square value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For non-New Town parishes the chi-square between "significant demolition" (32) and percentage of new housing was 0.0341: that is, very small. Together with the data in Table 5:11 this seems not to support the explanation that differences between increase in attendance in New Town and non-New Town parishes is the result of the effect of demolition of property in those non-New Town parishes which have had a substantial amount of new housing development.

From this survey it is clear that the higher growth of church attendance in New Towns is due to something other than the building of new housing. The contrast between changes in attendance in New Town and non-New Town parishes with large amounts of post-1960 housing is very marked. It suggests that New Towns provide a far better context for church growth than do expanding older communities.

(iii) Priorities in New Town Parishes

If there is something quite distinctive about New Town parishes, it is possible that clergy in New Towns may have different priorities compared with other clergy and that the distinctive features of New Town parishes arise from that.

In Tables 5:13 and 5:14 the conditional distribution of priority score for New Town and non-New Town parishes are set out.
Table 5:13

Conditional percentage distribution of Sacred Priority Scores by New Town and non-New Town parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Town Parishes</th>
<th>Non-New Town Parishes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sacred orientated priority scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nos.)</td>
<td>(49)</td>
<td>(70)</td>
<td>(119)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:14

Conditional percentage distribution of Secular Priority Scores by New Town and non-New Town parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Town Parishes</th>
<th>Non-New Town Parishes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secular orientated priority scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nos.)</td>
<td>(49)</td>
<td>(70)</td>
<td>(119)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These two tables show a remarkable consistency in sacred/secular priorities between New Town and non-new Town parishes.

The five clusters of high priorities were set out in Table 5:9 above. In Table 5:15 the five clusters (namely, (i) involvement in community activity; (ii) emphasis on exclusively private prayer; (iii) prayer with some corporate dimension; (iv) emphasis on study of scripture; and (v) keeping "well informed") are collapsed to two groups, secular priority clusters (ii) and (v), and sacred priority clusters (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Table 5:15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups of Priority clusters by parish : New Town or other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority secular Groups (i) and (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority sacred Groups (ii), (iii) and (iv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(no information on 53 parishes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square = 0.373

Table 5:15 confirms the conclusion that there is no evidence for there being significant differences between New Town and other clergy in their sacred/secular priorities.

One small piece of evidence to the contrary was, however, made apparent when the priority cluster variable (17) was cross-tabulated with the New Town variable (25). The conditional percentage distribution table which resulted
Table 5:16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Clusters</th>
<th>Parishes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Town</td>
<td>Non-New Town</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Involvement in community</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Private prayer</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Corporate prayer</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Study of scripture</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Being well informed</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Nos.)</strong></td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>(42)</td>
<td>(67)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual numbers involved are very small, and so it would be unwise to claim too much from the above results. It is, however, interesting to note that there is an apparent emphasis on corporate prayer by New Town clergy, as opposed to private prayer by other clergy.

(iv) Consistency of Priorities with Activities in New Town Parishes

The decision to include New Town parishes in the sample was based on the expectation that the priorities of the clergy might be more consistent with activities in the parish in New Towns as opposed to other areas. (33) The 'making a new start' climate of New Towns could mean that clergy and
churches were more self-conscious in their planning of activities.

In Table 5:17 the values of the statistics indicating correlations or associations between activities and priorities are listed separately for New Town, non-New Town, and all parishes, so as to make comparisons possible.

Table 5:17

Correlation scores for Activities and Priorities in New Town and Non-New Town Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>15 Sacred Priority Scores</th>
<th>16 Secular Priority Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Parishes</td>
<td>New Town Parishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Corp. Sacred Activity Score</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>-0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Clerical Sacred Activity Score</td>
<td>0.137</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Clerical Sacred time use</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>0.0249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Corp. and Clerical Sacred Score</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Total Sacred Score</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>-0.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Corp. Secular Activity Score</td>
<td>-0.188</td>
<td>0.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Total Secular Score</td>
<td>-0.209</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.616)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) Figures are values for Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, with those in brackets being chi-square values used to verify or otherwise the statistical significance of any association.
(II) Solid underlining indicates statistical significance at the 5% level.
(iii) Broken underlining indicates a correlation with an association falling below the 5% level of significance.
The conclusions which may be drawn from Table 5:17 become more apparent when the information is more diagrammatically represented as in Table 5:18 below.

Table 5:18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15 Sacred Priorities</th>
<th>16 Secular Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All New Town Other</td>
<td>All New Town Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Corporate Sacred Activity

7 Clerical Sacred Activity

8 Clerical Sacred Time (+) (+) +

9 Corporate and Clerical Sacred +

11 Total Sacred (+)

12 Corporate Secular Activity - - + +

14 Total Secular - - + +

(i) +/- indicates correlation of significance at 5% level
(ii) (+)/(-) indicates correlation less than significant at 5% level

Contrary to any expectation that church activities would be more consistent with the priorities of the clergy in New Town parishes, Table 5:17 shows rather more consistency, at least between sacred priorities and activities, in non-New Town parishes. The significance of this is discussed in Chapter Seven. (34)
(v) Sacred and Secular Orientation

As well as looking at the question of consistency between priorities and activities in New Town parishes, we are looking to understand any other possible distinctive features of church life in New Towns. This is the first of our secondary areas of investigation, mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter.

A number of the variables which are associated with whether or not a parish is in a New Town are to do with the activities of the local church; these are summarised in Table 5:19.

Table 5:19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Associations of levels of Church Activities with whether or not Parish is in a New Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chi-square and direction Association with New Town Parish (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Clerical Sacred Activity Score</td>
<td>3.429 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Clerical Sacred time use</td>
<td>1.106 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Corporate Sacred Activity Score</td>
<td>11.109 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 No. of Sacred charities</td>
<td>10.657 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Clerical and Corporate Sacred activities</td>
<td>12.502 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Total Sacred Score</td>
<td>11.520 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Corporate Secular Activity Score</td>
<td>11.475 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 No. of Secular charities</td>
<td>3.612 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Total Secular Score</td>
<td>6.602 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Underlining indicates association significant at 5% level.
It is clear from Table 5:19 that New Town parishes tend to score lower than other parishes, except for sacred orientated clerical activity.

The right-hand column of Table 5:19 shows that, in non-New Town parishes, there is no significant association between activity levels and the amount of new housing. Hence the association of activity levels with New Town parishes does not seem to be dependent on the amount of new housing.

(vi) Features of New Town parishes and amounts of new housing
This section began by listing the features of the New Town parishes which were apparent from the associations of the New Town variable with other variables. Subsequently there has been mention of how such features do not appear to be related to the amount of new housing, but rather to something else about the New Town phenomenon. The total picture of this is summarised in Table 5:20 below.
### Table 5:20

**Summary comparison of associations of New Town variable and new housing variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Code</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nature of association with New Town variable</th>
<th>Association with new housing in non-New Town parishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Years of clergy in parish</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Whether demolition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Whether new building</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sacred corporate activity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Clerical and corporate sacred score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No. of sacred charities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Total sacred score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Secular corporate activity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Secular charities</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Total secular score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Membership size</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Growth in membership</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Growth in attendance</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Urban parish</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ecumenical activity</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brackets indicate marked association or correlation which does not reach 5% significance level.
The clear conclusion is that the particular features of New Town parishes which have been discovered are not simply due to parishes having a lot of new housing. The unambiguous way in which this is demonstrated in Table 5:20 is quite dramatic. In Chapter Seven we shall be exploring this further and looking to find other ways of understanding the marked distinctiveness of church life in Anglican New Town parishes.

(f) Clerical, Corporate and Contextual Factors

(1) Three categories of Variable

The variables for which values have been obtained in this stage of data collection can be categorised in a variety of ways. One particular grouping of variables used in the exploration of various models is of 'clerical', 'corporate' and 'contextual' variables.

The 'clerical' variables are those whose value relates to the background, activity and judgements of the clergy. These variables are as follows:

- Years of clergyman in parish (2)
- Clerical sacred activity score (7)
- Clerical sacred time use (8)
- Sacred priority score (15)
- Secular priority score (16)
- Clusters of priorities (17)
- Year of ordination (30)
- Churchmanship of college (32)
- Extreme of Churchmanship of college (33)

The 'corporate' variables are those whose value relates to the things
happening in the local church which directly involve lay church members.

These variables are as follows:

Corporate sacred activity score (6)
Score for sacred charities supported (10)
Corporate secular activity score (12)
Score for secular charities supported (13)
Total secular activity score (14)
Size of church membership (18)
Level of church attendance (19)
Change in church membership (20)
Change in church attendance (21)
Ecumenical activity score (24)

The 'contextual' variables are those whose value is determined by facts of the physical nature of the parish, namely:

Whether or not demolition occurred (3) *
Whether or not new building occurred (4) *
Whether or not pastoral re-organisation occurred (5) *
Urban, Suburban or Rural parish (22)
Amount of new housing (23)
In New Town or not (25)
Which New Town (26) **
Which deanery (27) **
Population estimate (31) **

* These variables use a three year time scale and are designed only to check influences on membership and attendance changes; they are not, therefore, used in testing the
viability of models for the patterns of church life.

** Values for these variables are either incomplete, or refer to so large a number of categories as to make them unusable for testing the viability of models.

(ii) Clerical factors and their associations

Examination of Table 5:2 shows a number of associations (statistically significant) and 'trends' (below the 5% significance level) involving clerical factors. The principal features which emerge are:

1. Those clergy engaging in larger numbers of sacred orientated activities do spend more time doing these things than other clergy, but they do not attach higher priorities to these activities than others. There is, however, a trend for those who spend more time on sacred orientated activities to attach a higher priority to these. Hence there is a kind of hierarchy or sacred orientated clergy:

   Clergy who spend more time on sacred things and attach high priority to these.

   Clergy who simply do more sacred orientated activities.

2. There are trends for those clergy who have been in their present parishes for a longer length of time to both give higher priority to sacred orientated activities and to engage in more sacred orientated activities. Although it is also interesting to note that amongst those clergy who have been more recently ordained, there is also a trend for them to engage in more sacred orientated activities.
(3) There are no associations between the churchmanship of the college at which individual clergy were trained and the levels of clerical sacred orientated activity or the levels of corporate secular orientated activity. There is a trend towards an association between middle to low churchmanship of the clergyman's theological college and a low level of corporate sacred orientated activity. 50% of those from colleges of both moderately low churchmanship and middle churchmanship are in parishes in the lowest third of scores for corporate sacred orientated activity, and only 16.7% and 22.2% respectively of those from same categories of colleges are in parishes with the highest one third of the corporate sacred orientated activity scores. (See Table 5:21 below)

Table 5:21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very low church</th>
<th>Mod. low church</th>
<th>Central churchmanship</th>
<th>Mod. high church</th>
<th>Very high church</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Score</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate sacred activity scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Score</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Score</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: From a collapsed 2 x 2 table of extreme/moderate churchmanship against corporate sacred activity the chi-square value is 3.512 which has a probability of 0.06 of being attributable to chance. (This is just outside the range of statistical significance used).
(4) There is an association amongst clergy between those from very low church theological colleges and those with high levels of sacred priority, and between those from colleges of middle churchmanship and those with low levels of sacred orientated priorities. There is also a trend towards an association between those from very low church theological colleges and those with low levels of secular priority, and between those from colleges of middle churchmanship and those with high levels of secular priority.

It has already been mentioned that the one clerical variable which is most associated with other variables is the length of time the incumbent has been in the parish. From Table 5:2 it will be seen that the longer staying incumbent typically serves in a parish with more corporate sacred orientated activity, which supports more sacred charities, and is generally more sacred orientated. His parish has a larger membership and larger congregations, is not in a New Town and the priest himself will have been in orders longer. There is some indication that there will be more secular orientated activity and more secular charities supported, but that the priest will have higher sacred orientated priorities. The parish may also have a larger population. Maybe all that is being discovered here is that clergy stay longer in more active parishes with bigger congregations; or that parishes become more active and congregations grow when clergy stay longer; or even that the Church appoints men at more stable points in their careers (for example, when children are at secondary schools) to more active parishes with bigger congregations.
(iii) Preliminary models involving clerical factors

Four particular models were explored which involved clerical factors and other groups of variables: these groups were sacred orientation, secular orientation, membership and attendance, and contextual factors. (35) When the four models were compared with other models, two models seemed to have some credibility, namely, models involving association of clerical factors with secular orientation of the parish and with sacred orientation of the parish. (36)

It emerged from this exploration into models that the background and predisposition of the clergy are associated with both the levels of sacred orientated activity in the parish and the levels of secular orientated activity in the parish.

(iv) Corporate factors and their associations

Whereas there were only two associations and four trends (out of a possible total of 36 associations or trends) relating clerical factors to each other, there were 17 associations and 7 trends (out of a possible 45) relating corporate factors to each other. This closer inter-relationship of corporate factors as compared with clerical factors could mean that the corporate life of the church is more predictable than the background and pre-disposition of the individual clergyman!

From the analysis of data the following features emerged relating to corporate factors:

(1) A large number of sacred charities being supported by a church is associated with a large attendance and membership, and support for a
large number of secular charities. There is, however, a trend for both membership and attendance to decline in those churches which support large numbers of sacred charities. A factor in this could be that large churches tend to be decreasing in size, and small churches increasing; this is borne out by the analysis, as shown in Table 5:2. This might have been part of the reason for New Town churches exhibiting more growth than other churches, but this conclusion is not justified since low attendance is not associated with New Town churches. (37)

(2) The number of secular charities supported is also positively associated with attendance and membership, but not with any change in membership (which was the case with sacred charities). There is also a trend, which would be expected, towards churches which support more secular charities engaging in more secular orientated activity.

(3) There are no statistically significant associations between levels of sacred orientated corporate activity and other corporate factors, merely trends towards the sacred orientated activity score having a positive relationship with the support for sacred charities, the level of corporate secular orientated activity, and the level of church attendance.

(4) In contrast to the above, the level of secular orientated corporate activity is positively associated with church attendance levels, membership size and the level of ecumenical activity. There is also a trend towards association between more secular orientated corporate activity and the number of secular charities supported. To reinforce
this picture of the larger church being more secularly orientated, there is a positive association between the total score for secular orientation and the levels of both attendance and membership.

(5) The score indicating the level of ecumenical activity is positively associated with growth in both membership and attendance as well as with the level of secular orientated activity. (38)

(6) High attendance and large membership are associated with each other, as would be expected, but there is, as has been stated, a negative association between them both and growth in membership, and between high membership and increase in attendance. This is the 'small church growing and large church declining' phenomenon, or a kind of oscillation of church size around some kind of unstable equilibrium. If this did not happen then all small churches would disappear and all large ones grow ad infinitum! Changes in attendance and membership are, predictably, positively associated with each other.

(v) **Contextual factors**

A number of the contextual variables have been seen to be of very limited value. (39) Most useful of the variables are 'whether or not in New Town' and 'percentage of post-1960 housing'.

Table 5:2 shows that, apart from the New Town variable, contextual variables seem to have little association with other variables. If this were to be found to be the case in a study using much more sensitive contextual variables, it would be very worthy of note: it would imply that priorities and activities in the life of the local church were not influenced by the
particular social context of the parish!

(vi) **Summary of indications regarding categories of factors**

The grouping together of the variables into the three categories of clerical, corporate and contextual has led to three general insights:

1. Clerical factors seem to be associated with the orientation of church life in the parish.
2. Features of the corporate life of the local church seem to be largely associated with each other.
3. With the single exception of the 'New Town factor', contextual variables are little associated with features of local church life.

The questions for further investigation which are raised by these insights are whether or not clergy are (deliberately or unintentionally) dominating the processes which determine the pattern of the life of the local church; precisely what kinds of general patterns of church life are indicated by the associations between the corporate variables; and whether or not the local church really does remain unaffected by its local social environment.

(g) **Church Strength**

(i) **Associations involving church strength**

A more detailed discussion of the results of the postal survey, as they relate to the numerical strength of the local congregation, will take place in Chapter Nine of this study. That discussion will be concerned with wider aspects of the well-being of the local congregation, as well as with trends in attendance and membership. (40) As this point we note the various associations between church strength variables and other variables, before
looking at the relationship between church strength and orientations of church activities.

Table 5:22 shows the statistically significant associations of membership size, attendance size, membership change and attendance change with the other variables.

Table 5:22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associations between church strength and other variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 Membership size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Years in Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Demolition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 New building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sacred charities</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Corporate sacred activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Secular charities</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Total secular score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Priority cluster</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Percentage new housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Ecumenical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 New Town or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Speed of questionnaire return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Year of Ordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Churchmanship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Direction of association is shown by sign)
(ii) **Church strength and sacred and secular orientated activity levels**

When the associations of levels of, and changes in, church attendance and membership with variables relating to levels of sacred and secular orientated activity are extracted from Table 5:21 above, and then enlarged by the 'trends' towards association (see Table 5:22) the following picture emerges: larger membership and attendance seem to be associated with higher levels of secular orientated activities, and rather less so with high levels of sacred orientated activities. The difference between membership and attendance is particularly interesting. Membership is associated with higher levels of secular orientated activity but not (with the exception of the number of charities supported) with sacred orientated activity. Whereas attendance is also associated with secular orientated activity and exhibits a trend towards association with sacred orientated activity.

Changes in attendance and membership are not associated with sacred-secular activity levels. The association between low increases in membership and supporting larger numbers of sacred charities (and the trend toward association between low increases in attendance and supporting larger numbers of sacred charities) is the fascinating exception. It may be explained in two ways.

Firstly, it is possible that the more churches become preoccupied by supporting 'churchy' charities the less they appeal to, or are concerned with, the recruitment of potential new members.

Alternatively it may be that larger churches (which do seem to support larger numbers of sacred charities) are growing less rapidly than smaller churches (which do not support as many sacred charities.)
(h) Provisional Indications

Exploratory research can be like shovelling quantities of earth through a large sieve. All sorts of things are left behind in the sieve: some are interesting and relevant to the inquiry in hand; some are just interesting; and others are neither interesting nor relevant! This chapter began by indicating the two-fold function of the postal survey: to yield exploratory data about the primary and secondary areas of investigation and to act as a screen for selection of the parishes in which interviews were to be conducted. Regarding the second of these two functions - details of the use of the postal survey as a sampling screen are described in Appendix II. (41)

The exploratory data contains a number of key indications for the direction of this research. Some of this data will be used directly in Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten. The results of the postal survey have been used to influence the preliminary work on model construction, which then affected the design of the interview stage of the research. (42)

To provide an interim summary of the results of the principal results of the postal survey, we now group these results together under the headings of the five primary and secondary areas of investigation which were specified at the beginning of this chapter:

1. **Relating to the Sacred and Secular orientations of church life**

   1. The tendencies towards sacred and secular orientation do not appear to be mutually exclusive trends.

   2. The alternative polarity of 'outward looking' churches opposed to 'inward looking' churches is not justified as a valid basis for the model of the local church.

   3. There is evidence for the 'outward looking' church being a coherent
type for inclusion is some model of the local church.

(4) Levels of sacred and secular orientated activity in parishes do not reflect the nature or extremes of churchmanship of the incumbent's theological college. Thus sacred and secular orientations are not defined by churchmanship.

(ii) Relating to the Priorities of the Clergy

(1) Activities involving prayer and worship are top priorities for a very high proportion of the clergy.

(2) Only in non-New Town parishes are high levels of sacred orientated activity associated with high sacred orientated priorities amongst the clergy.

(3) High levels of secular orientated activity are associated with high secular orientated priorities amongst the clergy.

(iii) Relating to the distinctiveness of New Town Parishes

(1) Church life is quite distinctive in New Town parishes: the 'New Town variable' is very active. Hardly any of the distinctive features of New Town parishes are shared by other parishes with high proportions of new housing.

(2) The priorities of clergy in New Towns are similar to the priorities of other clergy, with the possible exception that New Town clergy stress corporate, rather than private, prayer.

(3) There is, if anything, less correspondence between activities and priorities in New Town parishes than in other parishes.

(4) New Town parishes tend to have lower sacred and secular orientated activity scores than other parishes.

(5) New Town churches are growing faster in attendance than non-New Town
churches.

(iv) Relating to the role of the Clergy

(1) Clergy who have been longer in their parish tend to have higher levels of sacred orientated priorities and more sacred orientated activities in their parishes.

(2) Middle to low churchmanship of clergy's theological colleges is associated with low levels of sacred orientated activities in parishes.

(3) Very low churchmanship of theological college is associated with high sacred and low secular orientated priorities.

(4) Middle churchmanship of theological college is associated with low sacred and high secular orientated priorities.

(5) Longer staying incumbents tend to be in more active parishes.

(6) The group of variables to do with clergy background and predispositions is highly associated with levels of sacred and secular orientated activities.

(v) Relating to the well-being of the local church

(1) 'Church strength' variables are widely associated with other variables.

(2) Smaller churches are growing more than larger churches.

(3) Larger churches have higher levels of secular orientated activity than other churches.

(4) Churches with high levels of ecumenical activity tend to be growing more, and have higher levels of secular orientated activity, than other churches.
Notes: Chapter V


2. Chapter IV, Section 3(c). (page 90)

3. Moser and Kalton make the important point that research which is limited to drawing no conclusions other than those capable of absolute proof from empirical data may be safe, but may also be more sterile than necessary.

4. Appendix II, Section 1(a). (page AII-1)

5. Chapter IV, Section 3(b)(ii). (page 89)

6. Appendix I, Section 1(a). (page AI-1)

7. See page 37 et seq. in Hill (1977).

8. Appendix I, Sections 1(c) (page AI-2) and 1(d). (page AI-5)

9. See section 3(a) of Appendix I. (page AI-16)

10. Assumptions about patterns of responses are similar to those made by Adorno (1950) in his research into personality types.

11. Information about population was found to be of such varying reliability as to be of very limited use in subsequent analysis.

12. For further details of these items, see Appendix I, Section 2(d).

13. The possibility was explored of using local authority information about housing age and population. A number of difficulties were encountered which showed this to be inappropriate. Firstly, the discrepancies between civil and ecclesiastical boundaries would have meant detailed and extensive work being done in relation to nearly all of the 144 parishes involved. At least six local authorities would have needed to co-operate in this. These authorities would have had to supply
population and housing information collected on a common basis (which basis did not exist!).

Secondly, such an exercise would have been incompatible with the desire to have a reasonably large sample.

Thirdly, by the time the interviews were taking place in the small sample, such detailed contextual data would be of marginal value since the research was not concerned with these factors at that stage.

14. For more details see Appendix I, section 2(a). (page AI-12)
15. See Appendix I, section 2(c). (page AI-13)
16. Appendix I, section 3(a). (page AI-16)
17. See Appendix I, section 3(b). (page AI-21)
18. See section 1(a) of this chapter. (page 99)
19. Appendix I, section 4(a). (page AI-29 to 32)
20. A summary of the results of the statistical tests is given in Appendix I, section 4(b). (page AI-33)
21. Chapter V, section 2(e). (page 119 et seq.)
22. Chapter V, section 2(g). (page 140)
23. Chapter IV, section 1. (page 81)
24. Chapter V, section 2(d)(ii). (page 115)
25. See Appendix I, section 3(c)(viii). (page AI-27)
26. Chapter IV, section 1. (page 81)
29. see Appendix I, section 3(c)(i),(ii) and (iii). (pages AI-22 to 25)
30. See Appendix I, section 4(b). (page AI-33)
31. See Appendix I, section 3(a). (page AI-16)
32. In the questionnaire 'significant' was defined as 'such as might
noticeably affect church membership or church attendance".

33. See Chapter IV, section 3(b)(ii). (page 89)

34. Chapter VII, section 3(a). (page 184)

35. See Appendix I, section 3(c). (page AI-22 to 28)

36. See Appendix I, section 3(c)(ix). (page AI-28)

37. See table 5:10 in section 2(e)(i) of this chapter. (page 119)

38. The significance of this for New Town parishes is dealt with in Chapter VII, section 5 (page 190) and Chapter IX, section 2(d)(iii). (page 261)

39. See section 2(f)(i) in this chapter. (page 132)

40. Whether or not it is a legitimate exercise to try to measure the well-being of the congregation is a matter of debate. In this study we agree with Williams, who warns against the church looking for "worldly success", but acknowledges the need to try to assess what is happening within the life of the Church, including statistical trends. (Williams (1966) p.62)

41. Appendix II, section 1(a). (page AII-1)

42. See Chapter VI, section 1(c). (page 153)
Chapter Six

THE THIRTEEN PARISHES

Diagram 6:1

Outline of Research Process

General Observations and Ripon/Sheffield Survey. (I)

Discussion of Theory

Secularisation (III)

Existing typologies and models. (II)

Research Questions

Postal (V) questions

Secondary questions

Primary questions

Preliminary Modelling (VI)

Sample Screening

Interviews (VII)

(1) New Town Parishes (VII)
(2) Role of Clergy (VIII)
(3) Well-being of Congregation (IX)

FINAL MODEL (IX)

Page 149
VI THE THIRTEEN PARISHES

The second stage of data collection in this study was by interviews of clergy and lay leaders in a small sample of parishes. Before these interviews could commence, however, the preliminary model of the local church needed to be developed. This model then determined the way in which the interviews were designed and the nature of the information sought from them. Thus this chapter falls into two distinct parts. The first section is about the model which has emerged, largely from the study of literature and theoretical discussion in chapters Two, Three and Four. The purpose of the interviews was to evaluate and develop this model. The remaining four sections of this chapter are then concerned with the interviews themselves.

1. The Emergent Model

With the completion of the major part of the literature survey and the analysis of the results of the postal survey, the next stage of the research was the development of a preliminary sociological model of local Church of England churches. It was anticipated that the results of interviews in a small sample of parishes would show what revisions or refinements of this initial model were required.

Three strands were woven together to construct this model: the principal criteria, as identified from consideration of the literature; reflections on the consequences of the process of secularisation for the local church; and factors arising from the postal survey.
(a) Principal Criteria

The importance of identifying clear criteria for any sociological model has been noted. (1) This requirement was particularly apparent when variants of the church-sect model were considered, some of which were much more useful because they did have clear criteria. (2)

Our analysis had led us to proposing sacred orientation and secular orientation as helpful concepts in understanding local Church of England churches. (3)

The distinction has been made, in Chapter Two, between the function and the purpose of a religious organisation. (4) In Chapter Four this was clarified with regard to the local church, as represented by the difference between the activities and priorities of the church. (5)

Thus, two criteria to be incorporated within the model are: Sacred orientation and secular orientation and activities as compared with priorities in the local church. (6)

(b) The consequences of secularisation

In our discussion on secularisation in Chapter Three, we identified two particular features of secularisation: the marginalisation of the religious institution and the loss of power by the religious conceptual framework. (7)

(i) Religious ethic in tension

The Weberian view is that tension exists between the ethic of the religious group and the wider community. (8) This tension is brought into focus when the church becomes a "specialist religious institution", as was noted in
Chapter Three. (9) Weber identified two options for the religious group: to remain separated from the world or to change the world. A third logical alternative would be to conform to the world. (10) This latter could be accomplished, in the modern situation, by the church simply behaving like a secular group, or else by accepting the role of a compliant "specialist" religious organisation. It should be observed, in passing, that the option to remain separated from the world is the sectarian option: it has already been concluded that "separateness" was the principal distinctive feature of the sect. (11)

Thus there are four options for the religious group: remain separated (sectarian); change the world; conform by becoming secular; or conform by accepting "specialist" religious role.

(ii) The "Serving" Church

Reference has been made to the important distinction by Mehl, amongst others, between the "basic" and the "serving" church. (12) (13) The church in the modern world is in the position of having to be a "serving" church and it can adapt to this situation in different ways. Two principal alternatives were identified, each of which had two forms. So again, four options were distinguished and are set down diagrammatically below:

Diagram 6:2

Options for the "serving" Church

- Integrist: Keeping entirely apart from the world
- Progressist: Retaining distinctive form but losing distinctive ethic
- Seeking to penetrate and transform the world
- Losing both distinctive form and distinctive ethic
(c) Indications from the Postal Survey

(i) No simple polarity

In the last chapter it was seen that there was no evidence of a simple polarity between levels of sacred and secular orientation in the local church. (14) This means that any model must be capable of accommodating the possibility of levels of sacred and secular orientated activity increasing together or decreasing together. This may well require a model to be understood as a two dimensional slice of a three dimensional model, with an axis perpendicular to the page representing greater or lesser levels of both sacred and secular orientated activity.

(ii) The "Outward" type of Church

The simple testing of viability of various models, reported in Chapter Five, had shown some models to be inappropriate. (15) One concept, suggested by the literature, which did show sufficient coherence for it to be credible, was that of the "Outward Church". An attempt will be made, therefore, to accommodate the initial model.

(iii) The Converse of New Town features

Analysis of the postal survey strongly identified distinctive features of the church in New Town parishes. These are set down in Table 5:10 in Chapter Five. Of these fifteen distinctive features, eleven were almost the converse of what might be expected of an established parish church which functioned as the civic church for a community. This is hardly surprising since, in the New Town, the local church has not had the time to establish a civic role, which role is frequently determined by long historical associations.
The eleven features expected of a civic church, with which the typical New Town church contrasts, are as follows:

(1) Clergy remaining a long time in the parish: this is important in relationships with secular authorities and for the incumbent to become a well known symbolic figure in the community.

(2) High levels of corporate sacred orientated activity: this is necessary to accommodate the wide range of traditional expectations of different kinds of worship.

(3) A high clerical and corporate orientated activity score: the clergy, too, would need to spend extra time preparing special services.

(4) and (5) High level of support of wide range of sacred and secular charities: charity fund raising is often an important feature of civic life.

(6) High total sacred score: see (2) and (3) above.

(7) High level of corporate secular activity: to fulfil civic expectations a parish church must have a wide range of traditional groups such as cubs, brownies and women's meetings.

(8) High total secular score: the civic church has little credibility if it is not seen as "meeting the needs of the community".

(9) Large nominal membership: to be on the electoral roll etc. of the
Parish Church is often perceived as important in a way that regular attendance is not.

(10) Low growth in attendance: the civic church can easily have a very static attendance - people and family attend who traditionally "always have attended", and this can inhibit growth in attendance.

(11) Low levels of ecumenical activity: although the civic church offers hospitality to people from a variety of traditions, it is in no position to sacrifice its autonomy by entering into ecumenical partnerships since that would threaten its unique civic role.

Many of the above points are open to various interpretations. Yet, taken together, they highlight the existence of a particular type of church: the civic church.

(d) A Preliminary Model
Diagram 6:2 shows the first attempt at a model of local Church of England churches. It is a simple four-fold model, based on the two axes of sacred/secular orientation and priority/activity. It also accommodates the various insights enumerated in this chapter. It must be remembered that it is a two dimensional cross-section of a three dimensional model: the axis which would be perpendicular to the page showing levels of sacred and secular orientated activity increasing or decreasing together. (16)
A Preliminary Model of Church of England Churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Sacred orientated</th>
<th>Secular orientated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sectarian Church</td>
<td>Remains separated.</td>
<td>Keeps apart from the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Church</td>
<td>Conforms by accepting &quot;specialist&quot; religious role.</td>
<td>Retains distinctive form but loses distinctive ethic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionising Church</td>
<td>(&quot;Outward&quot; Church)</td>
<td>Tries to change the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Church</td>
<td>Conforms by becoming secular.</td>
<td>Loses both distinctive form and distinctive ethic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are thus four ideal types within the model:

(i) **The Sectarian Church**: which has both a high level of sacred orientated activity and a high sacred orientated priority score: in other words, it is concerned almost entirely with other worldly things for their own sake. The church will tend to have an "associational" membership: people choosing to belong because of like-mindedness, and there is a clear distinction with those who do and do not belong. There is some coincidence between this type and what Niebuhr calls the "Christ against culture" model (17) of the church, with Rudge's "charismatic" model (18), and Cox's "koinoniac" model. (19)

(ii) **The Missionising Church**: which has a high level of secular orientated activity but a high sacred orientated priority score: thus it runs programmes of social caring etc. not just for their own sake, but in order
to evangelise and even infiltrate society at large. This type is supported by the coherence of the "outward" set of variables from the postal survey. This church tends to have an associational membership. There is a similarity between this type and Niebuhr's "Christ the Transformer" model (17), Rudge's "systematic" type (18), and elements of the "diakonic" and "kerygmatic" types suggested by Cox. (19)

(iii) **The Civic Church:** which has a high level of sacred orientated activities but holds secular orientated priorities: thus lots of services are held because they meet the secular needs of the community rather than for their own sake (such as Remembrance Sunday Services). It is almost the converse of the typical New Town parish. This church tends to have a "communal" membership: namely people belong because it is "their parish church" rather than because of the distinctiveness of its teaching or tradition, and there will be an ill-defined boundary between those who do and do not belong to the church.

There is some likeness between this type and Niebuhr's "Christ above culture", (17) both the "classical" and the "traditional" types described by Rudge (18), and the "kerygmatic" and "diakonic" models in Cox's analysis. (19)

(iv) **The Community Church:** which will have high priority and activity scores for their level of secular orientation: they embark upon programmes of secular caring for their own sake. This church tends to have a communal membership. The type bears some resemblance to Niebuhr's "Christ of culture" model (17), Rudge's "human relations" type (18), and Cox's "diakonic" model. (19)
This model derives largely from the study of literature, together with some influences from the postal questionnaire results. It is entirely provisional: a kind of half way stage, awaiting evaluation, modification and refinement in the light of the results of the parish interviews.

2. Parish Interviews and their Purpose

We have already emphasised that this research depends more on the results of interviews in a small number of parishes than on the data from the postal survey of the 144 parishes. This is because the intention is to devise a model which not only has theoretical validity, but actually helps to understand what is going on in real local Church of England parishes. Some close encounters with a manageable number of parishes are essential to accomplish this.

There were three specific objectives behind the conducting of the parish interviews. The first was to see if the concepts which were taking shape in the initial modelling made sense in relation to particular parishes. Are the concepts authentic in describing and illuminating what is happening in real local churches? How do the concepts need revising?

The second objective was to obtain illustrative material from the parishes. Concrete examples are important if theoretical and general statements are to be fully understood.

The third objective was to explore a small sample in more depth. This involved a number of elements. Some kinds of question were not appropriate to a postal questionnaire: questions about the use of church premises were,
for example, eliminated from the postal questionnaire because the respondents in the pilot study needed guidance in answering. The postal questionnaire had only been sent to clergy, and the views of lay people were required to complete the picture. Certain data would only be accessible by the researcher actually visiting the parish, and this was not physically possible with a sample of 144 spread across five dioceses. Information concerning changes which had happened in the parishes since the postal survey could be also taken into account.

This more detailed data would not only be important in the main task of this research (to construct a sociological model), but it would also be useful in moving further into the three secondary areas of investigation, namely: the distinctiveness of church life in New Town parishes; the role of the clergy; and the "well-being" of the local church. This might be especially important in understanding more about the role of clergy, since lay views would be sought.

3. Outline of Method

The details of the methodology followed in the interviews are fully set down in Appendix II. At this point we give an overall picture.

(a) Sample selection

The small sample of parishes for interview was chosen by using the postal survey as a sampling screen. Parishes were required from the three types of housing area: New Town, non-New Town with a high proportion of new housing, and non-New town with a low proportion of new housing. Secondly, parishes were required which exhibited all the combinations of high and low, sacred
and secular, activity and priority scores.

A sampling grid was constructed and, with the use of a random sampling procedure, a sample of 13 parishes were chosen: four New Towns (Telford and Redditch) and nine from the non-New Town parishes. All parishes were from the West Midlands, thus eliminating major regional differences. At least one example of parishes exhibiting every combination of different sacred and secular orientated priority and activity levels was included in the sample. (20)

(b) Interview Method

All interviews were conducted by me. This not only eliminated any biases caused by different interviewers, but enabled direct observation of the interviewees and their parish. These personal interviews mean that there is a substantial reflexive element in the research. (21)

The interview was of the "focused" type, as described by Moser (1967) (p.205f), although a full interview schedule was used in which the questions had been set in a carefully determined order. (22) Details of the precise interview method, and the painstaking way in which stages of the interview were accomplished, are set down fully in Appendix II. (23) Although the interviews generally had the feel of a cosy chat, they were the result of the use of a carefully designed instrument of data collection.

Clergy were interviewed privately, all in their own homes. Churchwardens were interviewed without the clergy present and mostly the two together in one of their homes. Details of the conditions of each interview are given below. (24)
Although information about the 13 parishes was available from the postal questionnaire, I deliberately avoided re-reading any of this, or even checking which category of the screening process had yielded any of the parishes. This was so as to avoid being influenced during the interview by any of the postal questionnaire responses of five years ago.

The data sought was not required for statistical analysis, and, in any case, the sample would be too small for this. Numerical representation is used to organise the observations but not for formal hypothesis testing.

(25)

(c) Interview Questions

The first questions were about the use of the church buildings, including church halls etc. What was required here was factual data, usually supplied by the incumbent and checked for accuracy by the churchwardens. The responses to the questions formed a very significant set of data which could be independently used to test the effectiveness of the model. (27)

Then followed questions about the incumbent's involvement in various groups and organisations, the use of his working time and his priorities. These, and all subsequent questions, were also asked of the churchwardens,

Next came questions about important parish activities and areas of dissatisfaction.

The penultimate group of questions were about areas of "influence" of the clergyman and the importance he attached to "churchmanship".
Finally, inquiry was made about major changes in the life of church during
the previous five years: that is, since the postal questionnaire was
completed.

(d) Interviewees and Interviewer

We have already discussed the significance of my conducting the interviews
myself (28) and factors associated with my own position within the church.
(29)

Every effort had been made to ensure that interviewees perceived the
research as something authorised "by the church", and something which
affirmed the value of local parish work. No difficulty was experienced in
arranging interviews. All interviewees seemed happy to co-operate. The
interviews with the clergy were all very relaxed, and many of the clergy
wanted to offer hospitality. Interviews with churchwardens often took
longer to "warm up": the key lay in enabling them to see me as an ordinary
clergyman, rather than an academic or a diocesan official.

The interviews were timed to last about three-quarters of an hour, and
interviewees were told of this, but the possibility of extending to a full
hour was requested. All interviews with clergy lasted at least an hour,
with several clergy wanting to digress about other features of their
situation. Interviews with churchwardens tended to be contained within the
hour: but the courtesy of accepting hospitality after the completion of the
interview extended many visits!
4. **Pen Pictures of the Parishes and Interviews**

The following contains brief comments about the parishes, the conditions of the interviews, documents supplied by the parishes and my immediate reflections about what was said. No analysis is attempted here, rather a recording of impressions. Each of the thirteen parishes is given a fictitious name, in order to preserve anonymity. Other details which might allow those not participating in the research to readily identify the parishes have also been omitted.

The thirteen parishes are briefly described below:

**West Kirby:** The Parish is an artisan area of mixed public and private housing. The church congregations were very strong for that kind of district. Vigorous projects meeting the particular social needs of the area had been established, largely through the drive of the Incumbent.

Church life was very busy, with a substantial lay training programme in progress. The churchmanship tradition of the parish was fairly "middle of the road", moving in a more catholic direction under the influence of the present Incumbent.

The interview with the Incumbent, which took place in his well ordered study, was one of the longer interviews. The Incumbent elaborated on many of his answers. This seemed to be because of his desire to avoid my misunderstanding his responses.

The interview with the churchwardens took place in a small church meeting room. The wardens were very concerned at their Incumbent's work load. They
were keen to talk about new directions which they felt church life was, or ought to be, taking, and less about achievements to date than I might have expected.

I was given a copy of a recent paper in which the Parochial Church Council wrote about the nature and aspirations of the parish. In the paper six aims for the future were specified: increased lay involvements; promoting "seven days a week" Christianity; increased ecumenical contacts; increasing fellowship between morning and evening congregations; more charity fund raising; and increased lay pastoral ministry.

During the interviews, both Incumbent and churchwardens emphasised the need to deepen the "spiritual life" of the church: this seemed to be to complement their social welfare work. A distinct impression was given of a parish moving into another phase of its life.

More than in any other parish, the interviewees seemed particularly aware of my being a rural dean. (30)

Chalton: A parish dominated by new housing and with a very large transient element in the population. The lack of stable community in the parish has greatly affected church life. The church buildings were very well used by a variety of secular groups. (31)

The interview with the Incumbent was one of the shortest interviews. The incumbent gave the impression of being conscientious in answering the questions accurately and was very helpful, but he was also concerned not to waste time.
The interview with the churchwardens took place in a small, comfortable church meeting room. Both wardens were keen to help, anxious about some of the disappointments within the life of their church and occasionally surprisingly unaware of some aspects of their incumbent's work: "Surprisingly" since there was a very obvious mutual regard and affection between incumbent and churchwardens. The incumbent was deeply involved in several secular concerns of which the churchwardens seemed quite ignorant.

Bourne Keaton: A parish with a slightly rural feel, but it was on the edge of a large housing development. The church buildings, church and modernised hall, seemed in excellent order, but no impression was given of successful church life.

The incumbent was wearing shorts, carrying a mobile telephone and sitting in his garden when interviewed. He held a part-time diocesan appointment, which seemed to give him a slightly more detached view of the parish than other clergy interviewed.

After making sure I had seen the inside of their church, the churchwardens were interviewed in a room in their church hall. They were friendly and anxious to share their concerns about the parish.

The incumbent gave me a copy of the summary of their largely accomplished "three year plan". The wardens did not refer to this at all. I was also given copies of both a "village magazine" and a church newsletter. The magazine seemed to be a church magazine which was produced by lay people and had become very secular. The newsletter was very "churchy" in content, and was a joint publication between two parishes and aimed at members of their
Worship was the predominant activity of the church, but the impression gained was that there was a lack of consensus between clergy and laity about priorities. There had also been, and continued to be, uncertainty about the staffing of the parish. The churchwardens feared that they might not have another vicar when their present incumbent left.

Catrill: A developing church in an area of new housing developments. A wide variety of community activities took place on church premises during the week and the style of Sunday worship seemed to have been adapted to meet the particular needs of a population with many young families.

The interview with the incumbent took place in his study, with occasional interruptions from small children. Of all incumbents he seemed to have most difficulty answering the questions on priorities. This was not because of any unwillingness, but because of a pragmatic attitude. "I'm very much of a butterfly" he said, meaning that the emphasis of his ministry frequently changed.

The churchwardens were interviewed in one of their homes. They seemed keen to be interviewed, possibly because they wanted to talk about their parish.

I was given copies of the church magazine. This was an ecumenical magazine (Church of England, Methodist and Salvation Army) with a high proportion of secular community input.

Some tension existed in the church between older traditionalists and newer
young families: the latter were much the dominant faction at that point.

Osgarth: A strong church in a settled urban area: but a church which had not always been as vigorous as it was at the time of interview. The secular community had "lost heart" because of the closure of factories and the loss of its civic identity: the former township was divided between three local authorities.

The interview with the vicar took place in his study, which was obviously a busy place. He was enthusiastic in responding to interview questions and displayed great clarity about policies and priorities. I was left in no doubt that he knew what he was doing!

A rather cold church vestry was the venue for the interview with the churchwardens. They immediately wanted to know the purpose of my research, assuming it was some kind of diocesan survey. They were very impressed by the hard work of their incumbent: "He puts his heart and soul into any job he does" one of them said.

The incumbent gave me copies of the parish magazine and a postcard of the church, in order, he said, that I could visualise it when writing about their parish. The magazine included both diocesan and deanery newsletters, as well as information about ecumenical and community events. Different local items were mixed together so that the reader constantly moved between church, community and ecumenical articles, barely realising it.

The impression gained was that the internal affairs of the church had been put in good order (viz: buildings and finance) with the clear intention that
the church might then address the needs of the community.

Langby: A vigorous church in a mixed housing area. The church had a distinctive style of life based on strong fellowship and high levels of personal commitment amongst members. The church had, in the previous few years, moved to different premises: these were multi-purpose and heavily used, largely by church groups.

The incumbent was interviewed in his sitting room. He talked readily, but very modestly, about the parish and about a major development in his own ministry which had led to the present policies in the parish.

The churchwardens were interviewed in a church room, having been extracted from two church groups with which they were severally involved.

I received copies of the monthly church newsletter. The content was distinctively evangelistic. There was no doubt that the purpose of the newsletter was to act as a vehicle for church members to share their experience of faith with other people.

Clergy and laity shared the clear priority of bringing individuals to personal religious commitment. The church was also involved in a number of social welfare projects, especially with the unemployed.

South Wiston: This was a thriving suburban parish which had undergone a major renewal of its life. This renewal had resulted in the emergence of a strong lay leadership.
The incumbent was interviewed in his study. The interview was one of the longer ones. Afterwards I was invited to a regular pub lunch at which the clergy from the different local churches met.

The churchwardens were interviewed in one of their homes. The host was keen to offer hospitality and the interview plus courtesies took up most of an evening!

The parish magazine was traditional and professionally printed on good quality paper. The content was largely about the domestic affairs of the church and was attractively and professionally laid out.

Clergy and laity seemed to be wanting the church to go beyond the stage of having big congregations and strong, church centred organisations. The laity in particular were articulate about the church needing to take on a larger role in the community, but this was primarily to share the benefits of their belief with others. One example of this was the lay led attempt to start a religiously based youth group. Another was the programme of home study groups and prayer groups, into which they wanted to introduce people who were not church members.

Upper Bagley: A parish which had not really recovered from an unpopular former incumbent. The area was largely artisan, and there seemed to be a disappointment within the community that the church and/or the clergy were not meeting traditional expectations.

The vicar, interviewed in his study, was very keen to tell me about the parish and his view of the future. A few days after the interview he sent a
long letter making 18 enumerated points about matters he thought he might have overlooked.

The churchwardens were interviewed in one of their homes. One churchwarden was unavailable, but the Incumbent had asked another long-serving member of the Parochial Church Council to deputise. As well as responding to my questions, the interviewees wanted to share their feelings about past disappointments in the parish and some of their anxieties about their present situation.

The Incumbent was very clear about priorities for the "inner life" of the church and about his own evangelical churchmanship. The laity seemed a little unsure about both of these.

East Ecton: The second thriving suburban parish in the small sample. Congregations seemed very large: a large car park was quite inadequate on Sunday mornings. The church had an impressive range of church activities. Church life had been dynamic during the past few years, with major new projects, such as a neighbourhood care scheme and a network of prayer groups established.

The Incumbent was interviewed in his immaculately tidy study. He answered the questions readily and spoke with great sensitivity and modesty about what was obviously a flourishing church.

Only one churchwarden was interviewed in the parish. The interview took place in his home, but he had arranged a large visual display of parish activities and changes in attendance and financial giving. This had been
assembled for some recent church event. I was also given a well produced 16 page document outlining the life of the church during the past 10 years.

Other material which I was given included a freely distributed bi-monthly magazine with a traditional church-orientated content; a "welcome" magazine, ecumenically produced and with a wealth of local information, which was distributed to all new residents; and a summary of parish priorities as recently established at a parish weekend.

The priorities covered three areas: "prayer and prayerfulness"; "sharing in the ministry of pastoral care"; and "welcome and follow-up" (concerned with welcoming new residents and new church members).

In the printed material and in the interview responses, there appeared to be a conscious effort to preserve an even balance between "praying" and "caring".

Polton: A down-town parish with a strong evangelical tradition. The church was deliberately standing out against changes in forms of worship which have become almost universal in urban Church of England parishes. Sunday worship was Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer following the Book of Common Prayer, Holy Communion was appended to each of these services once a month, and the Litany replaced Morning Prayer once a month. (32) There was very little weekday church activity. The Incumbent seemed glad to answer the questions, perhaps more out of kindness and courtesy than any enthusiasm for sociology. The picture he gave was of someone entirely committed to fulfilling his duty, regardless of what reward or success such action might bring.
The churchwardens, interviewed in one of their homes, were talkative and friendly. They were also at pains to leave me in no doubt about the churchmanship of the parish, although they seemed less conservative than the incumbent.

The parish magazine had a distinctive Christian content. Both the local material and the thick commercially published inset were predominantly Christian teaching.

Clergy and laity were very clear that the primary task of the local church was to teach the Christian faith.

Topley Parva: This was a housing estate parish. The church did a lot of work with children, but it had acute financial problems.

The Incumbent was interviewed in his study, as were the churchwardens. He clearly expected to leave the parish before too long and thus seemed to be looking at things a bit from the outside.

The churchwardens seemed depressed and anxious about the future of the parish. Much anxiety focused on the uncertain future of their large church building and church hall.

The Anglican and one Methodist church shared a joint magazine. It was a slim publication, containing little more than church notices.

During the interviews neither the Incumbent nor the churchwardens made
explicit reference to matters of faith or belief. The wardens had remarkably little idea of the Incumbent's views, as expressed to me, nor how he spent his working week. Patterns of public worship and of church organisations seemed to be determined entirely by the expectations of the community. At the same time the church did not seem to be trying to change the community in any way.

Fieldsend: An Anglo-Catholic church with an eclectic congregation, two thirds coming from outside its inner-city parish.

The Incumbent was interviewed in his study, with difficulty: a steady flow of people came to the vicarage door whilst I was there. The incumbent obviously enjoyed talking about his church and the parish.

The churchwardens were interviewed in one of their homes, which was well outside the parish. The wardens were comparatively young and very optimistic about the future of their church.

Three copies of the church magazine were provided. The content of the magazine was largely ecclesiastical. Snippets of local news and general interest items were included, but they seemed to be there to inform church members rather than to make the publication of interest to non-members. The magazine was supplemented by a weekly newsheet which was mostly about details of the services.

Clergy and laity alike were proud of their parish's churchmanship traditions, even reputation! There was little indication of the church having a negative attitude towards the wider community, but worship was
clearly the church's reason for existence and all else was quite secondary to this.

Bridge Town: This was a very large, mixed parish, with several places of worship. The church seemed to have gone through some difficult times in the past few years. This reflected the massive changes in the community, brought about by the collapse of local industry.

The vicar, again interviewed in his study, was very ready to answer questions. There was, however, no sense that he was desperately glad for someone to talk to about the parish, as there had been with some other clergy. A good deal of discussion about the parish clearly took place between the incumbent and other local clergy.

The churchwardens were interviewed in one of their homes. The interview again followed by hospitality which took longer than the interview. The home produced, and lay produced, parish magazine had a very high community content.

The incumbent emphasised the importance of clergy and laity alike taking responsibility for the life of the church. He did not regard himself as being there to run the church for other people. He was very active in a wide variety of groups, religious and secular, outside of the parish. He saw the church as part of the wider community and was reluctant to see it as at all distinct. It was not clear that the churchwardens shared his perceptions.
5. Results of Interviews

Two procedures were used to interpret the data acquired from the interviews. The first was a subjective exercise of judging how the churches saw themselves. The second was an analysis of the responses given in the interview.

(a) How the Churches saw themselves

Immediately after the conclusion of all the interviews, before any analysis of the data took place, I read carefully through the completed interview schedules. I tried to identify how the clergy and churchwardens saw their own churches: what, as a church, was their "self image"?

The purpose of this exercise was to produce a means by which to check any of the results of analysis of interview results.

The results of this procedure are set down in table 6:1 below.
Table 6:1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Apparent Self-Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Kirby</td>
<td>Community Church wanting to be &quot;more religious&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalton</td>
<td>Trying to fulfill ecumenical vision and vision of Church serving the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourne Keaton</td>
<td>Conventional &quot;Parish Church&quot; with ecumenical commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattrill</td>
<td>Church of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osgarh</td>
<td>Church leading the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wiston</td>
<td>Church just beginning to &quot;go out&quot; into wider community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Bagley</td>
<td>Christian fellowship being &quot;conscience&quot; of parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Ecton</td>
<td>A praying and caring church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polton</td>
<td>Evangelical Prayer Book church preaching the Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topley Parva</td>
<td>Part of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldsend</td>
<td>Eclectic catholic church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Town</td>
<td>Church with corporate leadership and blurred boundary between it and the wider community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langby</td>
<td>Church with task of gaining committed new members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Analysis of Interviews

Interview responses were analysed by devising rank order scores for each parish. The scores, which were separated between priorities and activities, indicated the predominance given to either sacred or secular orientations.

(33) The rank scores are set down in Table 6:2
### Table 6:2

**Rank Scores of Predominance of Sacred against Secular Orientation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>A:SA/SE (Activities)</th>
<th>P:SA/SE (Priorities)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Kirby</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalton</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourne Keaton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattrill</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osgarth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wiston</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Bagley</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Ecton</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topley Parva</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldsend</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Town</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langby</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The higher the rank the greater the sacred orientation; thus rank 1 = most sacred, rank 13 = most secular.

The principal use to which the scores in table 6:2 were subsequently put was in plotting the positions of parishes on the later model. At this point it is worth observing that the scores in table 6:2 do show consistency with the indications, set down in Table 6:1, of how the churches saw themselves. West Kirby is fairly high in sacred priorities and more towards a secular emphasis in its activities. Chalton is more secular in its activities and, to a lesser extent, in its priorities. Bourne Keaton emphasised the sacred in both priority and activity. Cattrill is more secular in both priorities and activities. Osgarth is the most secular in both priorities and activities. South Wiston emphasises secular activities.
whilst having fairly sacred priorities. Upper Bagley has fairly secular activities but very clearly sacred priorities. East Ecton maintains an even balance between sacred and secular in both priorities and activities. Polton and Fieldsend, from differing churchmanship traditions, are both clearly sacred in orientation. Topley Parva has secular priorities but rather more sacred activities. Bridge Town tends towards a secular emphasis in activities with a balance between sacred and secular in priorities. Langby has fairly clear sacred priorities and slightly less clear sacred activities.

(c) Nature of Interview results

The results of the interviews were two-fold in character:

I Data which has been categorised and ordered as scores, by "non-statistical" method.

II Information of a discursive nature, contained both in the "text" of the responses, and in the impressions and experience of the interviewer.

These results are used to give further consideration to the three secondary areas of inquiry: New Town church life; the role of the clergy; the well-being of the church. Most of all they are used, in Chapter Ten, to address the main task of developing and refining a model of local Church of England parishes.
Chapter 6 - Notes

1. See Chapter II, section 3(f). (page 37)

2. The models proposed by Hill and Swatos were cited as examples of models which were analytic as well as descriptive because of their clear criteria. See Chapter II, section 3(d) of this study. (page 30)

3. See Chapter IV, section 2(b) (page 86) in which these concepts are defined.

4. See Chapter II, section 2(c)(iii). (page 19)

5. See Chapter IV, section 3(b)(i). (page 88)

6. See Chapter IV, section 3(c). (page 90)

7. Note the distinction between secularisation, desacralisation and irreligiosity. See Chapter III, section 3, (page 57) of this study.

8. See section 4(b) (page 65) of Chapter III.

9. See Chapter III, section 4(d). (page 68)

10. Weber (1964 edn.) p.210, where Weber seems to dismiss the option of the religious group conforming to the world.

11. See Chapter II, section 3(f). (page 36)


13. See Chapter III, section 4(c). (page 66)

14. Chapter V, section 2(c)(i). (page 110)

15. Chapter V, section 2(c) (page 110) and Appendix I, section 3(c). (page AI-28)

16. See section (c)(i) above. (page 153)

17. See chapter II, section 2(e), (page 21) of this study, and Niebuhr (1951) pp.40-43.

18. See Chapter II, section 2(d), (page 20) of this study, and Rudge (1968) pp.21 et.seq.
19. See Chapter II, section 2(b), (page 15) of this study, and Cox (1965) p.127ff.

20. See Appendix II, section 1(a), (page AII-1) for details of the sampling method.

21. See Chapter I, section 4. (page 4)

22. The full text of the interview schedule is set down in Appendix II, section 1(c)(i). (page AII-4)

23. Section 1(b). (page AII-2f)

24. See section 4 below. (page 163 et.seq.)

25. See Appendix II, section 2(a). (page AII-9)

26. The full text and explanation of the postal questionnaire is contained in Appendix I, section 1(d). (page AI-5)

27. See Chapter X, section 2 (g). (page 299)

28. See section 3(b) (page 160) above and Appendix II, section 1(b). (page AII-2)

29. See Appendix II, section 1(d) (page AII-9) and Chapter I, section 6. (page 5)

30. See Appendix II, section 1(d). (page AII-9)

31. "Secular" is used here in the same way in which it is defined in Chapter IV, sections 2(b) and 2(c). (page 86)

32. This service is very seldom used outside such special occasions as ordinations.

33. Details of the scoring procedure are set down in Appendix II, section 2(a),(b) and (c). (page AII-9 to 13)

34. See Chapter X and Appendix II, section 2(c)(ii). (page AII-13)