

A (very) brief history of English Church Planting

The Diocese of Norwich
Church Planting School

Who am I?

John Valentine

- Married to Catherine, 2 teenage daughters
- Curate at Holy Trinity, Norwich
- Curate at HTB
- Planted St George's
- 2 plants, and 1 failure
- Work with Bishop Ric at the Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication

Why history matters

- We can be inspired and warned (1 Cor 10: 6)
- We can learn
- The past can impact the present
- The church has an historic dimension

Headlines

- Church planting has always been a thing
- There are very many different ways to plant churches
- Changing contexts demand different approaches

Where we are going

- NT recap and some theology
- Some key church planting moments
- Today

NT recap

- What was the NT pattern of church planting?

Theology

‘An unmissionary church and an unchurchly mission are both, from the standpoint of the gospel, absurdities’

Lesslie Newbigin

Celtic and Roman models

- Pope Gregory and St Augustine
- King Oswald and St Aidan

Two contrasting methods

Roman	Celtic
Presentation	Community
Decision	Conversation
Fellowship	Belief

Celtic church planting

- Deep prayer
- Mission as team
- Holistic training centres
- The edge of society
- Hospitality as a strategy
- Evangelism in community

(Winfield Bevins)

The next 1,000 years

- Monasteries
- The Reformation
- The question of *plantatio ecclesiae*

A question to discuss

How would you answer someone who said that we have enough churches already, so there is no need for new churches. We should concentrate instead on growing existing churches, rather than take on the challenge of starting new ones.

John Wesley (1703 – 1791)

- The Holy Club
- The mission to Georgia
- Aldersgate (24 May, 1738)
- ‘The world is my parish’
- By 1791, 70,000 in UK, 40,000 in US

Lessons from Wesley

- Personal encounter with Jesus
- Renewal within the church
- Taking the gospel out of the church
- Organisation (societies, classes and bands)
- The Holy Spirit
- Bi-vocational lay leadership
- Holistic vision

Another 300 years

- Anglo-Catholic church planting in C19th
- Evangelical church planting in C19th
- Bishop Blomfield (1786 – 1857) 200 new churches (1828 – 1856)

Today

Why should we be planting churches today?
What has changed?

Recent history

Holy Trinity Brompton

- Sandy Millar and 1985
- Planting at scale
- By 2018, 20 + plants
- 16 City Centre Resource Churches (2018)
- Church plants which plant churches

St Paul's Shadwell

- Ric and Louie Thorpe plant in 2005
- Plant 4 other churches, and a congregation
- Attendance increases x10 (72 to 735)
- 20% not attending church before
- Parish share increases by £300,000 p.a.
- Contextualized planting

Not just HTB!

- Co-mission, Vineyard, City to City, New Wine
- Other churches
- 1 London church in 7 planted 1992 – 2012
- 38% of growth from new people
- Black majority churches planting
- Bishop Ric consecrated September 2015

The Church of England

‘We welcome planting new churches as a way of sharing the apostolic mission by bringing more people in England to faith in Christ’

The House of Bishops, June, 2018

2013 The C of E plans for 100 new churches

2018 The C of E plans for 2,472 new churches

Challenges

- Are traditional plants reaching new people?
- Where are leaders and teams coming from?
- Reaching the estates
- Anglo Catholic church planting
- Working within the Church of England
- New types of churches for new places need new types of leaders

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Discussion questions

- Are you a Roman or a Celt?!
- What particular take homes do you have from the Wesleyan revival?
- What do you see as the opportunities and obstacles to church planting in your context?
- What has encouraged you from this evening?

This last few days

- St Saviour's Hanley Road
- Exeter
- Andover
- St Thomas's, Newcastle
- Preston Minster

