

MUSTARD SEED MISSIONS 1987:
EVALUATION REPORT
GREG SMITH January 1988

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1) INTRODUCTION:

Manna Ministries is a Christian Trust "committed to evangelism in the power of the Spirit, working with churches of all denominations." Founded in 1982 and under the direction of Douglas McBain it is based in the Kings Road Chelsea and linked into the work of the Manna Baptist Fellowship which has been planted in the area. September 1986 saw the pilot Mustard Seed scheme, a series of evangelistic campaigns in inner city churches across London. The concept was to bring in for a fortnight teams of ordinary Christian people who would work alongside local church members in locally appropriate outreach to people in the surrounding neighbourhood. An underlying conviction expressed by Douglas McBain is that God is at work by his Spirit, and that "by the year 2000 such a spiritual recovery will have taken place throughout the church that the life of the whole community will have assumed a God-centred focus" (Manna News Summer 1987). Revival of the church is on its way, beginning most likely in the most deprived areas of the capital, and the Mustard Seed process is seen as one part of the essential preparation. Against this is set the reality of London, "so impoverished spiritually, so decadent morally, so sorrowful in its lack of family and community spirit".

In 1987 Hugh Shelbourne & Brian Swain joined Manna Ministries to oversee Mustard Seed 1987, in what was hoped to be an expanded version of the 1986 campaigns. Hugh sees the reality of the churches as "rather like a first world war scene of small groups huddled together in isolated fox holes, keeping their heads down as occasional bullets fly overhead." Manna Ministries is conscious of being engaged in spiritual warfare in which Christians of all denominations and backgrounds need each other for support and need the power of the Holy Spirit if they are going to make any impact for the cause of the kingdom.

With this background the goals of Mustard Seed were listed as:

- 1) to bring others to Christ
- 2) to develop existing fringe relationships
- 3) to open up new contacts for the church to develop
- 4) to stir up the church to the work of mission.

(Manna News Winter / Spring 1988)

An further objective was to enable Christians from outside the inner city to spend two weeks there, as holiday, as evangelistic service, as a learning experience and for fellowship with the Christians who live and work there. Suburban Christians are seen as having a responsibility for the evangelisation of the inner city, but will only be effective if they are willing to come as servants and equal partners of those Christians who are already there.

The publicity leaflet issued in the spring of 1987 set a target of

1000 volunteers supported by their home churches to work in 100 inner city churches. The leaflet was targetted at committed enthusiastic Christians with a "heart" for London and specifically asked for volunteers from students, pensioners and unemployed people as well as from workers who were willing to give up part of their holiday for evangelism. In the event MS87 failed to meet the target of 100 churches and 1000 volunteers, and 17 teams with a total of just over 100 volunteers took part. In fact the Mustard Seed organisers breathed a sigh of relief for they had realised that they would never have been able to deal with the logistics of such a huge operation in an effective way.

In the spring of 1987 I was asked in my capacity of London ECUM's field officer by Hugh Shelbourne of Manna Ministries to undertake an independent evaluation study of MS87. He told me that on the experience of MS86 he believed the Mustard Seed approach was onto something exciting in the evangelisation of the inner city and wanted a rigorous and honest critical assessment of their achievement. He felt that on the basis of my experience in social research, and in particular the "God at Work in the Inner City Project" I was the obvious person to carry out this task. Having put this proposal to the London ECUM Council, they saw it as an appropriate use of my time and resources and so we agreed to go ahead. I drafted a research proposal and made a contract with Manna Ministries to undertake the research and produce for them a report by the end of 1987 in time to implement any recommendations for 1988. We agreed that as the project was of mutual interest to ECUM and to Manna Ministries that there would be no financial transactions involved other than for printing expenses, and that both parties would share copyright on the report.

This then is the report on Mustard Seed 1987. I would like to thank those who made it possible, especially Brian Swain who handled much of the administration at the Manna Ministries end, and all those church leaders, Mustard Seed team members, and local church members who filled in questionnaires and answered my questions.

2) THEORY & THEOLOGY

At the outset of any piece of research it is important to set out briefly a theoretical framework and the researcher's values & presuppositions. The first thing to say is that I am a committed Christian, working full time in an urban mission para-church organisation and belonging to an inner city fellowship in East London. Indeed we had a Mustard Seed team with us in September and I participated enthusiastically in the mission fortnight. Clearly then, I am a sympathetic observer of the MS87 project, and was already in a personal and working relationship with a number of the churches involved. However, I hope that as a social scientist I am able to study what happened from a position of critical detachment and make a truthful assessment of what took place in so far as it is possible from the data that was gathered. Pure objectivity is of course impossible to achieve, but honesty and empirical accuracy are worth striving after.

In the following paragraphs I hope to make some observations about the overall context of the inner city, the church within it, the nature of mission & evangelism, and the question of how God is at work in the urban scene.

a) The Inner City Context:

London has been for many centuries a centre of power and wealth. It is a world class city with a population of over six millions and a financial sector which despite the stock market crash continues to boom. Located in the prosperous South East, London suffers much less than Northern or Scottish cities from industrial decline. Yet within London there are vast pockets of multiple deprivation, with unemployment rates of over 20% in some inner boroughs, a housing crisis that makes 20-30,000 people homeless, chronic poverty among pensioners, single parent families and other claimants in the working class areas, and a physical environment that is noisy, dirty and despite recent improvements heavily polluted. Its chief gods are Mammon, symbolised by the square mile of the City and the redevelopment in Docklands, and Bacchus, symbolised by the West End, where all the traditional sins of the flesh are still going strong.

Most twentieth century cities have an international function and their population contains long term residents and short term visitors with origins in all parts of the earth. London is no exception and it is impossible to understand the context for mission without being aware of the pluralism and multiculturalism of the urban community. There are at least 130 languages spoken by children in London schools, and perhaps 25% of London residents were either born overseas themselves or have parents born overseas (The 1981 Census recorded 17% of the population born overseas, and 13% living in households where the head was born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan ie. Black or Asian). The largest and most visible ethnic minority groups are from the New Commonwealth countries of the Caribbean and South Asia, but Africans, Chinese, Cypriots, South Europeans, Arabs and Latin Americans are all

found in large numbers. The richness of such cultural diversity is gradually being recognised although for many white indigenous Londoners the presence of "immigrants" is perceived as a problem and causes conflict. The really serious problem is racism at every level in British society which ensures that black people, even those who are Londoners by birth face hostility, reduced life chances and discrimination at every level, in housing, employment, education and on the streets.

The way society works in a metropolitan mega city is quite different from village or small town community life. Interpersonal relationships tend to be short term and fragmented, and people's lives tend to be fragmented into different spheres. It is not normal for there to be much overlap between one's workmates, neighbours, leisure partners, co-religionists and extended family. In contrast in peasant society it would be more usual to find multiplex relationships e.g. that one person living in the same street is cousin, workmate, drinking partner and fellow member of the P.C.C. The urban pattern of associational (rather than organic) community has both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand it allows the individual more social freedom and space to pursue minority interests. On the other hand it tends to weaken family and traditional religious loyalty and permit poverty, illness and loneliness to pass unnoticed and unremedied. In London since 1945 social policy has also consistently encouraged this move to anonymity, with the growth of a massive welfare bureaucracy, and the wholesale replacement of poorer Victorian urban neighbourhoods by impersonal and badly designed estates of tower blocks and low cost flats. The policy of building new towns in such places as Basildon and Harlow and the fact that most of those with any "get up and go" have "got up and went" has meant that inner London is now largely a community of the newcomers and the left behinds.

The breakdown of the traditional community and the consensus of values that tended to accompany it has had a major impact on family life. Consumerism, TV and individualistic value systems have also contributed to the rise of the self contained, and very fragile, nuclear family. Divorce and common law marriage, illegitimacy and abortion are far more common than they once were. This has practical consequences in terms of poverty and social security, and on the case load of social workers, teachers and the other caring professions. For Christians such factors also present moral dimensions, with questions of personal responsibility and the challenge of finding an appropriate pastoral response.

Such a social setting inevitably becomes an arena for social and political conflict. There is conflict between employers and workers, between white collar, blue collar and unemployed workers, between ethnic groups, between the respectable and the marginalised, between men and women, between young and old and between the majority and a huge range of minority interest groups ranging from YUPIs, Tenants Associations, and disabled people's groups to CND, gay rights activists and the Animal Liberation Front. In the mainstream world of politics there is sharp conflict between a centralised national state driven by doctrines of market economics and local government committed

to providing decent services to the residents of their boroughs. However, the majority of urban people feel they have little interest and less influence in these political debates. If they are reasonably prosperous they seem content to get on with a busy search for personal happiness based on consumerism. If they are poor and struggling the general pattern is to accept their lot with apathy and resignation. Powerlessness can sometimes lead to deep frustration and alienation from the mainstream values of society, which is run by and for "them" not "us". Occasionally this bursts out in acts of violence, sometimes in mass disturbances such as those in Brixton and Tottenham in 1985, but more commonly in less directed lashings out at individual people or public property.

b) The Church in the Inner City

If the analysis of society in inner London summarised above is correct then our urban lifestyle clearly falls short of the Christian ideal, which might be summed up in the vision of the perfect city, the new Jerusalem in Revelation Ch. 21. Biblical realism would remind us that we live in a fallen world, and that all of us are sinners in need of God's forgiveness and transforming grace. Furthermore the Bible makes it clear that sin and evil also infects the very structures of society, there are spiritual powers and principalities fighting against all that is good and wholesome in human life. Clearly then the Christian message brings hope and Good News. At the personal level there is forgiveness and new life in Christ which goes on beyond the grave, at the societal level there is the Good News that God's Kingdom is bursting in, that His rule has been established de jure on earth, and that eventually it will be consolidated de facto. In the meantime then the body of Christ, consisting of all believers who have recognised and accepted the rule of Christ in their lives are to live as a model community with citizenship in, and values and lifestyle derived from the world which is to come. They are to be committed to mission, by sharing the good news with unbelievers, by building up the body of Christ, by demonstrating through word deed, and sign the presence of the Kingdom of God, and by working with God and with others in order to preserve what is good in existing cultures and transform what is bad to something which more closely resembles the will of God.

How then does the current urban church in London match up to this challenge. In short the answer is not very well. Firstly the church in the inner city is weak in numbers. Probably less than 5% of the population in inner London as a whole have any meaningful regular contact with any of the inner city churches. Worse than that the higher the indices of social deprivation in a neighbourhood, the lower will tend to be the church attendance. In South West Ham for example it is unlikely that more than 1 or 2% of people ever attend church. And those who do, especially the leaders among them, tend to be middle class incomers or aspiring people unrepresentative of the local community which the church serves. This is a scandal when set alongside the Biblical evidence of a God who is especially concerned

for the poor and the marginalised, and the pattern of the NT church where not many were of high status, rich or learned.

This low level of congregational life, coupled with the need to respond to pressing problems of urban people and communities, set in a context of ongoing national decline in church attendance and influence tends to produce a church which is depressed in spirits and pessimistic. Church leaders, who are inadequately trained for urban ministry, inadequately supported at the personal and spiritual levels, and pressurised by a wide range of conflicting and unrealistic expectations are easily tempted towards an easier life in greener pastures. Those who remain are vulnerable, and often cannot stand the strain; breakdown of physical and mental health, marital relationships, spiritual and moral life are commonplace. Meanwhile congregations can become very negative, complaining about the community out there rather than serving it, and resisting innovation on the ground that "we've tried it all before and it didn't work".

Of course the problems and weakness outlined in the previous paragraphs are by no means the fault of the Christians in the inner city who have usually maintained a remarkably faithful witness and a strong system of mutual support. Rather it is the structures, organisation and national leadership of the denominations that have failed them. Controlled and financed as they are by leaders and synods which are dominated by suburban values, which tend to operate on bureaucratic and commercial values rather than Kingdom ones, and by clergy who in many cases have lost their nerve if not their faith, is it any wonder that "the walls of Jerusalem are broken down". In contrast the Mustard Seed approach is one which works from the grass roots upwards, seeking to affirm and encourage ordinary people and churches to be themselves, to be led by the Spirit and God's Word, to engage in the type of witness and mission which they feel appropriate.

The church in a city like London is plural and diverse. Besides the obvious differences of denominational structure and theological emphasis there are a variety of types of churches. At the centre there are a small number of large preaching Centres such as All Souls, and Metropolitan Tabernacle. There are even some such gathered congregations in suburban and inner city areas. There are Anglican parishes serving every neighbourhood in the city; in the inner city their congregations tend to be small (under 50) and their influence tiny. Roman Catholic parishes tend to serve a larger area and thus to have higher numbers of communicants (1000 is not uncommon), but here nominalism is a problem and numerical decline is often reported. The traditional Free Churches have also struggled to maintain a presence, congregations again are small and there are many neighbourhoods unserved by any Methodist, Baptist, URC AOG or FIEC church.

However, there are certain more hopeful signs in church life in inner London.

Many mainline churches are reporting signs of numerical growth and there is an increasingly visible sector of new churches. Perhaps a third of inner London churches have been founded in the last 20 years.

On the one hand there is a range of new (charismatic) House and Community churches, some linked with the major "restorationist" networks, others more independent. Secondly there are a wide range of black led Pentecostal and Holiness churches. Emerging from the racist rejection of Caribbean Black Christians in the 1950's and 60s, there are now several major international denominations with branches in many parts of London as well as smaller more independent groups meeting in community centres, mission halls and hired Sunday School rooms. In the 1980's London has seen a wave of newly planted or emerging ethnic churches among African, Asian and European groups, some as a result of deliberate church planting by international missions, some as semi-spontaneous gatherings of people from a similar overseas church background.

Despite the new wave of life in London's churches it is clear that the Gospel is reaching only certain sections of the population. It is easy to predict that church members in London will be predominantly female, predominantly middle or aspiring middle class, and predominantly in the 20-35 or over 60 age ranges (unless they are West Indians who are more likely to be 45-65 years old). Ethnically Afro-Caribbeans, Chinese, Philipinos, Poles, South Europeans are far more likely to go to church than indigenous white Cockneys, Turkish Cypriots or Bangladeshis. In East London churches three main groups constitute perhaps 80% of protestant church attenders, these are educated young adults up to the age of 35 (mostly incomers from the provinces or suburbs), middle aged West Indians, and old age pensioners (mainly women living alone). Significantly all of these belong to groups with little extended family support living nearby, and it is hardly surprising that the role of the church fellowship as a substitute extended family is highly valued both implicitly and explicitly.

It is impossible to understand what is happening in the urban church without a brief look at the social action in which Christians and churches are engaged. Some of the more disadvantaged parts of London have long been the laboratory of urban mission; here the settlement movement, the Salvation Army, Barnardos, Lord Shaftesbury's Ragged School Union, the Methodist Central Halls and the London City Mission all began and thrived. There is a long tradition of social welfare initiated by the churches and taking place alongside evangelism. In the middle of the 20th century a divorce between the two aspects of mission took place as social gospel became almost exclusively linked with liberal theology, and evangelism with conservative fundamentalism. In the last fifteen years there has been a certain degree of theological reconciliation between the extreme positions and a resurrected breed of socially concerned radical evangelicals has emerged.

The result is that almost every inner city church is now committed in some degree to wholistic mission. There are still those on the wings who have an emphasis which excludes evangelism or minimises social concern. There are also different motivations for Christian social action, from those who see it as merely giving credibility to the

verbal proclamation of the good news to those who see it as good works Christians must do irrespective of results, to those who see it as an essential part of the proclamation and demonstration of the Kingdom. However most Christians in inner London are now convinced of the Scriptural legitimacy of being socially involved at some level. It is especially significant that strongly evangelical groups such as Shaftesbury Society, new charismatic groups such as Ichthus and Teamwork, and Black Led Pentecostal churches such as New Testament Assemblies are all involved in social action projects, and in taking stands in favour of Biblically rooted social justice. It is significant too that most of the churches forming the Mustard Seed constituency would share this approach to mission.

d) Theologies

Clearly this discussion of social action and wholistic mission has implications for our understanding and practice of evangelism. If we see the world as totally wicked and irredeemable until the return of Christ we will see the church mainly as a lifeboat. Our task therefore will be to rescue as many sinners as possible from the jaws of hell and once aboard to keep them well away from further danger. We will more likely be content to accept an individual response to preaching as evidence of regeneration, and faithful church attendance, personal piety and avoidance of the "sins of the flesh" as evidence of sanctification. If on the other hand our image of the church is of a warship engaged in the battle for God's Kingdom our evangelism will appear more as the recruiting office for the navy and marines. After taking the King's shilling there will need to be a discipleship training programme, before the recruit is sent back out into the world, as part of a disciplined team to do battle with the enemy. Both of these positions are compatible with the traditional evangelical orthodoxy of justification by faith, and the miraculous regenerating and sanctifying work of God in the life of the believer. However, I personally believe that the second view is more in keeping with the overall teaching of Scripture and that the former view crucially restricts the churches' vision of the nature of the work of God in the world today.

In an earlier paper (Smith 1986) I have discussed the question "In the Inner city How can we tell if God is at Work?" Clearly our answer to this question will determine how we evaluate the results of the Mustard Seed missions. In the first place we need to ask whether God is at work in judgement as well as in grace. If so could the rejection of the Good News by some be signs of a divine hardening of hearts? Furthermore there is a Christian tradition which stresses the role of redemptive suffering in the life of the believer, a theology which is deeply rooted in the experience of the cross. Such doctrine is often invoked as a corrective to triumphalism, or as a explanation of the pain of the inner city and the failure of the church. Applying it to the context of the Mustard Seed missions we could argue that God was still active and in control when people were not saved, when prayers for healing were not answered and when things went generally went wrong. Indeed the Scriptures promises us a share in the fellowship of

Christ's sufferings as well as in the power of his resurrection, especially when we stand as witnesses in the proclamation of the gospel or in the denunciation of unrighteousness and injustice. Obedience is more important than success. Therefore theologically I have quite a lot of sympathy for this viewpoint. However, it does present an insoluble dilemma for the evaluation of the project in sociological terms. For the work of God in our lives, especially through suffering, failure and judgement is almost totally indiscernible except through the eyes of faith.

Therefore my approach in evaluating the Mustard Seed missions will be to measure the results, perceived by a wide range of informants, as far as possible against the set of stated goals. Where precise goals had not been determined in advance of the mission I will set the perceived results against more generalised expectations of how God might be at work, for example in conversions, in healings, in building up the body of Christ, in increasing contacts with and development of the local community, in taking prophetic stands on local justice issues. In doing so I will apply a fair degree of sociological scepticism, for example I will not immediately take reports of a person making a decision for Christ as evidence of genuine conversion, or the fact that one black person feels happy to be a member of a white led church as evidence that racism has been eradicated.

On the other hand I hope to avoid cynicism about the Mustard Seed campaigns. If there were decisions for Christ which in some way were genuine long term conversions these are surely the work of God and causes for rejoicing. If there were well attested cases of physical or emotional healing, if there was strengthening of Christian relationships in the churches, if there was any encouragement in faith and mission, then all of these things are positive and will be counted as achievements of the Mustard Seed campaigns. It may be impossible to claim that these were examples of God at work except by faith, yet as long as the people who experienced them felt positive for more than a short time afterwards they are surely to be welcomed.

e) The Evangelism Debate

It has been important to set out the theological framework for this evaluation because it is exactly what is missing in most reports of evangelistic work. Jim Hart (1987) has pointed out this shortcoming in the reports on Mission England (Back:1985) and Mission to London (Brierley: 1985 /6). He has also highlighted some of the issues about evangelism brought to the surface by these great crusades, and particularly about their failure to reach the unchurched masses of the UPAs in Britain. Gavin Reid has replied (1987) defending the role of mass evangelism and there are the stirrings of a vigorous debate on evangelistic method and practice among the leaders of the churches.

It seems to me that the Mustard Seed missions take a clear stance in this debate. The assumption is that small local church based evangelistic outreach by "ordinary Christian people" relying on the

power of the Holy Spirit is far more effective than importing an international superstar evangelist and his travelling circus. Simple witnessing one to one, backed up by self giving love and a demonstration of the power of prayer is preferred to eloquent preaching to large and anonymous congregations. Indeed one of the distinctive of the Mustard Seed approach is to encourage evangelists to offer prayer for people and their specific needs, be it on the doorstep, indoors or later back at base. Informal long term relationships with relatives, friends and neighbours is more likely to be fruitful than using the psychology of mass advertising. There are two further assumptions, that such a low key local approach is more appropriate in the inner city, and that it better reflects the values of the kingdom of God in which a small seed can become a mighty tree. The present project gives us a chance to test some of these hypotheses and to see if the idea behind Mustard Seed really does work as evangelism. Even if our answer to that specific question is negative, it is possible that the campaign could still be worthwhile and right because the vision came from God and / or it was a learning experience.

Let us turn now to describing how we set about investigating what really happened.

3) METHOD OF RESEARCH

In order to carry out an adequate evaluation of a programme as large and varied as the one proposed by Mustard Seed 87 it was necessary to develop an overall research strategy which monitored the process from a number of different angles. It was important to pick up the perceptions of church leaders and church members as well as those of team members, and to collect qualitative as well as quantitative data. To understand the sociology of what was happening it was also important to have good background information about the churches and neighbourhoods they served.

The research design therefore came to look like this.

a) Pilot / Retrospective: A questionnaire was designed and mailed out to the leaders of churches involved in the 1986 Mustard Seed campaign. This asked for fairly detailed background information plus an account of what had happened during the 1986 missions. In addition churches were encouraged to send in reports already written up in church magazines etc., and Manna Ministries allowed me to see the short evaluation questionnaires they had prepared and received from the churches. Not surprisingly response rates to this questionnaire were quite low, despite a series of reminder telephone calls.

b) A Preparation Audit questionnaire: This was designed not so much to collect information as to get the local church thinking about the nature of the mission field it was trying to reach and the existing place of the church within the community. It was designed to be completed as a group exercise, by the local planning committee or by a church house group. The hope was that it would enable them to discuss the needs and opportunities for mission and to define more clearly their goals and expectations. These questionnaires were distributed by Hugh Shelbourne on his visits to church leaders with a recommendation to carry out the exercise and to return a copy of the completed questionnaire to me before the beginning of September. With a certain amount of telephone reminders response rates here were rather better with just 50% of the churches involved actually returning questionnaires, although I suspect a few others did complete the exercise but never got round to returning the form. The return or non-return of this questionnaire is an useful index of the seriousness with which the local church engaged its people in preparation for the mission. Indeed there is a certain intuitive correlation between the churches which returned these forms and those where there was a general consensus in all our sources of information that the mission had "gone well".

c) Team Members Questionnaire:

A short 4 page self completion questionnaire was produced and distributed to all team members via their team leaders. It was to be filled in and returned during the last two days of the mission fortnight. There were basic questions on social and Christian

background and a number of open ended questions tapping perceptions of their experience during the fortnight. In all 73 forms reached me (out of 140 team members). Two out of 17 teams returned no questionnaires at all. One set of questionnaires (PCF) mysteriously went missing in the 200 yards between the church leader's home and my desk, but because it was the mission I was most closely involved with we were able to reconstruct a substantial part of the data, thus giving us information from 80 team members in all.

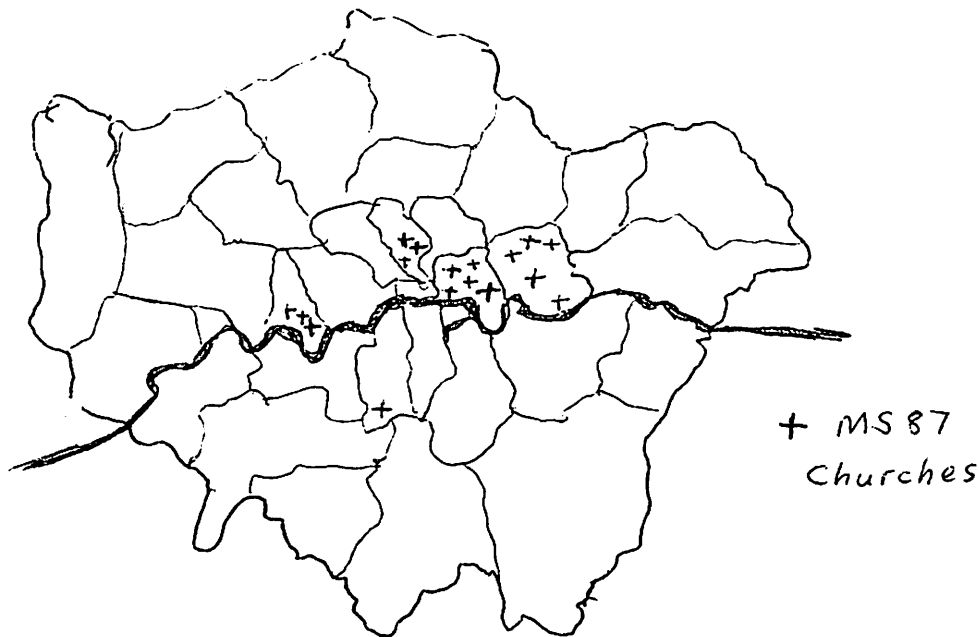
d) Church Members Questionnaire: An amended (shorter) version of the team questionnaire was distributed to the churches for completion by volunteers from the church membership who had been involved in the mission fortnight. 53 questionnaires were returned from 12 of the 17 churches taking part.

e) Participant Observation: During the mission fortnight I devoted at least half of my working hours to observation and involvement in the mission programme. I participated in morning team meetings of three of the teams in East London, and met all of the Newham teams when they came together for a joint session. I was fully involved in many of the activities of the mission at Plaistow Christian Fellowship, in the special events such as the concert, fun day and prayer meetings. I also spent one evening doing door to door visitation with the team, and in the run up to the mission acted as convenor of a group which produced a local community newspaper advertising the fellowship, the mission and the Gospel.

f) Debriefing Interviews with church leaders. Three months after the mission in December 1987 I conducted a telephone interview lasting between 20 and 40 minutes with the leaders of all 17 churches which had taken part. This was followed a structured interview schedule looking in turn at the team, the programme, the results, the follow up procedures and the practical and administrative aspects of the mission. All the questions were open ended and I allowed digressions to happen and pursued other interesting themes which emerged. The fact that we achieved 100% response rate on this part of the research means that we have enough data to make some assessment of what took place in every single church involved.

Thus the statistical data which will be presented is largely based on information collected by questionnaires c & d (above) and processed by computer using a statistical database package. Given the data collection strategy and the non-response rates it is not possible to treat the findings as representative of anything other than the groups of people who completed questionnaires, or to do any meaningful statistical tests, or to make predictive extrapolations to a wider population or Christians, churches or inner city neighbourhoods. The qualitative data, especially that from individual churches, is drawn mainly from the leaders' debriefing questionnaire and supplemented by observations and implicit background knowledge. Taking it all together one can make a general assessment of what actually happened and reflect critically on what this has to teach us for future programmes of urban evangelism.

ommissions, but if we are concerned for the united witness of the whole of the church of Christ then renewed efforts must be made to draw in some of these other groupings.



MAP OF LONDON SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF MS87 CHURCHES

The style of ministry of the seventeen churches was also quite varied as were the neighbourhoods in which they were set. Some were fairly conventional parishes, a few deliberately had no building of their own, while others operated from a base which they saw as a Christian community centre. According to my own reckoning only 4 or 5 of them were set in classic UPA situations, that is located in "sink" housing estates which comprised the majority of their parish or patch. One was located in Docklands in a community which is regarded locally as the lower end of the YUPI market. The rest were in very mixed residential areas, mixed in terms of housing, ethnicity and levels of social deprivation, ranging from three churches in the Chelsea / Earls Court area, to several in the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham. The geographical spread was interesting and clearly reflects the geographical bias in the networks of Manna Ministries. No less than 10 of the churches were in East Postal districts, 4 in South West postal districts (but only one south of the river) and the rest in N postal districts (concentrated in the LB of Islington). There are vast tracts of inner city London in for instance Southwark, Lambeth,

4) THE MISSIONS

a) Mustard Seed Missions 1986

In July 1987 following an attempt to discover what had happened nine months previously I sent the following notes to Manna Ministries. Questionnaires had been mailed to the leaders of a number of churches which had taken part in September 1986 and they had been followed up by a phone call. My impression was that it was extremely difficult to persuade them to fill in a questionnaire, but that when they did there were some encouraging things to report.

"I have had a chance to study questionnaires returned by about half a dozen of the participating churches and the following key points emerge. Of course these comments do not cover all the churches involved; it is noticeable that I have received nothing on paper from the black led churches who took part. If any do in 1987 it will be necessary to collect reports by personal visit.

1) Encouragement: There were a fair number of first time conversions recorded, many more rededications and healings. Other manifestations of the Holy Spirit were frequent too. There were many clear answers to prayer and the missions were confidence boosters and high points in the local church calendar. Several churches reported a surprising level of openness and spiritual hunger in the local community.

2) Variety and local control: A wide range of approaches were used from Make Way marches to home groups. It is hard to judge which worked best since local circumstances were different. Church based worship meetings did not seem to be a major success in reaching the unchurched, although some good things happened in them.

3) Manageability: Apart from a few minor administrative hassles, most of the small inner city churches appeared to cope reasonably well with a team of around ten people, working for 10-14 days. Budgeting was not a major problem, although it was a bit difficult in some cases to find places to stay for the whole team. There is little to suggest that Mustard Seed was a major disruption in the overall programme of the local church.

4) Part of a longer process: A number of churches reported that the mission was a catalyst in that it led to the reaping of carefully tended relationships and community involvements, or that the numerical growth of the church began to happen after the team went home.

5) A few questions about the role of the team and evangelists.

If there was one criticism mentioned it concerned evangelists / team leaders / preachers who were unclear of their role, had a

pet hobby horse, or could not be part of the team for the whole of the mission period. A couple of people hinted that the teams were not quite well enough prepared for the special circumstances of the neighbourhood (such as the Asian community), while other teams were described as very well prepared.

Two questions I would want to put which do not emerge from the reports.

a) How far were local Christians involved in the evangelism that took place, and how much training, confidence raising took place through Mustard Seed? Is it possible for locals to be in a genuine partnership with the visitors, and should the visitors be working themselves out of a job by passing on skills and saying "you can do it too"?

b) Did the mission penetrate beyond the church fringe into the unchurched members of the community, or bring any new people from the outer circle into the fringe, ready for the next stage of evangelism?

If we want to pursue these themes in more detail it is important that this year's evaluation is carried out as exhaustively as possible and that we get back information from all the participating churches, from all team members and from as many of the church members as possible. I am looking forward to collecting the data and discovering in it the things which the Lord has done."

b) Preparation & Training for MS87

During the Winter and Spring of 1987 Manna Ministries spent a lot of time and energy promoting and publicising the vision for Mustard Seed. Hugh Shelbourne in particular engaged in much useful networking and individual visitation of inner city church leaders, drawing them together to meet at a series of local prayer breakfasts. Out of this, negotiations about the possibility of hosting teams developed and eventually the 17 centres which were to be involved emerged. Meanwhile publicity went out to evangelical churches all over the country inviting them to send people to be part of the teams. The goal mentioned in the leaflet was to recruit 1000 team members; clearly this was not achieved. Perhaps it had always been unrealistic, and maybe it was providential that only 140 eventually took part. On the other hand we need to ask if this shortfall resulted from a failure of the publicity to reach the right target group, from practical considerations such as the timing of the missions, or from sheer fear and unwillingness of Christians to rise to the challenge of inner city evangelism.

During the spring and summer of 1987 a series of four training weekends were held at different church centres in inner London. These were designed to attract both potential team members and active people

from the local churches and had a variety of elements. There were sessions of praise and prayer, inspirational talks, specialist workshops on themes such as youth, Asians, presenting the gospel in drama and dance. There was also an opportunity for learning by doing with a chance to try out door to door visitation and open air witness, and to develop other gifts of ministry.

On the whole the respondents to the team questionnaires evaluated the training quite positively. Of 59 who had been on the training and answered the questions 17 rated it as excellent, 34 as quite useful, 6 as needing some improvement and only 2 as not very worthwhile. Under comments and suggestions 2 people felt it was rather too basic, 2 would have appreciated printed handouts, 2 more time for prayer, 3 thought there had been too much talk and/or praise and not enough training, 4 wanted more advice on the technique of door to door work (e.g. how to respond to difficult questions and what to say when sharing your testimony), 4 wanted more time to go out and actually do the work of door knocking. One person suggested the use of role plays in training, another did not want the Friday evening session, another advised that there should be no visiting before lunch on Saturdays (because people are not up rather than because it is difficult to witness on an empty stomach!). One person was very disappointed because he had been involved in a drama workshop in training but had no opportunity to do drama during the mission.

Finally there were three members who felt the real difficulty with training was that it should have taken place much closer to the missions, over a more extended period, in the locality of the church and if possible with the whole of the local team gathered together. This was echoed by nearly half of the church leaders interviewed in the follow up period and to some extent by spontaneous comments written by a few church members on their questionnaires. A number of church leaders also echoed the need for more on the practical technique of door to door visiting and one or two mentioned the need for some training on the issues involved in working closely together as a team over a two week period. Most of the church leaders appeared quite impressed with the skills and confidence levels of their teams, and thought the training had been quite good in preparing them.

c) The Churches and their Neighbourhoods

The 17 churches involved in MS87 were certainly a varied bunch. Seven of them were Evangelical Anglican Parish churches, 3 were Baptist congregations (but of very different styles), one was a Roman Catholic Parish, 4 were described as new charismatic house churches or community fellowships, one was a Shaftesbury Society Mission Centre and the final one a new ecumenical project and centre sponsored by Anglican Baptist & URC churches. However, it could be said that the variety falls far short of representing the diversity of the (Evangelical) Christian church in inner London. There were for example no Methodist or Pentecostal churches, either black led or white led, nor were there any fellowships specifically working with a single ethnic minority group. There may be good or bad reasons for these

Lewisham, Haringey, and Brent which were untouched by Mustard Seed 87. There are also large areas of UPAs in outer areas such as Barking which were not involved. Even when the churches which were involved in 1986 are added there are still gaps.

d) The Teams

Of approximately 140 people who were counted as team members by Manna Ministries we received and analysed data from 80 (or just under 60%). I think we would be safe to assume that there is not too much bias in the non-response since it is largely attributable to administrative hiccups, such as people leaving early, forgetfulness, or mislaying papers. However, we must bear in mind the limitations of the self completion questionnaire as a research method especially in terms of the type of response it produces. However well designed the questionnaire, however enthusiastic at motivating the respondents the research administrators are the quality of data can never match that gathered by longer more conversational interview techniques. For many people questionnaires bring back bad memories of test papers at school, with the result that less academic people are hesitant to risk expressing themselves with what they fear may be a "wong answer". It is also possible that some people were reluctant to complete questionnaires because they were brownd off with the whole mission, or hostile to researchers, or lacked confidence in writing. If so we can assume that the information we have probably comes from the more enthusiastic, more organised and more academically trained members of the teams. The same factors apply to the responses from church members which will be presented later.

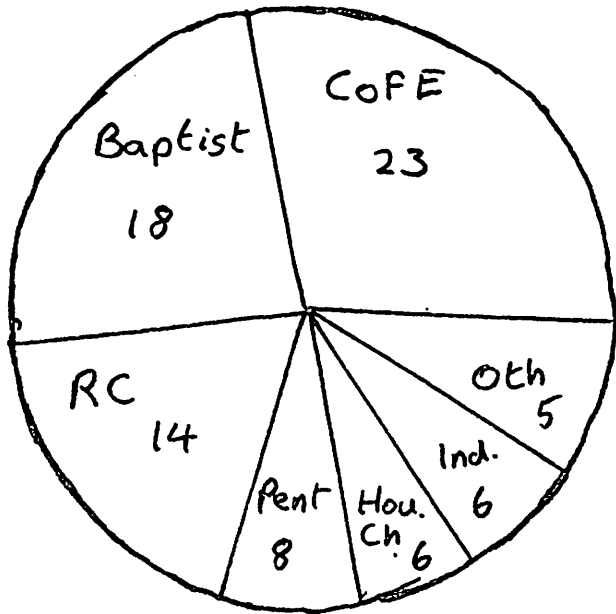
From the 80 respondents to the team questionnaire we can build up the following picture of Mustard Seed volunteers.

Home Base: 15 came from Inner London, 26 from outer London or the Suburban South East, 19 from other urban areas, 13 from small provincial towns, 5 from rural areas and 2 from overseas. Individuals had travelled from as far away as Cornwall and Scotland.

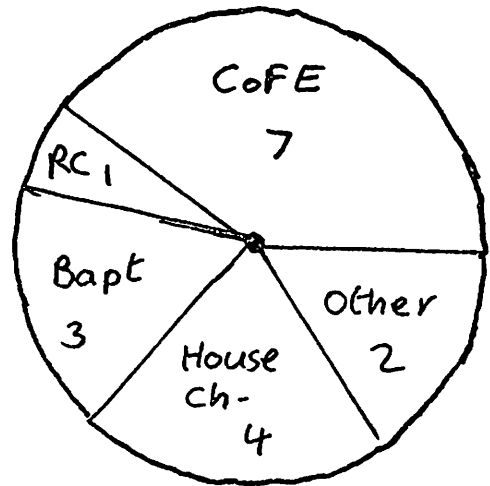
Denomination: 23 were Anglican, 18 Baptist, 14 Roman Catholic, 8 Pentecostal, 6 from new house or community fellowships, 6 from independent evangelical churches and the other 5 from a variety of other denominational or non-denominational groups.

Gender: 43 were male, 37 female (slightly surprising given the general tendency for churches to have 3 women for every 2 men)

Team Members

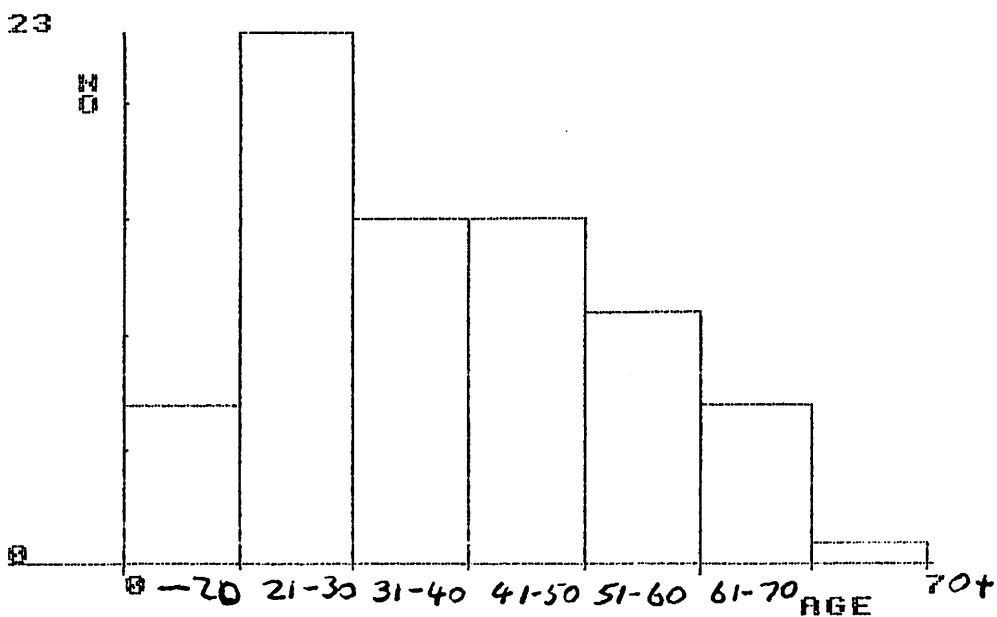


MS87 Churches



PIE CHARTS SHOWING DENOMINATIONS OF TEAMS AND MS87 CHURCHES

TEAM AGE GROUPS



BAR CHART SHOWING AGE GROUPS

Age: The age range was surprisingly diverse if predictably biased to youth. 7 were under 21, 11 between 21 & 25, 12 between 26 & 30 years old. 15 were in their thirties, 15 in their forties, 11 in their fifties, 7 in their sixties, and one over seventy years old.

Occupation: 31 were not economically active (including 15 students, 4 homemakers, 2 unemployed and 8 pensioners). 33 were in non-manual professional employment, 9 in intermediate non-manual or technical jobs and only 7 were manual workers. Jobs ranged from a doctor and an estate agents to a plumber and a waitress. 15 were already involved either in full time church work or evangelism, or were training full time at theological or Bible College.

Education: 34 of the 80 had at least a university degree or equivalent, another 20 had received some further education after leaving school and 21 said they had left school at 16 or younger.

Race: 72 of the 80 respondents described themselves as white, 5 as Black (Afro-Caribbean background), 2 as Asian (Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi background) and 1 as Chinese.

Christian Experience: Over half (45) said they had been Christians for more than 10 years, another twenty for 3-10 years. 6 had been christians for 1-3 years and only 1 for less than a year.

Previous Evangelism: Nearly two thirds (51) reported they had previously been involved in some form of evangelistic outreach and only 22 said they were complete beginners.

Church Backing: All except 7 respondents said they had the encouragement and/or prayer support of their home church. However only 6 said they had financial backing, and several of these were people who were already in full time paid Christian service.

How far then did the teams match up to the vision of being very ordinary people working together with God? In terms of geographical origin, sex and age and even race they were not strikingly different from the general population of the U.K. However in terms of occupation education and social class they were far above average, with over 40% being graduates, and less than one in ten a manual worker. Yet comparing this with what is known about the church membership in Britain, and about evangelicals and charismatics in particular, none of this is surprising. Furthermore when we take account of the kind of people who would have both the time and the resources to give up for a fortnight of urban evangelism we should not be surprised at who actually took part. Indeed we should be encouraged that the Mustard Seed teams drew in from far wider than the usual evangelistic teams of zealous young students. In short in many ways they were ordinary Christian people. There remains a question as to how far ordinary Christian people can identify and relate to ordinary inner city people, the poor, the alienated, the ethnic minorities and the working

class.

e) Church Member Survey Respondents

53 church members from 12 of the 17 churches returned questionnaires completed shortly after the missions.

The profile of these respondents is as follows

Denomination: 20 were Anglican, 16 Baptist, 15 House or community fellowship, 2 Independent evangelical.

Age Group: 4 were aged 21-25, 12 aged 26-30, 12 in their 30s, 9 in their forties, 7 in their fifties, 8 in their sixties and one over 70.

Gender: 23 were men and 29 women (almost the usual 3/2 ratio)

Occupations: ranged from head teacher to domestic assistant with 7 full time church workers. 19 were not economically active (8 homemakers, 9 pensioners, 1 student and 1 unemployed). 23 were in professional work, 10 in non manual work and only one manual worker. This social class distribution is not uncommon in the kind of inner city church we are dealing with, but may be further biased towards the professional classes because of the kind of people who are most willing to fill in written questionnaires.

Race: 49 were white and 4 Afro caribbean black. This probably underrepresents the black membership in the 17 churches.

Christian Experience: 32 of the 53 had been Christians for over ten years, 19 for 3-10 years and 2 for 1-3 years.

These respondents are in no way representative of the church memberships they are drawn from let alone of the wider Christian public. They are almost certainly drawn from the keen and active members of their local church and were probably the people who were most deeply involved in the MS87 campaign. To generalise from what they report may therefore be dangerous. However, the data they provide comes from people who were well informed about the mission and the local situation and have probably reflected at some length about what took place. Therefore the information they give is well worth looking at in some detail.

f) The Programmes:

The programmes for the fortnight were locally planned and extremely varied. In some cases (8) a formal Mustard Seed committee or planning group had been set up, in the others the initiative and planning rested more clearly in the hands of the church leadership in discussion with individuals or groups within the fellowship. In several cases the MS team leader visited in advance and played some part in the planning of the mission. However most team members arrived without knowing in much detail what they would be doing. Most of the

programmes had some degree of flexibility, and could be amended as was felt appropriate. In some cases team members felt the planning had not been good enough and the vision had not been fully owned by members of the church.

Publicity was generally locally produced and quite low key. Almost every mission used mass leafleting around their area to advertise the overall programme and/or special evangelistic events. One church produced a 4 page A4 tabloid newspaper which introduced the church, highlighted its involvement in the community, shared testimonies of half a dozen Christians, gave details of events and finished with a cartoon version of a gospel parable. Most missions also used posters in local shops and outside the church. There is very little evidence to suggest that all this circulation of pieces of paper actually brought many people to special events, thousands of leaflets may raise the profile of the church but few will turn out to a meeting because of them. However most churches realised this and tried as far as possible to offer personal invitations on door to door visits and among friends and neighbours. In this context handing over a leaflet as a reminder of time and place can be far more effective.

On the weekdays during the mission most teams spent the morning in worship, bible study, prayer and planning sessions. In many cases church members who were free would join them. However, most teams also kept time free for more private discussion and ministry to each other. In some of the missions there was specific teaching on mission in the local context, for example on how to approach people of other faiths. It was a general policy that all team members should be given sufficient free time for rest and relaxation. However the details of this varied and many team members ended in exhaustion, while in one case at least they felt that they had too much time off and voluntarily went off to do some extra door to door visitation.

The programmes of evangelism undertaken by the 17 churches were very diverse. The general approach was low key sharing of experience rather than highly pressurised persuasion. Most of the missions used a number of experimental and creative ways of presenting the gospel.

Visitation: The majority of time and effort in all 17 missions was devoted to visiting people in their homes. Door to door canvassing in the afternoon or early evening was a common practice. Most teams came back rejoicing at the welcome they had received and the openness of people they had talked too. One common practice was to encourage visitors to offer to pray for people in specific need, either there on the doorstep or later as appropriate. There were many positively encouraging reports that this offer had been accepted with willingness by local residents. Given that the majority of people have some belief in God, and that many of them have real needs in themselves or in the family the offer of prayer seems to build a bridge and lead beyond polite conversation to an openness to each other and to God.

Occasionally there was hostility, the worst incident I heard of was of a milk bottle thrown from a tower block to smash at the feet of a team

of visitors. One factor which produced frustration in the teams was the high proportion of homes where no-one was in, especially in the daytimes, and in some blocks the entryphone systems were an almost total barrier. At least one church concentrated visitation on the fringe contacts in the parish. This had the advantage that no one was visited totally from scratch, yet produced even greater frustration in the teams when they had walked a long way to a particular home only to find nobody at home, or worse that they had moved away.

Many if not all of the teams did evangelistic work in the streets or some form of open air presentation of the gospel. At least ten churches organised open air preaching or a meeting where the gospel was presented in words to anyone passing by who cared to listen. However, there is a growing realisation that preaching on the street does not usually draw a crowd so it is necessary first to capture the attention of an audience before communication can begin. Street theatre is a popular way of proceeding and the Mustard Seed missions were fortunate to have two groups of performers who were available to travel to a number of the churches for special events. "Mouthpeace" specialised in dance and mime performances, and "Punchline" in drama. Both groups were highly praised by church leaders and members both for their direct communication of the message, and for their ability to stimulate conversation with other team members who were attempting to accost members of the public. In addition at least one team had the services of a member who was extremely gifted as a sketch board artist, and this proved a useful crowd puller in open air work. One further open air approach, which is not strictly evangelistic in intent is the Make Way praise march. These took place in at least three neighbourhoods during the period of the missions and certainly raised the profile of local Christians.

Most of the churches organised special events and meetings ranging from concerts to barbecues and fun days. It appears there was a general trend to move away from the "religious" type of event towards "user-friendly" gatherings. It is possible to see several distinct categories of event amidst the diversity. (Nos of churches doing each in brackets if > 1: The figures mean at least (x) missions involved this; we do not have full programmes to hand)

1) the "go" model : e.g. visits to pubs, schools (3), hospitals, mother and toddler clubs (2), old peoples homes and sheltered housing (3). The aim of most such visits was explicitly evangelistic, either by a public presentation, or through personal witnessing.

2) the "community fun" model : e.g. social evening (2), barbecue (3) sports afternoon, family fun day (2). The aim here was generally not evangelistic but rather to show that Christians are normal people who enjoy themselves, who are involved in the local neighbourhood community and generally want to build relationships of friendship and service. There are of course occasional opportunities for personal witness at such events.

3) the "home group" model: e.g. coffee mornings (3), women's meetings in homes, home video meetings (4) home groups (2), discussion evening,

tenants room meeting on the occult. These rely very much on invitations through personal relationships and at their best are informal non-threatening occasions where a presentation of the gospel and personal challenge can be made, yet there is opportunity for comeback and questions. They are usually but one stage in a longer process of small group evangelism.

4) the "come to a special event" model: e.g. childrens meeting (2) Urdu film on the life of Jesus, evangelistic meeting for Asians run as a joint event by two churches, gospel concerts (4), cabaret, multicultural concert, film evening, drop in coffee bar. Some of these events were quite imaginative in the way they presented the challenge of the gospel or targetted the invitations at particular groups. However, many of them suffered from the general reluctance of inner city people to go out to meetings, even when they are held on neutral territory. Those who did attend tended to be Christians already or at least on the inner fringe of the local church. The reports suggest that the interesting exceptions which did reach a wide non-christian audience with the gospel were those targetted specifically at the Asian population and the multicultural concert.

5) the "normal service" model: e.g. traditional evangelistic meeting (3), special invitations and evangelistic focus in regular Sunday services (7+), service with dance drama, healing services (3) harvest service, united celebration meeting, united launch service. The general impression is that attendance at these by non-Christians was generally low, with the exception of some of the healing services. Nonetheless most reports about them were positive because of the worship, fellowship and ministry which took place there.

One additional event providentially played an important part in the Mustard Seed fortnight especially in East London. On the first Sunday evening the BBC's TV programme "Songs of Praise" came from Newham. Recorded a month early in Rathbone Market, with a congregation drawn from dozens of local churches of all varieties, it captured something of the vibrancy and diversity of the local Christian scene. There were a number of clear and explicitly evangelical testimonies from local Christians, and a presentation of the churches' social involvement in the midst of urban deprivation. The local churches in MS87 made the most of the broadcast, with a massive leaflet drop a few days before the transmission, and a follow up questionnaire about "Songs of Praise" for use in door to door visitation during the following week. The indications are that the broadcast had indeed reached a mass market, had been very well received and for many people been quite challenging.

My conclusion about this diverse programme is that overall the "go" elements were far more effective in reaching the non-christian masses than the "come" ones. As one church leader put it, "we learned five years ago that it's a waste of time putting on evangelistic meetings, the truth is nobody comes". Of course this does not mean that services and meetings should be abandoned altogether merely that we should not rely on them as a way of doing evangelism.

f) Administrative and Practical Problems

Overall the administration of the MS87 project seemed to run smoothly but inevitably there were minor practical problems from time to time.

Of the 80 team respondents just under half (35) said quite explicitly there had been no problems. An even higher proportion of the 53 church members (28) agreed (+8 with no comment); perhaps not surprisingly since they were less intimately involved on the whole.

From the perspective of team members 16 of the complaints were about planning, preparation, co-ordination and decision making, perhaps indicating that there was some room for improvement in local organisation and communication. A small number of team members were quite put off by vagueness, red tape or late arrival of instructions. Practical issues over catering and unnecessary travelling from place to place worried four or five team members. Three or four team members mentioned tensions within the team or with the local church, in some cases based on differences in doctrine, in others on personality. One team leader reported having to deal with a case of sexual harassment from a church member towards a team member. However overall the problems did not generally appear insuperable and there were a number of testimonies as to how God dealt with difficulties encountered.

From the church members point of view administrative and practical problems centred around the struggle to provide hospitality or transport, the organising of visits to local church contacts, the demarcation of responsibilities between the team leader and church leader, a shortage of literature, the late appointment of the team leader, and last minute changes to the programme. Significantly most of these problems were individual and specific to a single local church.

Of the 17 church leaders interviewed 6 made nothing except positive comments about the administrative support. A further six gave positive comments but mentioned an occasional minor hiccup or breakdown in communication. Of the rest two leaders were frustrated by the small size of the team that had arrived, one complained that the timing was not good and three or four complained that they had not known enough about the composition of the team before they arrived. While they recognised the difficulties involved in large scale organisation and the problems of last minute changes and dropouts it would have been better to have more firm information about who was coming from at least a month in advance.

5) THE RESULTS

a) Team Performance and Relationship with Local Church

The overall impression was that the teams and the churches they stayed with got on very well together. 57% of the 80 team respondents said they got on very well with their hosts and a further 27% that the relationships were basically OK. The church members echoed this with 70% saying relationships were very good and a further 9% OK. There were also a number of stories of emotional and tearful partings at the end of two weeks and of promises to keep in touch. One church even reports two of its team members who have since moved to London and become members of the parish. On the other hand there were two or three churches where the team members were clearly disappointed at the lack of enthusiasm and support from the local congregation, and one case where doctrinal differences between team members and church leaders were an issue but were eventually overcome through Christian love.

In terms of team performance 77% of the 53 church members said the teams coped very well overall and a further 12% said they were basically OK. Nine of the 17 church leaders gave their teams fulsome and unadulterated praise, specifically mentioning their enthusiasm, flexibility, their mutual support and the way different team members complemented each other. None of the church leaders were totally negative about their teams, but a couple felt they were inexperienced or naive, one that they were difficult to fit into the programme, one that the leader overshadowed them and one that the team was too small. In one case the team showed a certain reluctance to go out and do door to door visiting.

Six of the team leaders were rated by the church leaders as excellent in every respect. A further seven were rated as good overall but with lacking gifts in certain directions, for example those who were good evangelists but not strong as pastors or vice versa. Two team leaders were seen as not really suitable people for the job and two teams had no outside leader appointed anyway.

b) Evangelism

When measured against the goals and expectations of MS87 in terms of conversion growth of churches it can only be said that the achievement while substantial was perhaps a little disappointing. Manna Ministries and Hugh Shelbourne in particular had made it very clear to church leaders that a two week mission was not the alchemist's formula which would suddenly fill the church with worshippers, and that there were wider aims and objectives in Mustard Seed. Yet obviously the underlying expectation or hope in all the churches that had a team was about making new disciples, and this was expressed explicitly in most of the preparation questionnaires. I am not aware of any overall

target figure for conversions having been set but I know of one church which set a target of 10 new committed members (eventually recording 4 decisions for Christ) and of another church which set a target of one new convert (eventually not even meeting that goal).

Altogether the seventeen church leaders reported 31 people who had made a decision or first time commitment to Christ. Eleven of these were concentrated in a single church, the next church in the "league table" scored four and six of the churches had none at all. Furthermore with all of these new Christians there is the perennial problem of moving towards mature discipleship. At least one pastor was clear that one or more of the decisions were not genuine conversions, or that there was little hope of the people involved entering into a serious commitment. There was also an evident problem in nurturing new Christians in small inner city churches; where there are not enough young Christians to form a nurture group, and where many of the converts will have a lot of unhelpful "baggage" to be disposed of the only solution appears to be one to one discipling classes. Indeed some of the churches have already established these for their MS87 converts.

It is perhaps also significant that few of the 31 people making a decision for Christ generated a story or testimony which the church leaders felt remarkable enough to be worth retelling. There may of course be good stories, which I simply failed to pick up, there may be cases which are exciting but are best kept out of the public eye. Or the absence of dramatic testimonies may simply be a reflection of the spirit of the Mustard Seed process, where realism, honesty and ordinariness are the key values and the context in which God is seen to be at work. However the fact remains that the most the church leaders reported was that in one or two cases the lives of the people involved were hurting and that God has begun to work on them. One man who made a commitment has given up petty theft. But that is the sum of what has been reported to me. Even the team members, who might have been expected to enthuse about the testimonies of people they had helped bring to Christ, were very restrained in their reports of how God had been at work. With such small numbers it is almost impossible to see if there was any overall pattern in the type of people who responded.

Besides first time commitments the leaders reported one or two cases of renewed assurance or recommitment to Christ, and a handful of new contacts who had started coming to worship but had not yet made a definite commitment. There were also a few cases noted of persons who had started to attend church based activities such as the Mother & Toddlers club as a result of the mission. There were many new contacts who were deemed worthy of at least one follow up visit. Many churches had a list of between 20 and 100 homes which they intended to revisit. There are inevitably vast differences of judgement as to what kind of contact is worth following up. But in all cases there were some who were deeply interested or very "hot" contacts and a much larger group who were less promising.

In addition there were many existing contacts between churches and

local people which were strengthened because of the mission. It is almost impossible to evaluate what has happened here; only time will tell how deep friendships have become. However, from almost all of the church leaders the impressions I received in this respect were positive. Certainly no-one was complaining that relationships with the community had been made worse or that people had been driven away from the church, or alienated from God because of the MS87 campaign. Of course our information comes from only one side of the relationship between church and community. It is a sobering thought but there may be at least a few non-Christians in the community with a different story to tell!

Evaluating these results is a personal matter depending on whether one sees the glass as half full or half empty. One could see the results as disappointing in that it took 140 team members and 17 churches two weeks hard work to make about thirty converts, some of whom will not stay the course. Or we could say that thirty new Christians represents the equivalent of one average inner city congregation, and that for each one who repented there is a humdinger of a party still going on in heaven!

The clear message is that each new disciple in the inner city is won at the cost of much hard work and prayer, long term commitment to involvement, outreach and discipling. (But then of course there are the exceptions, who in total isolation from what the churches are doing, or even despite their fumblings in evangelism are turned upside down by a Damascus Road experience.) There is room for encouragement and hope for urban church growth in some unlikely places. MS87 clearly played a useful role in evangelism (and a wider one in outreach, witness, prayer and encouragement). Yet there is no magic formula to be applied in evangelism. Mustard Seed missions have never claimed to be the best thing in evangelism since John Wesley. The work to be done is long term and the Mustard Seed process is just one resource among many available to the churches. And while there is no real evidence yet that a mass revival is about to sweep across inner London, there are signs of hope and reasons for continued prayer.

c) Encouragement:

Although our attempt to measure the work of God by counting converts has proved ambivalent, this does not entail that the MS87 campaigns were a fruitless exercise. One of the key words in all three sets of questionnaires was "encouraging" and it is worth spending some time looking at why the campaigns were seen in such a generally positive light by all concerned.

Looking first at the general comments from church leaders it is clear that 14 out of 17 had a very positive view about what had taken place. "The best thing since sliced bread" (if not John Wesley! ed.), "very positive", "enjoyable", "it concentrates the mind and enables the church to work", "much better than other teams we have had", "very valuable", "thankful to God for MS", "the vicar was uplifted", "stirred up the church which I had failed to do in nine years" were

just a few of the comments. Over half of these leaders with a positive attitude were open to the idea of a return visit, providing that is what God and the church want. And for those who did not it was the practicalities, not the concept that made them reluctant.

The three church leaders who had less positive responses were quite interesting. One compared it with a previous summer mission team and found that MS87 was not so strong or so professional as the earlier one. The second said they had had enough mission teams for a while and that MS needed a clearer definition of aims and objectives and more realism in its approach. The third had been generally disappointed by the whole process, had a big question mark over the whole approach and thought there were better ways of evangelism available. In fact this particular church leader had not been very enthusiastic from the start and had left a keen group within the church to get on with most of the work.

On the questionnaires for team members and church members there were a number of more specific questions which enabled respondents to share their positive feelings and it is worth going through these in turn.

1) How was God at work in your personal life?

28 team members gave answers which concentrated on the ways God had been at work in and through them, at work in unexpected ways in difficult and impossible situations, in long term and low key ways. Among them were several who expressed surprise that God had been able to use them despite their weaknesses and personal struggles.

14 team members gave answers which indicated a strong (renewed) awareness of God's faithfulness and sovereign purpose and presence in their lives.

12 expressed something about the love and compassion of God for individual people and for the inner city.

7 expressed that they had learned to trust and rely on God more than previously or had come closer to Him.

About half a dozen team members said they had learned something about the kind of holy lifestyle and commitment which God honours in evangelism. At least two people said God had shown them that the Holy Spirit is at work in unlikely people, even in Roman Catholics!

Of the 53 church members:

15 expressed that they had found or been given a new commitment or confidence in evangelism.

12 responded in terms of spiritual growth, renewed assurance or a greater level of trust in God.

Several mentioned a new awareness of the needs of people and of God's heart for them, a growth in love, acceptance and relaxed hospitality

for other Christians, a growing awareness of the need for prayer, conviction of selfishness or other specific sins, and a learning to be more patient.

Clearly both team members and church members perceive that a lot of good has been done at the spiritual level in their own lives. It is hard to measure but must count as a positive achievement.

ii) How was God at work in the team?

The overwhelming response (54 mentions) among team members was in terms of unity, fellowship and bonding together across the denominational and other divides.

The other comments from a few people each were about learning to trust God, to be open to the Holy Spirit, growth in skills and confidence, a broadened vision, a growing understanding of the realism needed in urban mission, and one or two specific cases of healing or other ministry among team members.

Among the 53 church members:

20 mentioned the unity and fellowship of the team members despite their diversity.

10 mentioned the teams role in encouraging and challenging the church in its evangelism through the boldness and enthusiasm of their witness.

Half a dozen responded in terms of appreciation of the actual tasks undertaken by the teams. Several felt their own faith had been strengthened or deepened because of the witness and ministry of the team. A few church members thought God had worked in what the team had learned from their experience and the teaching they had received.

The love, fellowship and unity in the team was widely seen as a remarkable witness to a Christ who breaks down barriers. There were also a number of testimonies which came to my notice, especially concerning the breaking down of barriers and prejudice between Protestants and Roman Catholics. There were some cases where open repentance reconciliation and tears were the order of the day. A cynic might ask whether such love would survive a period of intense interaction much longer than two weeks without a single task to draw them together. However, having seen some of the teams in action I personally am not so cynical. Surely this reconciling of brothers and sisters is a moving of the Spirit, much spoken of in the Bible and often found in church history at the start of periods of revival.

iii) How was God at work in the church?

31 of the team members felt the church members had received encouragement, renewal, challenge to outreach or something similar.

8 felt that God had worked to build up fellowship or sort out relationships within the church, in one church in particular by making them to face up to underlying problems.

The remaining comments included several about the way the Holy Spirit had been at work, sometimes revealing needs or problems, sometimes disturbing complacency and challenging them with new ideas and vision. There were also a handful of comments detecting the hand of God already in the lifestyle of the congregation and their love for one another and for the team.

Among the 53 church members

21 mentioned that there had been a new challenge, vision and confidence in the church's work of evangelism and mission.

7 mentioned a growth of fellowship within the church, with the team and with other local churches.

7 mentioned a renewed sense of confidence in God and spiritual awareness with the congregation.

Individuals mentioned growing participation by church members, the uniting of ethnic groups in the church, the church leader having to face up to some home truths and a sense of being supported by other Christians.

There is a broad consensus that the MS team's performed a useful function as the catalyst for spiritual renewal and a new vision for mission. Time will tell how each church maintains the impetus.

iv) How was God at work in the community?

36 of the team members responded in terms of a growing awareness or raising of the profile of God and the church. They should know by now that the church is here, God is alive and that both we and He cares.

10 mentioned a sense of openness which indicated that God had been preparing the ground for them.

7 felt God to be at work in the hearts touched, responses made and in the individuals who had asked for prayer and received healing.

Several others felt that the love of God had been shared and offered, but there were also a small number who felt the ground was stony and who had obviously been disappointed by the response.

Of the 53 church members:

22 replied that God had been at work in raising the awareness level and the profile of the church, or developing bridges and contacts.

8 commented that He had been opening doors and softening hearts

Only two or three saw much sign of positive response from people in the community.

There appears to be relatively less certainty and far less specific to report as to what God is doing out in the community. The team members can be excused for not knowing a great deal of what is happening in the neighbourhood and are hardly likely to give authoratitive and comprehensive replies to this question. Even though the question was restricted to the period of the mission, it does concern me that the local church members seem to have no more detailed ideas, or general "feel" for what is happening "out there". There replies do not on the whole indicate that they are very closely in touch with what is happening in the neighbourhood, and I personally would hope they might see more signs of the kingdom than a raising of the church's profile and a vague sense of openness to the Gospel.

Fundamentally the issue is one of limited and false teaching about the rule of God in the world at large. For so long the explicit message and implicit culture of the evangelical churches has been that religion is totally separate from everyday life, that it is a private and individualistic activity, to be put in a separate box and taken out only on Sundays. This is underlined by the pressures of secular culture which is constantly seeking to marginalise serious faith commitments and push them out of the public arena. Despite the recent moves towards a more wholistic view of mission the majority of ordinary Christians are still working on traditional, unbiblical assumptions about church and world. They therefore find it almost impossible to give a theological interpretation to what is happening out there. The ordinary Christians cannot be blamed, but those who teach them might consider how best to encourage them to make the appropriate connections between Bible and context.

d) Other Positive Impacts

Team members and church members were asked a number of other questions which enabled them to express something of the value they saw in MS. We will go through each in turn.

1) What do has been your most effective ministry during the campaign?

There are of course difficulties with such self evaluation but the pattern from team members is as follows.

13 witnessing, evangelism or door to door work
11 Prayer
9 hopsital or school visits
9 listening, counselling or pastoral work
5 music
4 dance or drama
4 befriending or speaking to individuals

- 4 open air speaking or street work
- 3 leadership
- 3 enabling or encouraging the church members
- 3 working as part of the team
- 2 kids work
- 1 visual art
- 1 stamping leaflets
- 6 could not say

These answers reveal a wide diversity of ministries, and probably indicate that there was space in the MS campaigns for most people to use their gifts and talents.

A similar question to church members concentrated on what in the overall programme had been most effective

- 18 mentioned visitation or door to door work
- 7 open air or street work
- 3 visits to old peoples homes
- 3 working ecumenically
- 2 gospel concerts
- 2 the start of a Sunday School
- 6 awareness raising, getting the gospel across and new contacts
- 2 that the community now saw them as normal people

One each said making us aware of our responsibility, revealing needs on an estate, new people in church, backsliders brought in, feedback at the end of the campaign, having the team at normal services, and teaching the team about the wrath of God.

ii) What surprised you most?

Of 80 team members

- 20 said the openness and receptivity of the public, "even punks talked to us civilly!"
- 7 they had enjoyed it "as a holiday" much more than expected
- 3 the way God used them
- 4 the way an interdenominational team got on together
- 3 the racial mix in their church
- 3 that the neighbourhood was not all inner city ugliness
- 3 the welcome and hospitality
- 1 the prepared state of the church

There were also negative surprises

- 5 were about the state of the local church
- 7 the battle, the resistance to evangelism and the spirit of fear in the community
- 2 the inexperience and lack of planning
- 2 the tiring workload

From the church members' point of view out of 53 respondents

16 mentioned openness and receptivity to the Gospel (including one case where Bengalis were willing to listen)
3 that particular church members got involved
6 the zeal and gifts of the team

One person mentioned each of the following

the power of the Holy Spirit
I grew to love folk I couldn't love
no new people came to church
the beer consumed!
that nothing surprises me!
multicultural singing
that God used people
the fear in tower blocks
the united effort of three churches
a youth gang who were drawn in

The overall view is encouraging. After all and despite everything "it can be done".

iii) General Positive Comments

From the teams

8 spontaneously mentioned hospitality
13 stressed how enjoyable it had been
8 how valuable or worthwhile it had been
5 the learning experience
4 what God had been doing
4 gave specific stories and testimonies
5 mentioned the team spirit
2 gave the team leader a star rating
1 the local leader

Of the 53 church members

In answer to a specific question: "How worthwhile was it?"

30 said very worthwhile, and 21 worthwhile, with only 2 expressing doubts.

In addition

13 made spontaneous comments about how worthwhile and enjoyable it had been.
4 made very positive extended comments about the team

e) MS87 as a Learning Experience

Team members were asked two questions about what they had learned:

1) About the inner city.

7 said either nothing or that the area they served in was not deprived inner city (true in the case of Beckton and perhaps Streatham)

15 spoke about the emotional hurts and spiritual needs of people
13 had learned something about our multicultural society and the church within it.

12 spoke about the spiritual hunger and openness to God

6 said something about the struggles of the churches

6 mentioned loneliness, apathy and despair

5 spoke of the difference between London and their home situation

5 spoke of peoples' rejection or misconceptions of God

4 the need for outreach and long term mission

3 stressed people were still human / the same everywhere

3 mentioned poverty / housing or deprivation

3 mentioned the friendliness and community spirit

Clearly there has been some learning here and some of the worst myths about the inner city and church life there have been challenged. However, it is striking that many aspects of inner city life and issues were rarely mentioned. For example not one team member mentioned the experience of racism, or the political conflicts and their implications for ordinary people. Only one mentioned housing problems, no one mentioned unemployment or the powerlessness of the claimant in the face of welfare bureaucracy or any of the other daily struggles that many inner city people face. Obviously the teams cannot learn everything in two weeks, and only a few of the churches have resource people on these issues, but it can be argued that they ought to be educated a bit more about the structural issues and the Biblical reasons why many urban Christians are moved to involvement in wholistic mission and social justice causes. I personally believe that such an understanding will make them better evangelists.

ii) About God

27 had learned that God can work in unlikely places and through unlikely people (even them)

11 responded in terms of God's faithfulness

10 spoke of a deeper understanding of his love for people

7 said they had learned to trust God more

5 spoke of some challenge to their lifestyle or conviction about sin

3 reported struggles but God's grace within them.

All this learning seems very positive and worthwhile.

f) Difficulties and Grouses

Both team members and church Members were asked, "what was your most difficult or discouraging experience?"

Of 80 team members

18 mentioned the disappointing low and apathetic response to meetings and visitation

10 mentioned practical organisational problems such as conflicting instructions, bad planning etc.

9 had feelings of weakness or inadequacy for the task

6 mentioned lack of support by the local church (in 2 churches only)

4 mentioned relationship or leadership difficulties in the team

3 in one church had doctrinal disputes and tensions

One each mentioned a theft, keeping going, a contact with a spiritualist, entryphones, a non-sleeping baby, people who were out, the weakness of the church, a child who was "excluded" from a fun day, refraining from criticism, the unprepared soil, talking to people who had been hurt by the church, tiredness and too much cigarette smoke!

Almost all the other generalised negative comments from team members covered the same ground so it is not worth going over them in detail. Additional ones included the lack of opportunity to use specific gifts, lack of liason between three local teams, tiredness, poor publicity, a young person who felt out of place in a relatively middle aged team, and two or three people put off by fundamentalist emphasis and excessive teaching on demons. One person was very upset because the local churches had been charged for the services of the team. (In fact this arose from her misunderstanding of the financial relationship, which was that Mustard Seed was run on a shoestring budget and the local churches were invited / challenged to contribute as they were able.) Another wrote a long essay about all that had been wrong with the whole campaign.

Of 53 church members

17 mentioned the low or negative response, or the discouragement at apathy when visiting

9 were disappointed at the low interest from the church

3 felt the strain and exhaustion

3 mentioned problems on the team

2 mentioned discovering competitive visiting by another church

1 mentioned a specific incident with a youth gang

1 said racism in the neighbourhood

1 said disorganisation

Other generalised negative comments from church members again covered much of the same ground. The only new areas seen as problematic were the need for better planning and co-ordination in advance, and the need for careful selection and preparation of team leaders. In one church they didn't have a team leader and concluded one was essential.

Broadly speaking the pattern of negative comments and discouragements was the same for the team as for the church members except that organisational problems were more salient for team members, presumably

because they were more involved in them. The disappointment at low response needs to be set against all the positive feelings about openness to the gospel and is therefore probably mainly a temporary thing, except for what has already been concluded about turnout to meetings. The lack of commitment of some church congregations is a far more serious matter and suggests that long term mission will not go forward until something happens to the church. Indeed there was a noticeable difference in attitudes, impact and achievement levels between those churches where a large proportion of the congregation were motivated and mobilised and those where the team came in and "did it for them". At its best Mustard Seed is an appropriate way of enabling and encouraging the local church members to become involved in witness and mission alongside a visiting team. If the local church congregation resists involvement then the effectiveness of the outreach is minimised.

Wishes expressed by team members included

to return in 88 (several), more planning with a team get together in advance, better prepared and more supportive churches, more research on community needs, more pub work (was this the chap who consumed all the beer?), less local travel, more straight evangelism, better organisation, more prayer, a single age team, more home support, to be more effective in evangelism.

What has been presented in this section is in summary form. There are a number of questionnaires on which extensive comments, stories and observations were written. These would be well worth examination provided that the reader remembers that each form only represents the perceptions of one person and that it would be unwise to act upon specific suggestions or complaints unless they represent a generally held view.

6) OVERALL EVALUATION

In terms of its own vision and publicly stated objectives MS87 failed to live up to some of its wilder expectations. Yet my overall impression is that it was a very positive event and made a substantial contribution to the extension of the Kingdom of God in inner London. Generally I would want to affirm and praise the team members and local churches who got involved for their vision, creativity, hard work, prayer, openness to God, love for one another and faithfulness in the course of the missions. I am certainly far more convinced about the effectiveness of this approach in reaching people in the inner city, than I was about the mass evangelistic campaigns of Mission to London, or the traditional method of the 6.30pm Gospel service.

a) The key failures to achieve stated or assumed objectives are summarised below (failures is probably too harsh a word; disappointments might be better):

- 1) Instead of 1000 volunteers serving in 100 churches only 140 came to work in 17. However, it had been realised at a very early stage that this target was unrealistic.
- 2) Those churches while varied and well spread did not represent the full range of the Christian family in the inner city.
- 3) In terms of conversions only about 30 people altogether made decisions for Christ, in some of the campaigns there were none at all, and some "converts" already have failed to follow through on their commitment. Although no target figure had been set the number of decisions was probably less than had been hoped and prayed for.
- 4) Many special meetings and events were organised at which the turnout of non-Christians was disappointingly but predictably low.
- 5) In some of the churches there was a very limited commitment on the part of the congregation, with the result that the work of the mission was extremely limited.
- 6) For a movement placing a major stress on ministry in the power of the spirit and in the demonstration of the Good News through signs and wonders, there was a disappointingly low number of remarkable testimonies of healing, miracles and specific answers to prayer.
- 7) There were a number of relatively minor administrative and organisational difficulties which could have been avoided with better planning and preparation.

b) Let us look now at the positive side of the account.

- 1) About 30 people were brought to make a first time decision to follow Christ. Many more were challenged to think more deeply about his claims, a number remain in voluntary association with some of the

churches and others are open to follow up visitation.

2) Many Christians in the different churches (and the teams) experienced a measure of spiritual renewal, growth or rededication. There were a small number of physical and emotional healings reported.

3) The profile of 17 churches in their communities was considerably raised in a way that presented an image of friendly, caring and "normal" people.

4) Many relationships between churches and non-Christians were strengthened and lots of new relationships were built.

5) Many creative forms of evangelism were tried out and the most useful and appropriate ones will be useful as models for future work.

6) Most of the 140 team members had what they considered an enjoyable and worthwhile two weeks, which was both a learning experience and a confidence booster that even they could be used in Christian service and evangelism.

7) In most of the churches local Christians were encouraged, challenged and enabled to continue the work of evangelism.

8) The breaking down of barriers between Christians of different denominations, theologies and backgrounds, especially within the teams was a remarkable feature of the campaigns.

General Conclusion

There was a general agreement from almost everyone who answered any of my questions that the whole MS87 project had been extremely worthwhile. It would be churlish to try to contradict this conclusion just for the sake of argument, but it is worth considering the following points.

1) The people answering my questions were almost all enthusiasts for MS87 and many of them had invested a lot of time and energy into the project. Therefore most of them would be likely to report positively about what had happened, and perhaps to rationalise away any disappointments.

2) Although it is impossible now to find the evidence there might be a very different set of perceptions about the campaigns which we have failed to pick up, for example among team and church members who did not fill in questionnaires, or among neighbouring churches which did not approve of the campaigns or among non-Christians in the community who felt they had suffered from two weeks of religious nutters who were out to get them signed up.

3) I have no information about the costs incurred in the project but they must have been huge, especially if we take account of giving in kind and unpaid labour. Would a cost benefit analysis, if such a thing

is conceivable in the economy of the Kingdom (see parables of the pearl, the 99 sheep etc.), show that MS87 was the most effective way of achieving these results?

4) There is a certain resistance in the inner city against "parachutists" who come in from outside for a short period, with the intention of putting the world to rights in three weeks. To a large extent MS87 deliberately avoided giving this impression and my personal assessment is that of its kind it was very good in this respect. However, there remains a real question about the role of incoming Christians in the inner city, especially those who come for a brief period and seem to take more than they can give. How far do short term missions with outside teams divert the attention from long term work, and perhaps even disable local Christians from carrying out the work themselves? There is little evidence of such criticism from the participating churches in respect of MS87, yet we must keep it ever in mind as future campaigns are planned. There is however, a real value in the visit of a team of outsiders who come in not as experts, but as learners, partners, and servants alongside the local church. That value is summed up in the word "encouragement".

7) AFFIRMATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the Mustard Seed evaluation linked with my wider understanding of the urban mission scene I would make the following comments and recommendations which have implications for every Christian group involved in urban evangelism.

a) For Urban Mission in General

1) THERE WAS ENOUGH POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENT IN THE MS87 CAMPAIGNS TO MAKE IT WELL WORTHWHILE TO REPEAT THE PROJECT IN FUTURE YEARS. THERE IS A WIDE MISSION FIELD STILL TO BE REACHED AND EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO EXPAND THIS STYLE OF WORK TO OTHER PARTS OF INNER LONDON AND OTHER CITIES.

Other urban mission groups can learn much from the local, low key, participatory style of witness by ordinary Christian people and from the specific technique of offering prayer for the specific needs of people they are talking to. This offer provides a bridge between the evangelist and the listener and opens the whole situation to the presence of God.

2) THE MISSIONS WERE MOST EFFECTIVE WHERE THE CHURCH CONCERNED WAS FULLY COMMITTED AND SUPPORTIVE AND THE CAMPAIGN FITTED INTO AN ONGOING PROGRAMME OF MISSION. IN FUTURE MS CAMPAIGNS WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN OUTREACH IF LOCATED IN CHURCHES WHERE THERE IS A WIDESPREAD ENTHUSIASM. HOWEVER THEY HAVE ALSO PROVED USEFUL AS A CATALYST FOR

THE INTERNAL RENEWAL OF CHURCHES AND THIS CAN BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS EFFECTIVE LOCAL EVANGELISM.

The existence of contacts with an enthusiastic church needs to be set against the need for evangelism and ministry in the neighbourhood and for renewal in the local church. (By this I mean that for theological reasons we should concentrate effort where need is greatest, yet there are practical difficulties in introducing a short term team where the church is at its weakest.)

THE AFFIRMATION, ENCOURAGEMENT, MOBILISATION AND ENABLING OF INNER CITY CONGREGATIONS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IMPERATIVES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN MISSION.

3) MUSTARD SEED (AND OTHER MISSION TEAMS) SHOULD CONTINUE AND STRENGTHEN ITS ATTEMPTS TO MATCH THE INCOMING TEAM WITH AN EQUAL NUMBER OF LOCAL CHRISTIANS SO THAT THEY CAN WORK TOGETHER, LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER AND BOOSTING EACH OTHERS' CONFIDENCE SO THAT THE WORK CAN CONTINUE AFTER THE TEAM GO HOME. RECRUITMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE FROM THE WIDE BASE OF CHRISTIANS THEY ARE IN CONTACT WITH BUT IN ADDITION MUSTARD SEED SHOULD WORK AT STRATEGIES (INCLUDING FINANCIAL SPONSORSHIP?) FOR INVOLVING A LARGER PROPORTION OF ORDINARY INNER CITY AND WORKING CLASS CHRISTIANS.

In this wide partnership suburban Christians can be challenged about their responsibility to the inner city, and given a chance to respond in an appropriate way. At the same time they can work together with urban Christians who because of their cultural background and local knowledge might relate more readily to some of their peers in the urban scene.

4) MUSTARD SEED MISSIONS AND THE LOCAL CHURCHES INVOLVED ARE TO BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR BROAD ECUMENICAL VISION IN EVANGELISM. THE UNITY OF, AND EVIDENT LOVE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS, REMOVES ONE OF THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS TO THE GOSPEL. RACIAL DIVISIONS CAN ALSO BE A SCANDAL, THEREFORE IN FUTURE YEARS SPECIAL ATTENTION OUGHT TO BE GIVEN TO INVOLVING A WIDER RANGE OF CHURCHES, SPECIFICALLY THOSE THAT ARE "BLACK LED".

We must not minimise the difficulties of building trust across theological and cultural barriers, but partnership can be built on the basis of personal relationships. In order to do this effectively a vast amount of time is needed for networking and learning from each other. While it would probably be helpful to have a black christian from within the Black led church networks working alongside Mustard Seed staff in the promotion and planning of the missions, we must beware of tokenism here. Broad based partnership in mission based on relationships, rather than organisational unity is the way forward for the urban church.

b) For Urban Evangelistic Campaigns

1) MASS LEAFLETING IS MAINLY USEFUL IN A FAIRLY RESTRICTED ROLE CONCENTRATING ON PROFILE RAISING, PRE EVANGELISTIC LITERATURE AND GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME OF THE CAMPAIGN. LEAFLETS ADVERTISING SPECIFIC EVENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE IF HANDED OVER WITH A PERSON TO PERSON INVITATION.

2) DOOR TO DOOR VISITATION SHOULD REMAIN THE BREAD AND BUTTER WORK OF MS TEAMS, ALTHOUGH FURTHER THOUGHT NEEDS TO BE GIVEN AS TO THE BEST TIMES TO CARRY IT OUT AND THE STRATEGY OF REPEAT VISITS ETC.

3) THE PROGRAMME OF SPECIFICALLY EVANGELISTIC EVENTS WOULD DO WELL TO CONCENTRATE ON ATTENTION GRABBING OPEN AIR "HAPPENINGS" AND ON VISITS TO PLACES WHERE PEOPLE ARE ALREADY GATHERED.

4) THERE IS A PLACE FOR NON-EVANGELISTIC COMMUNITY FUN EVENTS AND FOR LOW KEY SMALL GROUP GATHERINGS IN HOMES, AS PART OF AN OVERALL LONG TERM STRATEGY OF MISSION IN WHICH RELATIONSHIP BUILDING PLAYS A KEY ROLE.

5) SPECIAL EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS ARE MORE LIKELY TO ATTRACT NON CHRISTIANS WHEN THEY ARE CLOSELY TARGETTED AT PARTICULAR SUBGROUPS WITHIN THE LOCAL POPULATION. FOR EXAMPLE FILMS IN ASIAN LANGUAGES WILL REACH THE PARTS ROCK GOSPEL CONCERTS WILL NOT. INVITATIONS ARE BEST ISSUED PERSONALLY AND THROUGH EXISTING COMMUNITY GROUPS AND NETWORKS RATHER THAN ANONYMOUSLY EN MASSE.

6) SUNDAY AND WEEKNIGHT SERVICES HAVE A ROLE BUT IT IS NOT NECESSARILY EVANGELISTIC. THEY WILL PROBABLY BE MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN FORMING PART OF A REGULAR PATTERN OF OUTREACH TO AN EXISTING CHURCH FRINGE. E.G. MONTHLY FAMILY SERVICES.

7) HEALING SERVICES HAVE SOME POTENTIAL FOR ATTRACTING SOME NON-CHRISTIANS WITH A SPECIFIC NEED AND ARE ALSO OFTEN HELPFUL TO CHRISTIANS.

While we should remain expectant and open to the Holy Spirit we need to be cautious in publicity because unrealistic expectations can be raised. If the goods are not delivered the last case could be worse than the first. It may be wiser to concentrate the healing ministry in inter-personal and small group settings.

c) For Mustard Seed Administrators.

1) FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS AT THE CENTRE AND FOR THE SAKE OF FLEXIBILITY AT THE LOCAL CHURCH END A CASE CAN BE MADE FOR A ROLLING PROGRAMME OF MUSTARD SEED CAMPAIGNS WITH SOME CHURCHES OPERATING CAMPAIGNS AT EASTER, OTHERS AT PENTECOST, MIDSUMMER, DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND IN SEPTEMBER.

2) TRAINING:

a) IF LOGISTICALLY POSSIBLE THE TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR MUSTARD SEED SHOULD BE AMENDED TO A TWO OR THREE DAY PERIOD AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH MISSION. THE WHOLE TEAM, AND LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERS, SHOULD BE TRAINED TOGETHER ON SITE, THE TRAINING SHOULD HAVE MORE LOCAL ORIENTATION TO IT, AND CONCENTRATE ON THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES OF DOOR TO DOOR VISITATION OR WHATEVER FORM OF EVANGELISM IS APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCAL PROGRAMME. METHODS SHOULD BE OF THE GROUP LEARNING WORKSHOP AND APPRENTICESHIP TYPE RATHER THAN SERMONS AND LECTURES.

b) THIS DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING ONE OR MORE DAYS A MONTH OR MORE IN ADVANCE AS ENVISIONING DAYS IN WHICH THERE MIGHT BE WORSHIP AND PRAYER, A GLOBAL OVERVIEW AND A CHANCE TO ENGAGE IN PRACTICAL EVANGELISM AS A WAY TO BOOST CONFIDENCE THAT "YOU TO CAN DO IT".

c) WHERE POSSIBLE IN MS TRAINING OR TEAM ORIENTATION SOME ATTENTION BE DEVOTED TO SOCIAL AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INNER CITY. PERHAPS STARTING FROM A CASE STUDY OF "WHAT WOULD BE GOOD NEWS TO A SINGLE PARENT / BANGLADESHI FAMILY IN B & B / UNEMPLOYED BLACK TEENAGER?"

3) MUSTARD SEED AS A WHOLE AND EACH OF THE CHURCHES TAKING PART SHOULD SET A REALISTIC, MEASURABLE AND ACHIEVABLE SET OF GOALS WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE MISSIONS. "HYPE" IN THE PUBLICITY IS UNHELPFUL BUT CAN EASILY CREEP IN. IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE IN HONEST COMMUNICATION OF THE FACT THAT INNER CITY EVANGELISM IS OFTEN HARD SLOG, THAT THERE ARE OFTEN OTHER CONCERNS ON THE LOCAL CHURCH AGENDA, AND WHILE WE SHOULD EXPECT GOD TO WORK IT IS NOT ALWAYS IN TERRIBLY SPECTACULAR WAYS. IS THAT NOT PART OF THE MESSAGE OF THE MUSTARD SEED PARABLE ANYWAY?

4) THAT IN FUTURE MANNA MINISTRIES SHOULD ATTEMPT TO SETTLE THE FINAL COMPOSITION OF TEAM AND LEADER AT LEAST SIX WEEKS IN ADVANCE (AS FAR AS THIS IS HUMANLY POSSIBLE). THIS SHOULD BE SEEN AS A FIRM CONTRACT BETWEEN TEAM MEMBER AND CHURCH AND LATE APPLICANTS SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE TEAMS WHERE THEY ARE MOST NEED OR USEFUL.

5) A MORE COMPREHENSIVE REGISTRATION FORM FOR TEAM MEMBERS SHOULD BE PRODUCED GIVING DETAILS OF AGE, EVANGELISTIC EXPERIENCE, GIFTS AND INTERESTS ETC. AND THESE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE CHURCH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

6) WHEREVER POSSIBLE THERE SHOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TEAM MEMBERS AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE TEAM LEADER TO VISIT THEIR CHURCH SOME WEEKS IN ADVANCE.

It is interesting and encouraging that the leaders of Mustard Seed have independently come to similar conclusions on most of these administrative recommendations. Nos 1, 2a, 2b, 5 & 6 have already been implemented for 1988 and most of the rest are being considered subject

to a solution to practical difficulties.

A FINAL WORD

I have personally been very encouraged by my own involvement in Mustard Seed 87. I enjoyed meeting and sharing with some of the team members, taking part in some of the events and as a result felt both affirmed and challenged in my own faith and ministry. I was encouraged too by the sense that God was at work in our fellowship and neighbourhood and saw members of our church growing in faith, confidence and skill because of the campaign. I also saw non-Christians in the community relating to the fellowship in new ways, and took part in or overheard a number of very deep conversations. In my research role I generally found that I had a strong spiritual empathy with those who were taking part and a deep sense that the basic concept and style of Mustard Seed was of God. I felt a deep privilege in being able to take a look at the overall strategy and progress of the movement, and finish this research with a conviction that God is at work in inner London, through some very ordinary people in some small and beleaguered churches.

Therefore I would encourage all concerned to continue in obedience to the vision they have received, to work out their missionary calling before the Lord, and to be encouraged that God does not despise the day of small things. To adapt a saying from William Carey, "attempt small things for God, expect great things from God".

FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED. A MAN TAKES A MUSTARD SEED AND SOWS IT IN HIS FIELD. IT IS THE SMALLEST OF ALL SEEDS BUT WHEN IT GROWS UP IT IS THE BIGGEST OF ALL PLANTS. IT BECOMES A TREE SO THAT THE BIRDS COME AND MAKE THEIR NESTS IN ITS BRANCHES. (Mt. 13:31-32)

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF MUSTARD SEED CHURCHES:

AND THE INFORMATION RECEIVED ABOUT THEM

DATA PROCESSING ORDER

			Pre MS	Teaa	Members	Leader
A / 1	St. Pauls Shadwell	Julian Scharf	488 4633	y	5	5 y
B / 2	St Saviours Forest Gate	John Williams	534 6109	n	7	n y
C / 3	Poplar & Berger Tab	Henry Dixon	515 8743	y	7	5 y
D / 4	St. Saviours Islington	Tony Norton	272 1246	y	6	6 y
E / 5	Manna Baptist Chelsea	Douglas McBain	351 2062	n	7	n y
F / 6	Beckton Christian Fellowship	Ian Parker	511 5609	y	4	4 y
G / 7	St. Judes Earls Court	David Ryaer	370 1360	n	7	n y
H / 8	Manor Park C C	Neil Osborne	478 6201	n	6	1 y
I / 9	St. James Bethnal Green	Brian Castle	980 1612	n	3	n y
J / 10	Servite Church Chelsea	Fr. Martin	352 6965	n	5	n y
K / 11	Tower Hamlets CF	Stuart Murray	986 4528	n	4	5 y
L / 12	St. Matthews E15	Paul Bontell	519 2504	y	5	5 y
M / 13	Bridge House Old Ford	David Hewitt	985 7797	y	4	2 y
N / 14	Plaistow Christian Fellowship	Terry Diggines	474 3354	y	2 +6*	5 y
O / 15	Mitcham Lane Baptist	James Pate	677 5803	n	1	9 y
P / 16	Marquess CC Islington	Roger Williams	226 5924	y	n	5 y
Q / 17	St. Augustines Highbury	Peter Alcock	226 6870	y?	n	1 y
TOTALS				9	80	54 17

* Questionnaires lost but data partially reconstructed.

APPENDIX 2

CHURCH BY CHURCH REPORTS:

This section is an attempt to summarise and comment on what happened at each of the 17 centres. For each one I outline as far as possible the background information about the church and neighbourhood, the programme of the mission, the impact it made and some suggestions for building upon it.

It is not intended to publish or distribute these summaries beyond the churches themselves so I am attempting to write with a certain degree of confidentiality. Clearly my impressions and recommendations are only as good as the information I have received. Therefore I am very open to receive comeback and correction from those who were more closely involved within each church.

If other readers desperately want to see individual reports of churches they should contact the church leader concerned and ask for a photo-copy.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF MUSTARD SEED CHURCHES:

AND THE INFORMATION RECEIVED ABOUT THEM

DATA PROCESSING ORDER

				Pre MS	Team	Members	Leader
A / 1	St. Pauls Shadwell	Julian Scharf	488 4633	y	5	5	y
B / 2	St Saviours Forest Gate	John Williams	534 6109	n	7	n	y
C / 3	Poplar & Berger Tab	Henry Dixon	515 8743	y	7	5	y
D / 4	St. Saviours Islington	Tony Norton	272 1246	y	6	6	y
E / 5	Manna Baptist Chelsea	Douglas McBain	351 2062	n	7	n	y
F / 6	Beckton Christian Fellowship	Ian Parker	511 5609	y	4	4	y
G / 7	St. Judes Earls Court	David Ryaer	370 1360	n	7	n	y
H / 8	Manor Park C C	Neil Osborne	478 6201	n	6	1	y
I / 9	St. James Bethnal Green	Brian Castle	980 1612	n	3	n	y
J / 10	Servite Church Chelsea	Fr. Martin	352 6965	n	5	n	y
K / 11	Tower Hamlets CF	Stuart Murray	986 4528	n	4	5	y
L / 12	St. Matthews E15	Paul Bontell	519 2504	y	5	5	y
M / 13	Bridge House Old Ford	David Hewitt	985 7797	y	4	2	y
N / 14	Plaistow Christian Fellowship	Terry Diggins	474 3354	y	2 +6*	5	y
O / 15	Mitcham Lane Baptist	James Pate	677 5803	n	1	9	y
P / 16	Marquess CC Islington	Roger Williams	226 5924	y	n	5	y
Q / 17	St. Augustines Highbury	Peter Alcock	226 6870	y?	n	1	y
TOTALS				9	80	54	17

* Questionnaires lost but data partially reconstructed.

THE HISTORY SO FAR

On the 1st January 1980 the Tower Hamlets Renewal Trust was formed by a number of local church leaders to promote Renewal in the church in the borough of Tower Hamlets. The clear leading of the Lord over the years has been in the encouragement, up-building and pastoral concern for the leaders themselves, and for their wives.

In 1985 Douglas McBain in his *Manna Ministries Trust* had the vision for Mustard Seed. In 1986 and 1987 more than 300 christians from all over England, and some from abroad, have taken part in over 40 missions. The results have been such as to endorse the original vision and to warrant a continuation of the work.

As from October 1987, the Tower Hamlets Renewal Trust have agreed to take on the Mustard Seed work, seeing it as an extension of their original vision for inner city churches.

In order to make the aim clear, the Trust is changing its name. It will now be the **INNER CITY RENEWAL TRUST**. Charities Registration No. 279295.

The Trust has little financial resource and, at this time pays no salaries.

Trustees: Rev D.C. Hewitt, Rev G.S. Kendall,

Rev Dr U.E. Scharf, Rev H. Watson,

M. Lawrence Esq. FCA

Advisers: Douglas McBain, John Ivinson,

David Tomlinson, Brian Snelling,

Gordon Holloway. Roger Mitchell

Director of Mustard Seed: HUGH C. SHELBURNE

Write to: **MUSTARD SEED, CHURCH HOUSE,**

WELLCLOSE SQUARE, E1 8HY.

Telephone: 01-488-9505 (9.30a.m to 5.00p.m.)

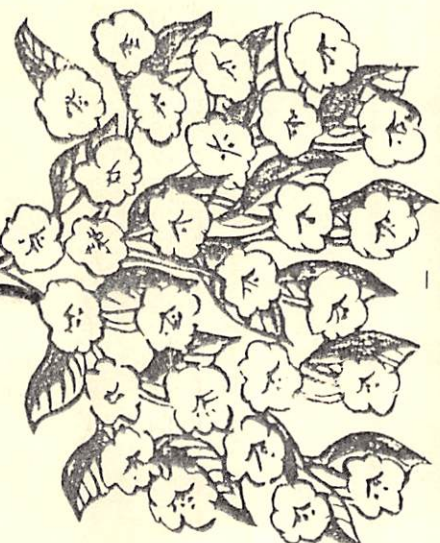
HOW DO I BECOME A MUSTARD SEED WORKER?

- * Consider our MUSTARD SEED WORKER leaflet prayerfully.
- * Most christians are fearful and feel themselves to be inadequate for such a role.
- * Many consider that they are too old - Satan will feed you with "good" excuses.
- * We have already had all sorts from clergy to unemployed, grandparent to student.
- * Those who have already risked have mostly been thrilled and blessed.
- * Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope asking for a registration form. We will register you as a MUSTARD SEED WORKER on its return to us.

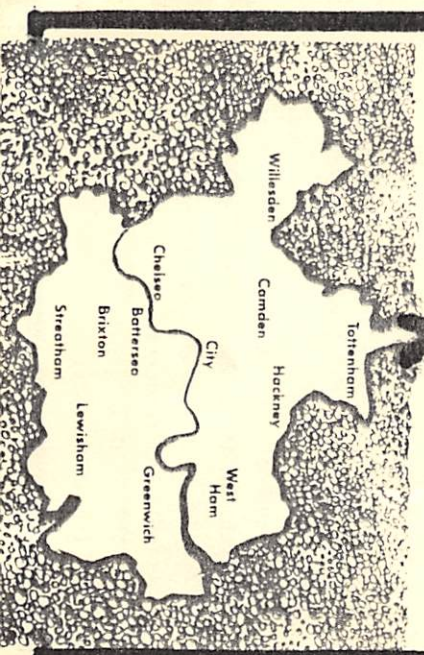
HOW CAN MY CHURCH GET A MUSTARD SEED TEAM?

- * Simply write to us expressing your interest, and we will call on you to discuss it. **THE SOONER YOU WRITE, THE BETTER YOUR CHANCES - WE NEED 6 MONTHS (min) NOTICE.**

Faith to believe
in inner
city churches



MUSTARD SEED



A / 1 St. Pauls Shadwell

Julian Scharf

488 4633

Denomination: Church of England

Size / type of membership: 40 + small but growing mixed background congregation. Fighting threat of merger/closure.

Neighbourhood Setting: Mainly council high rise and poor quality older flats. Growing influx of rich YUPIs. Large Bangladeshi Muslim population.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Vicar plus parish worker. Evangelical parish ministry, developing use of buildings for community groups, visitation programme with parish magazine. Members active in community affairs.

Team Leader; Rodney Sexton Wickford Essex. Rated highly by vicar, strengths in music and handling team

Mustard Seed Team B7 : 5 members plus 2 local church members full time.

Programme Outline for MSB7: Door to door, street/pub theatre with Mouthpeace & Punchline, fringe visitation, social evening, visits to OAP clubs, children's work.

Goals / Objectives: Profile raising, spiritual growth and learning about mission. One convert, trigger to further activities.

Members' involvement: Not a lot: some key folk on holiday others worn out after special programme in July.

Responses to Evangelism: Mixed reception on visits. No decisions/converts. Several contacts with low level interest. Some Bengalis stopped to listen to open air work.

Other Encouragements: All very low key but part of a longer process.

Challenges Encountered: struggle to assemble team and organise mission in advance

Comments: Previous teams with SU had been stronger. Team and church members blessed by unity despite backgrounds. Moderate level of encouragement.

My impression is that this mission was a very low key affair. Neither the team nor the church wildly enthusiastic reports, yet there was very little negative coming through either. I believe the church and its leaders are tired and war weary as they seek to engage in mission in one of the inner city areas in London. They feel unsupported by the denomination and expectations are rather low. The Mustard Seed mission added in a small way to these. It is a pity the campaign should have gone ahead at the time it did given the low level of involvement. However, it should be seen as one step in an ongoing process of mission.

"I will overcome and keepeth my works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations."

B / 2 St Saviours Forest Gate

John Williams

534 6109

Denomination: Church of England

Size / type of membership: about 100

Neighbourhood Setting: Poorer part of Forest Gate, mixed Council and older terraces. Multiracial mixed population.

Focus of Regular Ministry: evangelical parish ministry (linked in team with neighbouring parish). History of evangelistic outreach to Asians

Team Leader: RC from Huntingdon: rated excellent by church leader

Mustard Seed Team 87: seven members

Programme Outline for MS87: door to door visitation, open air meetings, Barbecue, healing service, Mouthpeace

Members' involvement: A few joined in visiting and events; not much else

High Spots: open air by station

Responses to Evangelism: fairly welcoming reception. No new converts but about 10 have started to worship occasionally and 20 or so worth following up.

Other Encouragements: Nothing spectacular but very positive feelings from vicar. Team believe God had worked dealing with broken relationships in the church. General sense of encouragement and challenge to mission.

Problems Encountered: lack of enthusiasm and internal problems in congregation.

Evaluation: My impression is that the church was not really ready for a big thrust out into the community. Nonetheless the presence of the MS team had many positive effects, bringing encouragement, resolution of issues which needed to be opened up, and spiritual growth in a number of directions. If commitment to mission grows within the church another team next year might well take things further.

Denomination: Baptist / Evangelical

Size / type of membership: 9 active members, congregation may reach 30. Young educated incomers plus new Christians. A ministry which has been resurrected almost from scratch.

Neighbourhood Setting: Working Class inner city Council estate with proportion of Black (Afro-Caribbean) residents.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Evangelical Reformed preaching ministry, Bible studies, boys club, Sunday school and visitation. The leaders and members are clearly what Ray Bakke would call "truth Christians".

Team Leader: no external leader. This was felt to be a problem by some.

Mustard Seed Team 87: 5 visiting members plus the church pastor

Programme Outline for MS87: Door to door, open air preaching, evangelistic meetings, Harvest Service.

Goals / Objectives: To see Gospel declared to the lost, some definite and lasting conversions.

Members' involvement: most were involved either in visitation or hospitality.

Responses to Evangelism: a polite welcome but general indifference to the gospel. 2 decisions made but at least one not sticking or genuine. Lots of new contacts worth follow up. One or two fringe members drawn back to church.

Problems Encountered: Practical struggle to provide hospitality. Some predictable theological tensions.

Other Comments: The team was "better than others we've had" and brought real encouragement. Despite theological tensions there was a lot of Christian love developed between the church and team. Pastor is thankful to God for it.

Evaluation: I have the impression from both the church and the team members that differences of doctrine made this a difficult mission to be part of. However, there is a lot of evidence suggesting that in openly facing up to these differences both sides learned something and came to a healthy respect and love for each other. I wonder if this stress on doctrinal truth actually hindered the work of evangelism. There were certainly far less experimental and creative attempts to witness in this campaign than in any of the others. The campaign was largely restricted to visitation and church based meetings, to which very few none Christians would come. I wonder also if the church's stress on the lostness and sinfulness of non-Christians around them and the great difference that redemption makes, while undoubtedly sound doctrine, in fact alienates the local community and prevents any meaningful communication of the gospel from taking place. I am betraying my own theological prejudices but I feel it would be good for Poplar & Berger to have another team next year and to take a few more risks in building relationships with the locals and in presenting the gospel in less traditional ways.

D / 4 St. Saviours Islington

Tony Norton

272 1246

Denomination: Church of England

Size / type of membership: 65 mixed local congregation two thirds female, over half black and over a third pensioners

Neighbourhood Setting: Old terraced housing plus larger houses in multi-occupation, some Council. Mainly working class area with mixed population (25% ethnic minority) including a good number of Afro-Caribbean and Cypriot origin.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Evangelical parish ministry, some use of building by outside groups.

Team Leaders: Ron & Betty from Sion Community RC. Rated highly as leaders by vicar

Mustard Seed Team B7: six members

Programme Outline for MS87: Door to door, open air with sketch board, healing service, childrens meetings, socials

Goals / Objectives: mobilising church members to effective witness, reaching relatives of church members, restart childrens work, new christians

Members' involvement: not a lot but 5 did take part in visiting

Responses to Evangelism: People very open. One decision for Christ.

Other Encouragements: financial provision came in. Some people helped through healing service. Vicar uplifted, Sunday school restarted. Team encouraged and felt positive.

Problems Encountered: Catering difficulties. Resistance to being involved from congregation. Some tension in team between RCs and Protestants but resolved positively.

Other Comments: Most church members responding were positive but at least one felt it was a flop.

Evaluation: The picture I get is of a parish where the vicar and a handful of people were keen on mission but the majority of the congregation were not enthusiastic. The hope that everyone would be fired up didn't fully come off yet there was a lot of positive achievement. The new beginning for a Sunday school is a real step forward. There is a lot of potential in the area but renewal of this type of church will probably need time and hard work as well as a touch from God. (see Ray Bakke's book "The Urban Christian" for hints.) There is a need to develop long term mission strategies for outreach and involvement in the community.

E / 5 Manna Baptist Chelsea

Douglas McBain 351 2062

Denomination: Baptist

Size / type of membership: About 50 mixture of elderly and under 35's, wide social class range, mainly white with a few black and Chinese. More women than men.

Neighbourhood Setting: Kings Road Chelsea, mixed residential area with plenty of YUPIs but outreach focussed on two Council estates.

Focus of Regular Ministry: A newly planted church, with no permanent building.

Team Leader: from Bournemouth: rated as a good pastor but not very effective as team leader.

Mustard Seed Team 87: 5 outsiders plus 4 full time from locality/fellowship. Enthusiastic and hard working.

Programme Outline for MS87: Door to door, open air with street theatre, Make Way march, healing services (with other local churches), pub, school and hospital visits.

Members' involvement: 4 full time plus 20 active in events and visitation

High Spots: healing service and schools and hospital visits.

Responses to Evangelism: Very open. RC partnership gave credibility among Catholics. 3 decisions for Christ plus a dozen hot contacts.

Other Encouragements: One person healed of a limp. Two of the conversions were in hurting lives. Turned fellowship outwards.

Problems Encountered: Major administrative problems with two events. Team felt planning was poor and in one case that church took them for granted.

Evaluation: My impression is that this mission suffered because the fellowship is too closely linked with Manna Ministries central office and there was a lack of clarity of roles and planning was too sketchy. In addition the illness of Douglas McBain at the crucial point cannot have helped. Nonetheless there were some strong points. Several church members were obviously strongly committed to the mission and there were positive responses to evangelism. However, I have the feeling that the time has come for this fellowship to take some time out to reconsider its long term objectives, the first stage of simply establishing a presence and forming a church is relatively straightforward. Should the next step be an attempt to build a mega-church, divide and grow, deeper involvement and service in the community or what?

F / 6 Beckton Christian Fellowship Ian Parker 511 5609

Denomination: Independent (House Church)

Size / type of membership: a dozen. Mainly young couples, almost all with higher education, 2 Asians the rest white.

Neighbourhood Setting: A new private estate in the Docklands redevelopment area. The lower end of YUPI land. Affluence seen as problem and barrier by the fellowship.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Home based Sunday afternoon worship and midweek prayer meeting. Some leafleting and visitation. Evangelistic Bible studies.

Team Leader: Steve Spear from Kent. Rated as excellent

Mustard Seed Team 87: six members

Programme Outline for MS87: Door to Door, leafleting in street, barbecue, 2 coffee meetings in homes

Goals / Objectives: profile raising by visiting or leafleting every home in Beckton. Numerical Growth

Members' involvement: Everyone committed but only half involved in visitation.

Responses to Evangelism: Polite and sometimes willing to talk. Widespread ignorance of Gospel. 1 man converted through door to door conversation. Very small numbers of Non-Christians came to barbecue and coffee mornings. Twenty or thirty worth follow up.

Other Encouragements: sense of expectancy and of presence of God. A team member received inner healing at united celebration. Encouraging experience and fun time.

Problems Encountered: Another church discovered to be visiting in competition.

Evaluation: Beckton is probably a unique situation in London in that it is a totally new community and this is a totally new church. This small fellowship is in danger of being invisible unless it puts its lamp high on a lampstand and rightly decided to use the mission as a profile raising exercise. A lot of people now know they exist. However, it is not the type of church to which people will COME, because they have no building, offer no services such as rites of passage, and there is no great need for the church. Also people living in Beckton may have relatively few social needs, little commitment to the community which doesn't yet exist, and little time in busy working lives. Therefore the fellowship's task long term seems to me two fold. Firstly to build their strength by gathering existing Christians of as wide a range as they can (and keep in touch with other local churches). Secondly to be involved in building community in Beckton, committing themselves to long term relationships with neighbours, schools, leisure and community action groups. To do this both as Christian service and as a base for evangelisation. The fellowship members also need to work out a Christian lifestyle which is radically and noticeably different from the affluent materialism of the new Docklanders.

G / 7 St. Judes Earls Court

David Rymer

370 1360

Denomination: Church of England

Size / type of membership: 80 including a lot of elderly residents and a younger more transient group. A few black people.

Neighbourhood Setting: Mixed area of very rich families with weekend cottages, and bedsits. Multicultural

Focus of Regular Ministry: Evangelical Anglican parish

Team Leader: Paul Spiller from Clapham: excellent leader and wise man of God despite his youth.

Mustard Seed Team 87: eight members (2 failed to turn up) In addition 4 local YWAM team members joined in.

Programme Outline for MS87: visiting existing church contacts, open air with Punchline street theatre, house groups, coffee bar, special services, united healing Service and Make Way march

Goals / Objectives: to stir up local church

Members' involvement: Not a lot. PCC had been suspicious. But a few went visiting

Responses to Evangelism: mainly an internal renewal mission. 3 people went forward for prayer

Other Encouragements: positive feeling that all was worthwhile and fun. Ecumenical partnership although it didn't quite come off as hoped. Healing service very positive. Success in stirring church.

Problems Encountered: Administrative hassles. Timing was far from ideal. Team a bit discouraged by lack of church support and poor organisation but appreciated hospitality.

Other Comments: Would like to do MS again and involve other local churches.

Evaluation: The mission at St Judes had been seen by the vicar as a chance to stir up the church while the PCC and congregation had gone along only reluctantly. There is some evidence that forward movement was achieved although this is hard to measure objectively. It may be that planning and organisation fell down a bit because this internal mission was very different from that in the other 16 MS87 churches. I don't have enough information on the background of the church but my impression is that radical changes are needed if the church is to be moved from maintenance to mission.

H / 8 Manor Park Christian Centre

Neil Osborne

478 6201

Denomination: Independent Charismatic (Community church / Baptist)

Size / type of membership: My perception based on sporadic contact is 100+ members a lot of young couples and singles, some retired people, predominantly white (lower) middle class, some black a few Asian and Chinese.

Neighbourhood Setting: mainly Edwardian suburb of owner occupied terraced houses. Multiracial with Asian (Sikh and Hindu) community predominant. One mainly white council estate.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Fellowship has history of pilgrimage. Only in current building and set up for last two years. Eldership team ministry, Charismatic worship, home groups, work with Mums and toddlers. Strong links with other Newham churches, considering new patterns of community involvement.

Team Leader: a Baptist from Ashford Middlesex. Rated excellent as encourager and pastoral team leader.

Mustard Seed Team 87: 12 members (but this included Mouthpeace dance troupe who were shared with other missions.)

Programme Outline for MS87: Door to door, Songs of Praise follow up, open air with dance, fun day, street barbecue, concerts, Mums and Tots, cabaret, concert, schools visits.

Members' involvement : 5 almost full time about 60 were keen supporters.

High Spots: Open air with dance drama

Responses to Evangelism: generally welcoming on visits. Many listened in open air work. 15 came to street barbecue, small numbers at other events. One new convert 50 people to be followed up.

Other Encouragements: Mums and tots programme developing, deep ministry in team prayer times. Developing contacts in Hathaway estate. Several folk learned door to door visitation for first time. Team respondents basically positive about experience, perhaps a little disappointed at small no. of conversions.

Problems Encountered: Planning and admin. Perhaps overstretched. Followed too closely on summer NYFC campaign. Seeing how team gifts fitted into programme.

Other Comments: Turned us outward. One team member had very negative view about the laid back fun style of the mission and wanted harder work with more direct evangelism and presentation of the truth.

Evaluation: My impression is of a church on the move with a lot of committed and creative people. The team who came in helped push along the work of reaching out in an area which presents many challenges. There is a lot of new thinking and willingness to experiment for the sake of the kingdom which showed up in this mission. A lot of the effort seemed to me to be pre evangelism, which given the recent history of the fellowship is probably right. For the long term I feel there needs to be a clear assessment by the church of who they are, where they are in relation to the community around and what God is calling them to do in mission. There is a particular need to clarify the tension between the focus on the immediate neighbourhood and Newham as a whole.

1 / 9 St. James Bethnal Green Brian Castle 980 1612

Denomination: Church of England

Size / type of membership: 80ish entirely white, but wide mix of age and social class. Few Teenagers.

Neighbourhood Setting: Parish covers Victoria Park end of Bethnal Green which is gentrifying as house prices rocket. Also some Council estates, where a few members live. Mainly a white area.

Focus of Regular Ministry: long history of evangelical urban mission. Non stipendiary ministry team. Modern user friendly style of family worship. Growing church; when vicar came 9 years ago only 12 in congregation.

Team Leader: Denis Pethers from Brighton. rated excellent for pastoral care and flexibility.

Mustard Seed Team 87: Six outsiders plus one full time church member.

Programme Outline for MS87: door to door, special services, open air with drama, visits to school assemblies.

Members' involvement: A whole church effort with 20-30 very deeply involved.

High Spots: Assembly reached 900 kids, street theatre started conversations

Responses to Evangelism: Surprisingly warm welcome. About 20 non-Christians came to meetings, four first time commitments to Christ. A dozen continuing contacts.

Other Encouragements: A person with eye trouble had help through ministry of healing. A young widow who had been screwed up by charismatics got into ministry of healing. Even sceptical church members got involved.

Problems Encountered: Overwork and exhaustion. Difficult to plan if team unknown before arrival.

Other Comments: Tearful partings but two team members have since moved to London and joined church. Team respondents positive except for minor admin hassles.

Evaluation: Clearly this is a lively growing church and the MS87 mission fitted well into an ongoing commitment to mission. There was a fairly positive response and lots of openings for evangelism in the community. My question for the long term is about the relationship of the church to the rapidly changing local community. I would like to hear more about how well the congregation represents and relates to the people of the parish, and whether the successful story of evangelism and church growth really penetrates to all sectors, especially to the Council estates and ethnic minorities. I'm not sure for example whether the programme of events in fact avoids anything which involves long term relationship building with the church. It seems to say "we've got something, come to our meetings and get it," or "we are coming out to offer you something", rather than "we (and God) are interested in you as people". There may well be other things in the church programme that say that, but they don't appear in reports of the mission.

J /10 Servite Church Chelsea

Fr. Martin

352 6965

Denomination: Roman Catholic (MS87 team worked closely with other Chelsea teams)

Size / type of membership: 1000 parishoners. Well mixed backgrounds including a lot of migrant workers from Europe, Phillipines etc..

Neighbourhood Setting: Mixture of luxury homes and Council estates, people from many parts of the world.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Catholic parish ministry. One Spanish language mass.

Team Leader: RC priest from E Midlands. Good particularly in preaching but perhaps overshadowed the rest of team.

Mustard Seed Team 87: 5 questionnaires (although I was told 3 by Church leader)

Programme Outline for MS87: visitation, Healing service, coffee morning, video groups.

Members' involvement: a dozen joined in events

High Spots: Healing service

Responses to Evangelism: Not a lot. One good new contact only.

Other Encouragements: team learned a lot from each other, worked well together despite differences and felt church was beginning to respond.

Problems Encountered: Administrative and planning problems. Team felt lack of enthusiasm from church and church leaders.

Other Comments: Church leader felt it had been a lot of hard work for little results and has a big question mark over style and approach.

Evaluation: I have received less positive feedback from this mission than from any of the others and it seems to me that it may well have been inappropriate to hold it in the first place. I suspect what happened was that the church agreed to it mainly because of good local ecumenical relationships, and the fact that RCs would be on the team, without ever really working out the aims and strategies of the mission. Probably the style of a short evangelistic campaign was less familiar to this church than to most of the others. It shows that a lot more work needs to be done at the inter denominational level on the theology and strategy of mission and evangelism.

Denomination : Independent Charismatic Community Fellowship

Size / type of membership: 250 plus, split into 3 congregations. Very mixed in terms of nationality and social background. Strong group of younger professional incomers.

Neighbourhood Setting: 3 focus areas in Poplar, Bethnal Green and Bow. These areas tend to be traditional white working class Council estates but there is increasing gentrification and some ethnic minority (Afro-Caribbean and Bangladeshi) presence.

Focus of Regular Ministry: 3 congregations, many house groups, Christian School. A new church with leadership very aware of the issues of urban ministry

Team Leader: from Macclesfield rated as good in pastoral ministry and leadership if a bit rusty in evangelism and lacking direction.

Mustard Seed Team 87: 7 plus 2 one weekers. Plenty of enthusiasm if little experience.

Programme Outline for MS87: based on previous patterns and planned and focussed on 3 local areas. Door to door visitation, open air, Make Way march, some special services, a few home based meetings with videos.

Goals / Objectives: Church Leader believed these were not clear enough

Members' involvement: 3 full time with team. Only about 10% of church got very involved due to timing.

Responses to Evangelism: Team encouraged by openness on doors. 20 or so people from fringe came to meetings, mainly a strengthening of existing contacts. No new converts.

Other Encouragements: Team felt quite positive encouragement and reported good fellowship and growth. Appreciated hospitality. Church member respondents felt encouraged.

Problems Encountered: exhaustion. Church (perhaps unrealistically) expected more professional evangelists. Team felt a bit unsupported by church at times.

Other Comments: Very uneventful. Team too small to make much impact.

Evaluation: This mission made a limited impact which I think may be a reflection on the church's expectations. THCF has had many visiting teams in the past and has quite a good track record in evangelism and church planting in a borough which is notoriously stony ground. Probably that meant the team and preparations were rather taken for granted. The decentralisation which is a proper part of the fellowship's strategy did not make things any easier for the team. Perhaps it would have been better to concentrate their resources on one neighbourhood and/or project. Perhaps in the future THCF should see its role far more as a provider of apprenticeship training for such teams rather than as a user of their services.

L /12 St. Matthews E15

Paul Bowtell

519 2504

Denomination: Church of England

Size / type of membership: 50+ with four main groups or roughly equal sizes. Older white indigenous, younger white professional incomers, Afro-Caribbean background, Asian (Panjabi-Urdu speaking Christians from Pakistan).

Neighbourhood Setting: Multiracial neighbourhood with mostly older terraced housing, some larger houses broken into flats and a small council estate including tower blocks. 40% white working class, 25% white middle class, 20% Black, 20% Asian

Focus of Regular Ministry: Evangelical Anglican parish (in team with next parish), Recent appointment of Pakistani team vicar. Housegroups, childminders group, Urdu speaking group. Building used by black Pentecostal Church. Involvement in Newham Christian Fellowships. Lots of housing professionals in the congregation!

Team Leader: Bobby Bose (Bengali living in Tower Hamlets) : rated as good, particularly in evangelism and teaching team, with a few weaknesses in leadership and admin, and some difficulty in appreciating RCs point of view.

Mustard Seed Team 87: seven members: worked extremely well together and all had useful gifts

Programme Outline for MS87: Door to door, open airs, praise march, two events (incl. film) for Asians, social evenings, family fun, united celebration meeting. Special services

Goals / Objectives: To get church people out visiting, 10 new members, raised profile.

Members' involvement: 2 full time volunteers and 2 staff. 6-8 joined in visiting, otherwise some disappointment that congregation backed off.

High Spots: Asian evening, final celebration.

Responses to Evangelism: Generally very good on visitation, despite one bottle thrown. Turnout to some events by non-Christians better than expected especially at Family Fun (30) and Asian film (50). 4 first time commitments (2 sticking with it), one church member assured. Some excellent conversations. 50 people to follow up.

Other Encouragements: Ministry of healing at celebration brought relief to three people. Vicar very encouraged by prayer ministry and as part of wider long term process. Church members encouraged by growing fellowship across ethnic boundaries.

Problems Encountered: Minor admin problems. Late appointment of leader. Church members could have been more supportive. Difficult to find time to follow up.

Other Comments: Church Member respondents thought. Team united despite diversity. Very worthwhile. Team members surprised by openness of local people and learned much about the multicultural scene.

Evaluation: I have been quite closely connected with the work at St. Matthews for some time and am impressed by it as a model of ministry in a multicultural parish. MS87 seems to have been a generally positive experience and fitted well into an ongoing pattern of mission and ministry. The disappointments were in terms of failing to meet the (rather bold) target of conversions, and in the hesitant commitment of a large number in the congregation. St. Matthews seems to have discovered a range of events which can to an extent draw in people from the fringe. I wonder if a necessary step now is to develop more regular activities through which

deeper relationships can be build and in which the more diffident members of the congregation can develop ministries of befriending, service and eventually verbal witness.

M /13 Bridge House Old Ford

David Hewitt

985 7797

Denomination: Independent Evangelical Shaftesbury Society

Size / type of membership: 40 majority elderly white and female, but some professional incomers and several recent converts.

Neighbourhood Setting: Council estate in Bow, two thirds white working class with a 20% Afro-Caribbean and 5% Asian.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Ministry team. Centre used by large number of community groups, church involved in Parents and Toddlers, new play group, kids holiday projects, English classes, Aerobics etc. Also regular worship, Bible study, open airs and visitation. Link with sheltered home.

Team Leader: from Orpington & Bible College. Not rated highly as a team leader and was struggling with her own problems. Good at pastoral work and encouraging team.

Mustard Seed Team 87: Six people. Quite good, but sometimes reluctant to go out on doors

Programme Outline for MS87: Door to door, open air with dance /drama, healing services, youth concert

Goals / Objectives: to visit whole estate, to develop fruitful ministry, conversions.

Members' involvement: 5 or 6 fully committed and active.

Responses to Evangelism: generally polite if apathetic. Disappointing turnout at meetings. 1 new convert, lots of new contacts especially among Asians.

Other Encouragements: One person released from bondage to traditional religiosity, another from gambling. Generally a positive feel. Team felt positive.

Problems Encountered: hospitality had to rely on another church. Role definition between team leader and Church leader.

Other Comments: Sense of disappointment in that not as good as last year.

Evaluation: A generally low key but encouraging mission which fits into the overall strategy of what Bridge House is trying to do. Perhaps after the shot in the arm that MS86 provided, expectations were a bit too high. Perhaps a little worrying that a centre which has so many good contacts through its community work can't profit more from these relationships in terms of an evangelistic thrust. Should something more be done to build up a sense of belonging to the Bridge House Community, e.g. a community festival on the estate or a massive street party? Need to involve more of the local Christians in ministry although this is obviously difficult for the older ladies. What about the other Christian group that hire the premises?

N /14 Plaistow Christian Fellowship Terry Diggines 474 3354

Denomination: Independent Free / Charismatic / House-Community Church / Base Christian Community

Size / type of membership: 60 plus. Mix of young educated incomers (under 35s) and older Cockney Christians (most more recent converts). Half a dozen black and half a dozen Chinese, many in mixed marriages.

Neighbourhood Setting: Mixture of owner occupied terraces and Council property which includes some high rise. Focus of mission on Regents Estate, an older development with semis and low rise flats. Mainly white working class here but rest of patch very multicultural.

Focus of Regular Ministry: New church (< 10 years) Sunday worship in community centre, Home cell groups, prayer meeting, regular visitation on estate, community work alongside Tenants Association, Childrens after school club, involved with other Newham Churches, individuals active in community as school governors, teachers, politics etc.

Team Leader: Kim Lovell East Ham. rated good by church leader. Strong pastoral heart and sensitivity and knew his role, perhaps lacked dynamic initiative.

Mustard Seed Team 87: Eight people two of whom lived locally. Well mixed and related well.

Programme Outline for MS87: Community paper distribution, Door to door, Songs of Praise follow up, street work and open air, Make Way march, Special services with Dance Drama, concert, Barbecue, sports afternoon, meeting on occult.

Goals / Objectives: To turn church outwards and enable people to evangelise, to build and deepen contacts on the estate, new converts.

Members' involvement: Several involved in visiting, hospitality, prayer support, arranging events etc.

Responses to Evangelism: Generally welcoming, small numbers of fringe people came to events, except sports which had large turnout. One commitment to Christ, half a dozen deep contacts and 20-30 for follow up.

Other Encouragements: two testimonies of healing, a very positive event, confidence booster for church, Growth in team members, awareness of spiritual warfare. Team gelled so well.

Problems Encountered: needed to know about team earlier, some loopholes in training. Publicity leaflets confusing. One church member disappointed at lack of church support.

Other Comments: This is my own fellowship and I was a participant observer.

Evaluation: I believe most people in PCF see MS87 as a very positive event in the life of the church although there may be some underlying disappointment that the church has not grown as a result. There was a lot of creative energy and talent put into the mission although we had probably been unrealistic in hoping for large turnouts at evangelistic events. Certainly the profile of PCF was raised, and many of our existing contacts were strengthened. As presence and mission grows on the estate I believe we are gaining street credibility there. If there is a problem I think it may come from the very diversity of PCF and its involvements (which in many ways is our strength). This means that a lot of people have some concern for mission on the estate, a few actually give up time to do something there, but no-one is a permanent presence. In the long term commando raids are not enough. We need to put more effort into building long term relationships with non-Christians there.

0 /15 Mitcham Lane Baptist

James Pate

677 5803

Denomination: Baptist

Size / type of membership: 175 members 80% white, some Black. Large group of young educated incomers, several elderly gap in middle aged.

Neighbourhood Setting: Suburban fringe area. Mainly owner occupied terraces. High mobility. Substantial numbers of Afro-Caribbean and Asian background people.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Evangelical Baptist Church beginning to develop some involvement in community.

Team Leader: Geoff Thorington from Hillingdon / Moorlands. Rated very highly.

Mustard Seed Team 87: Two outsiders plus 6 local church members.

Programme Outline for MS87: door to door, open air, multicultural concert, evening at sheltered home, home groups, mother and toddlers

Members' involvement: besides six full timers several did 2 or 3 days. Home groups organised evenings.

High Spots: Multicultural concert

Responses to Evangelism: generally friendly polite response. 30+ contacts worth follow up. Some strengthening of long term relationships. No commitments or conversions.

Other Encouragements: A lot of church members enabled to share faith more boldly. Church member respondents gave positive reports of how they had been challenged and grown in confidence in mission.

Problems Encountered: Needed more people on team

Other Comments: Nothing spectacular happened but it was policy not to hype the event. Seen as part of growing community outreach.

Evaluation: This was a very low key mission with limited aims because of the small numbers of outsiders on the team. Reports suggest it was a very positive event. The danger in this sort of medium-large suburban church is usually complacency. I would want to encourage greater awareness and involvement in the local community and increased mobilisation of the church membership in outreach. They could probably organise something like this campaign at least once a year with or without the presence of an MS team as a catalyst.

P /16 Marquess Christian Centre Islington Roger Williams 226 5924

Denomination: Ecumenical Project of CofE, Baptist and URC churches.

Size / type of membership: New congregation being launched with MS87, targetting at about 60 people being involved.

Neighbourhood Setting: Modern low rise Council Estate, 95% white working class.

Focus of Regular Ministry: Development of a Christian presence in the activities of an existing community centre.

Team Leader: LBC student rated excellent in everything except admin.

Mustard Seed Team 87: 7 incomers plus 7 local people full time

Programme Outline for MS87: door to door, open air rock concert, fun day, special services, evangelistic meetings, home video groups.

Goals / Objectives: Launching the MCC, planting a church, new converts

Members' involvement: 8 - 10 got involved in spare time in visiting, hospitality, at events. Disappointing as this left things to full timers.

High Spots: fun day and concert

Responses to Evangelism: more welcoming than expected, few turned up to evangelistic events, half a dozen people stuck as worshippers since mission, 2 commitments/conversions, one rededication, one Mormon now leaving his church, 40-80 contacts worth following up.

Other Encouragements: turned Christians outward, achieved launch of MCC as desired. Church member respondents encouraged by inter church co-operation, openness of community and growing in confidence in outreach.

Problems Encountered: weakness of core congregation meant not all work completed. Anxieties about MS team recruitment and training. Low turnout to meetings.

Other Comments: Vicar very enthusaiastic, wants a team in the rest of parish in 88.

Evaluation: Using an MS team as a launchpad for a long term church planting work seems to have been a very appropriate idea, and to have come off quite well. (Perhaps MS in future years should keep a lookout for other launching projects which might value a team.) There is a generally positive feel about what happened, some clear results in terms of new Christians and a new growing congregation. The difficulty of getting people to meetings is universal in this type of neighbourhood, and we ought to have learned the lessons long ago. The long term mission here depends on involving the local Christians with the local community, in the activities of the new centre and in ongoing evangelism. What plans are in hand for the period after the "honeymoon"?

Q /17 St. Augustines Highbury Peter Alcock 226 6870

Denomination: Church of England

Size / type of membership: 70 including large group of educated incomers and some Afro-Caribbean Black people.

Neighbourhood Setting: No details available..

Focus of Regular Ministry: Evangelical Anglican parish, home groups etc.

Team Leader: Simon Flowers from Leeds University. Rated as excellent especially with young people.

Mustard Seed Team 87: 7 outsiders plus 7 full time church members

Programme Outline for MS87: door to door, open air, special services, film evenings, concert, discussion evening, video home groups.

Members' involvement: Over half church members involved in some way.

High Spots: Healing service: Gospel Concert

Responses to Evangelism: mixed response on visitation (hostility from some RCs and because of Jews). Large turnout to healing services (200) and film evenings (130) including many fringers and new contacts. Eleven conversions, church attendance grown substantially.

Other Encouragements: Two testimonies of healings, plus various answers to prayer. £2300 budget raised. Team fitted in so well with locals. Positive contact with a youth gang.

Problems Encountered: Follow up difficult to complete. Co-operation with other churches didn't come off. Training over 4 weekends a problem and fear that visiting parish on training day could be counter productive.

Other Comments: "Best thing since sliced bread."

Evaluation: These comments are based on very limited data (one conversation with vicar and one church member's questionnaire.) The main thing to say is that this mission appears very different from all the others in the large number of new commitments to Christ, and in the high reported turnout of non-Christians to some of the evangelistic events. I have no clear explanation for this but suspect it may be something to do with the sociological nature of the parish rather than the superior efforts / spirituality of the church, vicar and team. There was obviously something happening, I'd like to find out more before hazarding any explanations.

Adopt a strategy for church revival!...and we'll help you.

These are the essential ingredients...pray for revival...heal the people...reach out in mission...look for the return of Christ!

CHURCH LEADERS UNDER PRESSURE

Many faithful ministers are struggling with isolation, disillusion, lack of support or encouragement, empty churches, elderly congregations, dilapidated premises, contempt for their ministry, lack of divine power. **We want to contribute positively into this situation.** We draw on years of working with church leaders of all denominations in an inner city environment. We know that there are no simplistic answers, but there are answers!

STEP ONE - RECOGNISE LOCAL LEADERS

Local church leaders are in the front line. They have special needs which must be recognised. We want to offer a service to local church leaders that will encourage, support and enable them in the combat. In order to do this effectively we will need to spend time building understanding and trust at a personal level. We would expect to discuss the plan of action that would most appropriately meet the needs of the church. We do not have a ready made set of answers, but we do have some valuable insights and resources. We believe that the church at large has a responsibility for the inner city.

STEP TWO - AFFIRM THE SAINTS

We want to encourage inner city christians to be themselves, and to discover the power of God that is within them. We seek to encourage the unlocking of God given ministries in ordinary christians. Jesus meant our christian experience to be vital and exciting. He wants us all to discover how to combat the miseries of this world. Everyone without exception can find the way - it is not easy, but it can be done!

STEP THREE - ENVISION THE CHURCH

We believe that God has His troops in His churches. We believe that God has His leaders in His churches. We affirm inner city church leaders and inner city christians as being OK for the job Jesus has for them to do.

PRAY FOR REVIVAL

Revival speaks of that abundant life which Jesus came to give - especially to the poor, the weak, the less able, the sick, the lonely and the outcast. The kingdom of God is not for the powerful and elite, neither does it consist of words. Let us pray together, for God to revive His church in this time of urgent need in our society.

A MUSTARD SEED TEAM WILL COME ALONGSIDE YOU

- > its a team of up to 10 people with a mature leader.
 - > it is made up from ordinary christians from all over the country.
 - > they will have different denominational/cultural/ethnic background.
 - > they come for 9 intensive days.
 - > many will be mature christians, others new and younger, united by their love for the Lord, and their desire to serve.
 - > they become part of the local church for 9 days, joining with members in mission.
 - > the planning and detailed arrangements are the responsibility of the local church.
 - > the local church are urged to participate.
 - > the combined team and church members share prayer, praise and study each day.
 - > the local church provides hospitality for the team during their stay.
- OUR EXPERIENCE IN OVER 40 MISSIONS SHOWS US THAT WHEN CHRISTIANS COME TOGETHER IN FAITH, THE LORD WILL WORK HIS PURPOSES IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. ITS REALLY GOOD!
- HALLELUJAH!