

# **URBAN MINISTRY AND THEOLOGY PROJECT**

## **NEWCASTLE EAST DEANERY**

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## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
Glossary	4
<b>I. Background</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Introduction	6
2. Origins of the Project	7
3. The Area	9
4. UMTTP scope and organisation	14
<b>II. The Project Strands</b>	<b>19</b>
5. Community Engagement	20
6. Church Development	25
7. Theological Training and Education	32
8. Weaving the strands together	36
<b>III. Impact and Effectiveness</b>	<b>40</b>
9. Community role	41
10. Deanery, Diocesan and wider Church role	44
11. Continuity and Change: Possible Future Scenarios	49
12. Conclusions, success factors and wider questions	51
<b>Appendices</b>	
I: The Evaluation Proposal	59
II: Interviewees	61
III: Time line of key local events	62

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## GLOSSARY

AGM	Annual General Meeting
CDWs	Community Development Workers
CofE	Church of England
CUF	Church Urban Fund
DIY	do-it-yourself
EECVSF	East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum
IT	information technology
NCC	Newcastle City Council
PAG	Parishes Advisory Group
PCC	Parochial Church Council
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund
UMTP	Urban Ministry and Theology Project
UPA	Urban Priority Area

# URBAN MINISTRY AND THEOLOGY PROJECT

## PART I: BACKGROUND

*The rush of new urban processes has affected what our towns and cities actually look like – how the buildings and urban spaces are changing – but what of the soul of the people? How do we think, feel, worship and pray in an urbanizing world? What are our priorities? What do we believe about the places we inhabit? Where do we hope it may all be leading? What are the urban meanings?<sup>1</sup>*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*The project is a particular way of working that we have adopted to achieve much the same goals that a parish in any circumstance might want to achieve. . . . Although we are calling it a project our aim is to see it as a process that we live out rather than an organisation that we are trying to build up in its own right. The project is a particular model of working or even a way of being church.<sup>2</sup>*

1.1 The Urban Ministry and Theology Project (UMTP) is based in churches in the East End of Newcastle in the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle. The word 'project' here is shorthand to describe multi-faceted processes towards achieving a vision of:

- regeneration in the East End of Newcastle that embodies Gospel values;
- a church presence that honours the local context;
- a learning and reflective community extending into the wider church.

1.2 Three broad task areas are linked with this vision:

- *community engagement* – co-ordinating the church's involvement in regeneration structures;
- *church development* – new ways of being church including increased community engagement;
- *theological education and training* – exchanging learning with people outside the area.

1.3 The Community Engagement aspect received grant aid from the Church Urban Fund New Initiatives funding stream. A requirement of the grant was that the funded work should be externally evaluated. However, as the different strands of work are inter-related and inter-dependent, the evaluation has looked at the whole Project.

1.4 The purpose of the evaluation was to try to draw out transferable lessons. This entailed looking at UMTP's effectiveness and impact and trying to identify the factors contributing to or inhibiting its success. The resources available precluded a full-scale evaluation, particularly given the Project's scope and complexity. I therefore saw my role more as acting as an independent 'critical friend' (Appendix I) and trying to :

- encourage an evaluation culture amongst those involved in the project: the members of the Parishes Advisory group, the Management Committee and the Project Staff;
- help the initial process of identifying the success criteria and therefore what evidence needed to be collected to establish whether or not these criteria are being met;
- undertake periodic reviews of progress;
- facilitate reflection amongst participants;
- contribute to and support the dissemination of lessons.

1.5 This report has been compiled following a review of Project documentation, visits to the Project made about twice a year over three years, observation at some meetings, discussions with the Project staff and interviews with a variety of people involved in the Project's management, in the participant churches and in partner organisations (Appendix II).

### Report structure

1.6 The report is in three parts. The remainder of Part I covers:

- the origins of the Project;

- some features of the area in which it is situated;
- UMTTP's scope and organisation.

1.7 Part II looks at the different strands of the Project in turn and then how they are woven together.

1.8 Part III focuses on its impact and effectiveness:

- in the community;
- in the deanery, diocese and wider church;
- in terms of its longer term sustainability; and finally looks at:
- the factors that affect its success and the wider questions raised by the Project.

## 2. ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

2.1 The Urban Ministry and Theology Project's geographic coverage is the parishes of:

- St Silas', Byker;
- St Michael's, Byker;
- St Anthony of Egypt, Byker;
- St Martin's, Byker;
- Christ Church, Walker;
- St Oswald's, Walkergate.

2.2 Four of these six churches are regarded as 'core members' of the Project. St Anthony's, St Silas', St Martin's and St Michael's all have staffing arrangements that are directly affected by the Project's way of working and their areas are the primary focus for the Church Development task. Christ Church, Walker, is a 'supporting' parish, sending PCC representatives to the Parishes Advisory Group and benefiting from the activities of the staff over the wider area. St Oswald's, Walkergate, has chosen neither to support nor benefit from UMTTP's work.

2.3 UMTTP came into being after at least eighteen months of consideration and planning. Calling it a 'project' is convenient but to some extent misleading because it suggests a set of activities tacked onto other work in the parishes concerned whereas it is more a set of values imbuing the whole work of the churches concerned, an approach and set of processes. An early description<sup>3</sup> described how it had emerged from five strands in the life of the local church:

- The first strand was the diocesan strategy for mission and ministry in urban parishes. One element of this contained in a 'Deployment for Growth' paper included, *inter alia*, two relevant principles. There was a commitment to ensure "worship, service and evangelism in each community" and there was a wish to see a deeper connection "between faith and everyday life".
- The second strand also related to the diocesan strategy in the significance of the role given to the deanery "in determining the future shape of the church and its ministry . . . . as an important unit in encouraging local identity and interdependence".
- A third factor that was influential was the history of church involvement in regeneration in the East End of Newcastle from the 1980s onwards. Diocesan personnel and clergy had variously been connected with a variety of initiatives, such as the activities of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation and Single Regeneration Budget schemes secured

by Newcastle City Council, and there was continuing engagement with the Ouseburn Partnership and the East End Partnership.

- A fourth strand was the need to 'regenerate' the life of local congregations not only against the background of the regeneration going on in the locality but also in view of declining church attendance and the problems associated with church buildings.
- Finally, there was a perceived need to establish closer connections between the experience of urban ministry and formal theological training and there was an opportunity to do this through creating a module for university courses and by making learning derived from the local situation more widely available.

2.4 Newcastle East Deanery responded very positively to the challenge concerning its role. In the mid 1990s, the Deanery formed clusters of independent parishes in various areas of the Deanery and, by this means, worked through a lot of the issues of clergy collaboration across parish boundaries. Without this groundwork, UMTTP could not have come into being but, because it had taken place, the local congregations could take ownership of the Project by recognising it as a natural extension of this process. "The Deanery sees the objects of the Project as key to its mission strategy in the Byker and Walker areas."<sup>4</sup>

2.5 Another significant background factor was that the churches in the area had experienced great difficulties in recruiting clergy partly because three of the four Byker parishes operated under Resolutions A and B<sup>5</sup>. They were therefore experiencing long interregna: three years at St Anthony's up to 2000 and eventually two years at St Silas. Even though it was not technically in interregnum in September 1999 because the then Vicar of Christ Church was the priest in charge for the latter two years, St Martin's had not been not staffed with its own incumbent for over four years. These experiences meant that whilst congregations may have been reluctant to depart from the model of clergy activity they were accustomed to, it was better than having no priest at all.

2.6 The churches varied in their churchmanship and in the nature of their congregations. Some congregations were eclectic, drawing back people who had early links but had long since moved out of the parish. Even where parishioners were local residents, they were not necessarily typical members of the community. These were further factors that needed to be taken into account in developing the Project.

2.7 At the outset when the Team was being assembled, the Steering Group was open to the possibility of one member being a lay person with the right skills and experience. However, at that time, this was clearly going to be a step too far for the congregations. The start of the Project came when Peter Robinson was appointed Priest in Charge of St Martin's Church, Byker, in September 1999. (He subsequently also became Priest in Charge at St Michael's.) He is Director of UMTTP and has the training and education role. About four months later in January 2000, Jeremy Clark-King became Vicar of St Anthony's, Byker linked with the community development remit, and in November 2001, John Sadler took up the Church Development post. The Team members reflected the diversity of theological positions across spectrum of the Church of England: 'liberal evangelical', 'Affirming Catholicism' and 'radical liberal'.

2.8 Originally, St Silas' Church was only one of the supporting parishes but became part of the project when the Church Development work got underway. This then also led to obtaining a new incumbent who brought additional skills. The enlargement of the team was welcomed and also because the incoming priest was a woman. As well as working

together with John on Church Development, Sue Faulkner could bring new perspectives to the whole approach.

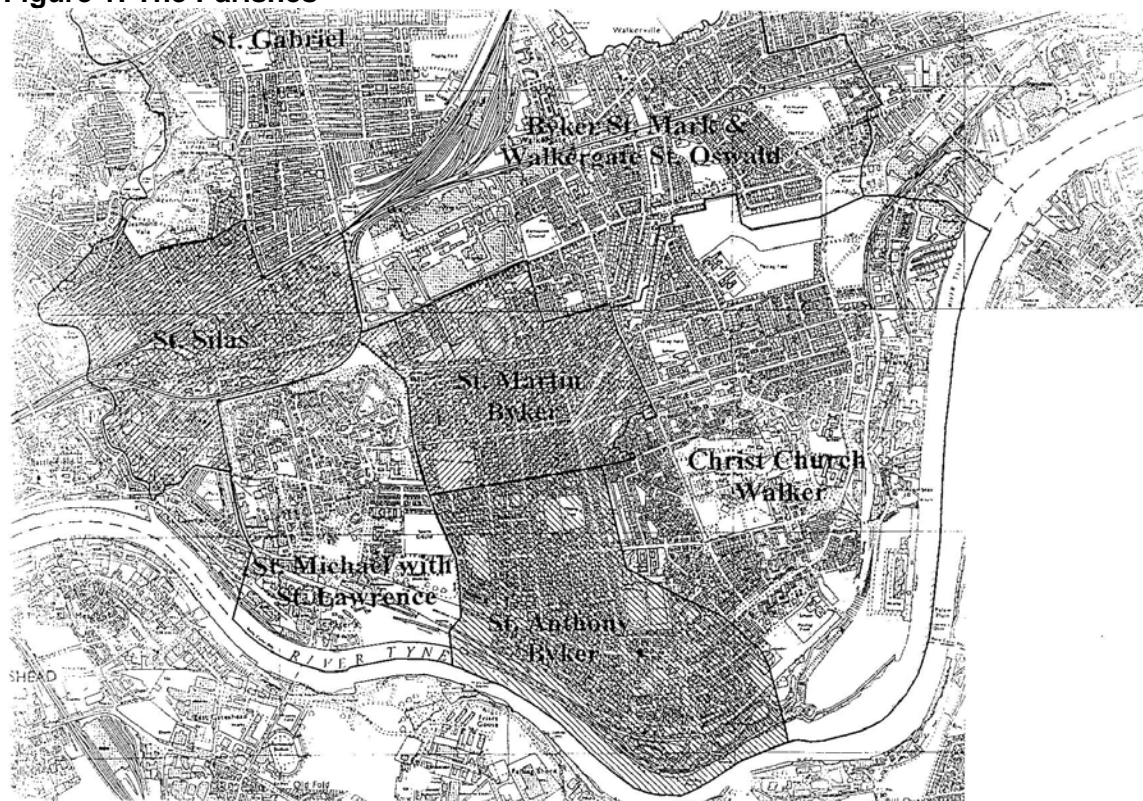
### Ecumenical context

2.9 When the neighbourhood covered by UMTP was first formed, many Roman Catholic migrant workers settled there and this is still reflected in the 4 Roman Catholic churches in the area. There is a mixed community of Assumption Sisters and de la Salle Brothers who have a mission to the socially excluded. They have been running Kids Kabin for 8-14 year olds since 1994 and acquired new purpose-built premises in 2002. There are also two Methodist churches. The local Methodist Circuit employed a Lay Worker, Chris Carroll, who became closely involved with the work of UMTP.

2.10 A Churches Together in Walker (which later became Churches Together in Walker and Byker) helped towards good relationships with much of the emphasis on joint services.

## 3. THE AREA

Figure 1: The Parishes



**Figure 2: Ward Map**



*The East End of Newcastle is changing – and changing fast. In the last four years, all the fixed points of our communities have either been taken away or scheduled for removal. The recent pace of change is partly a product of the massive, city-wide, regional, national and global changes that have gone on over the past 50 years. Newcastle is a shrinking city and many of the people left in areas such as that served by the Project parishes are there because they cannot leave. They are held by high multiple deprivation, or very low levels of health or – more positively – by strong extended family links.<sup>6</sup>*

### **Newcastle East End**

3.1 For the purposes of looking at its socio-economic characteristics, the UMP area (Figure 1) can be seen as matching that of the Newcastle East End Partnership covering the South East side of Newcastle upon Tyne, bordered by the Ouseburn Valley to the West, the East Coast railway line and the Metro to the North, the Tyne to the South and Wallsend, part of North Tyneside, to the North East. The UMP area was chosen to correspond to that of the regeneration initiative. Prior to the 2004 ward boundary changes, it encompassed all of Byker, Monkchester and Walker wards and parts of Walkergate and Heaton (Figure 2). The area mainly developed in the mid to late 19th century with the provision of housing for

workers in local industries: mining, iron, chemical and glass works, shipbuilding and related engineering industries. The population is now about 35,000.

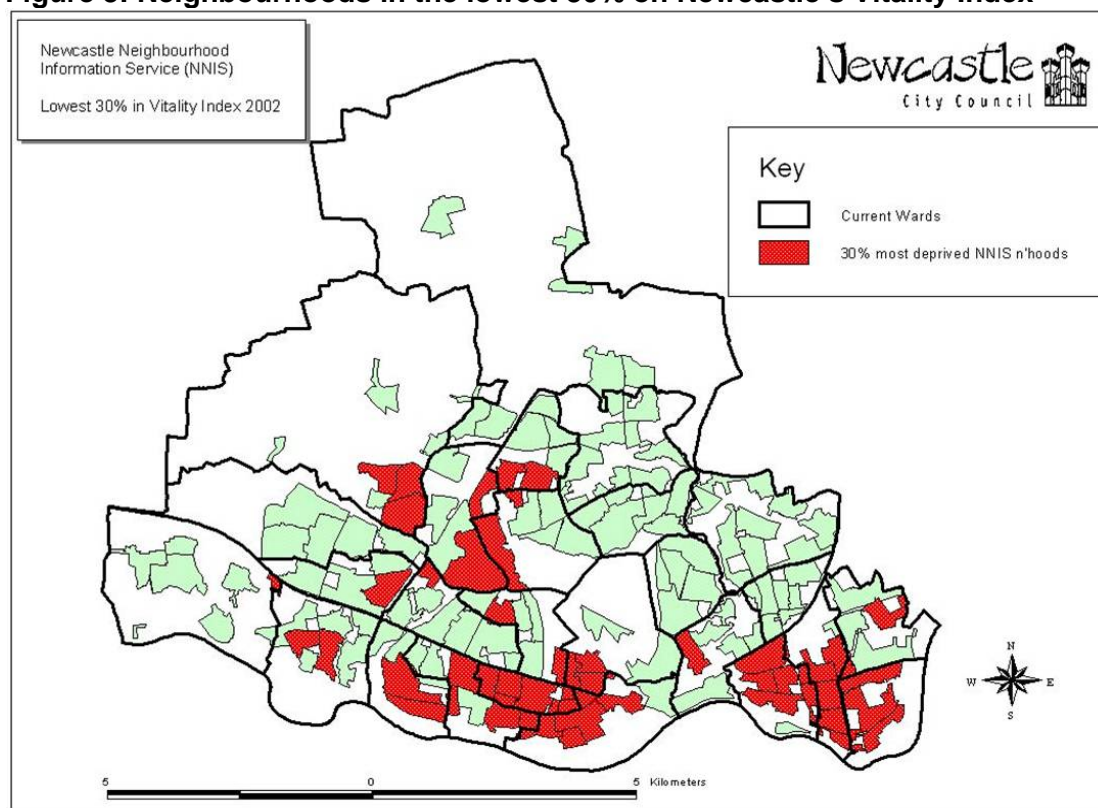
**Table 3.1: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000: scores and ranks**

Ward	Score	Rank
Byker	70.61	78
Heaton	19.46	3671
Monkchester	75.37	31
Walker	75.57	30
Walkergate	41.22	1037

**Table 3.2: IMD 2000 domain rankings**

Ward	Income	Employment	Health	Education	Access	Child poverty
Byker	126	73	128	68	7666	175
Heaton	3417	1861	3073	5828	7719	2372
Monkchester	55	75	56	238	6264	139
Walker	49	65	61	195	7293	77
Walkergate	1137	950	809	1004	5017	1826

**Figure 3: Neighbourhoods in the lowest 30% on Newcastle's Vitality Index**



3.2 Appendix III shows key local events over the past century and a half taken from a timeline developed by local voluntary and community groups. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 give the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 scores for the relevant wards. The Index used late 1990s data so that these scores represent the position at the start of UMTP. They show Walker as the 30<sup>th</sup> most deprived ward in England and Byker as the 78<sup>th</sup>. There is a total of 8,414 wards in the country and the difference between rank scores can be very slight but, even so,

these ranks were a reversal of what most people locally would have expected about the relative positions of the two wards.

3.3 It is difficult to give an updated position today, partly because the data presently obtainable would mainly be about two years out of date and partly because the neighbourhood data presented in the 2004 Index is not based upon wards, which rules out the possibility of making direct comparisons. Figure 3 shows the spread of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 30% according to Newcastle City Council's 'Vitality Index', which is based upon combining indicators on crime, education, health, housing, income and unemployment into an overall neighbourhood index.

3.4 A recent development has been the change that the East End experienced as a result of the Home Office dispersal programme for asylum seekers and refugees that began without warning in early 2000. At one point it was said that Byker not only had the greatest density of asylum seekers living in local authority housing in the city, but also that over 30 language groups were represented. Today, an increasing proportion of people from non-white Anglo-Saxon ethnic backgrounds with a variety of religious backgrounds have their home in Byker and Walker. The percentages remain small compared with many British cities, but the change in the East End of Newcastle has been a dramatic one in a very short period.

### **East End Partnership**

*In Newcastle, the SRB funding was seen as essential to shore the area up against decline and give it a potential for revival . . . investment in the area was essential if the spiral of economic, social and environmental decline is to be halted and reversed . . . . .<sup>7</sup>*

3.5 The last few years have seen considerable change as a result of regeneration initiatives. The East End Partnership was set up to manage a £25 million seven year SRB Round 2 Programme. The Programme, which ended in March 2003, levered in a further £35 million.

3.6 The Partnership's information pack described the area as having a "worrying combination of problems":

- the decline of the Shields Road District Centre, the main commercial centre serving the whole of the target area;
- the decline of the traditional engineering industries, the high level of unemployment and low skills levels of the resident population;
- high levels of deprivation and poverty, poor health and lifestyles;
- rising levels of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, especially around shopping centres;
- housing environments in need of improvement and poor environmental quality in much of the area;
- poor quality leisure facilities.

3.7 The area as a whole was characterised by high unemployment and long term unemployment, but also a high proportion of people on Incapacity Benefit and, amongst those in work, many low paid. However, the East End of Newcastle had less population turnover than the West End and hence retained greater stability. For residents, the key issues were anti-social behaviour and fear of crime that meant that many – especially elderly people - were reluctant to leave their homes after dark. There was also a reluctance to report crime.

### **Vision for the area**

3.8 The vision was for an area that could “break free from the spiral of decline and take advantage of its economic potential . . . attract private investment and stimulate enterprise [and] look to the future with restored confidence and renewed optimism”. The strategic objectives, which arose directly from the problems cited above, were:

- the regeneration of Shields Road District centre;
- enhanced employment prospects for residents, particularly the young and long term unemployed through education, training and job creation through new businesses and business support;
- assisting youth, support for the family and individuals with special needs through a comprehensive community support network;
- a more secure and safer East End;
- improving the leisure facilities to enhance the quality of life.

### **Major projects**

3.9 The SRB has implemented many of the planned projects; for example:

- an improved district centre with better lighting, a new public square and a new Morrisons store;
- education and training projects, such as substantial IT investment in two local secondary schools and an Offshore Technology Centre;
- ‘living over the shops’ provision and environmental and security improvements to about 2,000 properties on St Anthony’s Estate.

### **Going for Growth**

*The City’s strategy was a move to try and regenerate [communities in decline] permanently, rather than manage continuing decline. Our interviews suggested that these strategic attempts to break up poverty concentrations and create sustainable mixed tenure neighbourhoods were moving too fast. Laying down plans for the vibrant urban neighbourhoods of the future, politicians and city officials had overlooked the strength of existing communities and their commitment to their homes and neighbourhoods, however rundown.*<sup>8</sup>

3.10 The introduction of Newcastle’s *Going for Growth* strategy in 2000 brought a lot of local concern and uncertainty. “The strategy is about saving an area from decline. In this respect it focuses on addressing the problems of the area rather than on its residents.”<sup>9</sup> Although *Going for Growth* addressed local problems, it was the economic opportunities, especially along the riverside, which seemed to dominate the thinking of policy makers. The *Going for Growth* proposals for introducing housing at the high end of the market and moving towards a more diverse tenure base and social mix coincided with other plans affecting housing: the switch of council properties to an ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation) and the Housing Market Renewal Initiative that would also have local implications. Together they engendered fears that swathes of existing properties would be demolished and the community disrupted.

### **Different approaches to regeneration and governance**

3.11 It is notable that two sorts of development were happening in parallel in the East End:

- the developer-driven, exemplified by the Riverside housing schemes, and

- the community-driven linked with local social regeneration and with cultural schemes such as the bid to be European Capital of Culture and the listing of the Byker Wall.

3.12 At the same time, the lifetime of the UMTF to date has coincided with changes in the city's governance arising from the government's Modernising Local Government Agenda, which has seen the introduction of local strategic partnerships and community strategies as well as reorganisation within councils.

3.13 This then was the background: physical and other changes were taking place and others were planned; many that would bring local benefit but others where the likely impact on the existing community was still unknown. In fact, throughout the four to five years, there has been a feeling of constant flux because of delays and uncertainties. This meant that there were associated anxieties amongst local people but the community infrastructure was insufficiently developed to engage with a strong, traditional and paternalistic Council.

3.14 Many of the activities described in Part II of the report were developed in direct response to this context.

## 4. UMTF SCOPE AND ORGANISATION

*It is **aspirational** in that it seeks to imagine a vibrant urban church and to construct a framework that will encourage everyone to work towards it, building on strengths and working on weaknesses.*<sup>10</sup>

### **Purpose, vision and objectives**

4.1 The purpose of UMTF is to live out a style of Christian Ministry that assists local churches and communities to engage effectively with the processes of social and economic regeneration in the East End of Newcastle upon Tyne.

*The vision is that the changes taking place in the East End of Newcastle embody the kingdom of God; that new forms of church presence emerge that honour the current context; that we share our learning with those outside our situation and learn from them." In other words it "starts with the mission of God in the world, moves towards His work within the Church itself, then in the act of sharing with other people . . ."*<sup>11</sup>

4.2 The Project has Unincorporated Association status. Its constitution gives its objectives as:

- "To promote and develop a Christian approach to the building of capacity of individuals and groups living and working in the Anglican Deanery of Newcastle East.
- In the context of physical, social and economic regeneration, to enable, resource and support the full participation of local people in the processes that affect their lives; to ensure and develop the integration of this object with the other objects to their mutual benefit; to share results and resources with the wider church.
- In the context of physical, social and economic regeneration, to enable, resource and support the full participation of the local Church and to develop new ecclesiological models and appropriate methods of growth and outreach; to ensure and develop the integration of this object with the other objects to their mutual benefit; to share results and resources with the wider church.

- To offer, in partnership with other agencies, training to lay and ordained persons on programmes of theological education and training; to ensure and develop the integration of this object with the other objects to their mutual benefit; to share results and resources with the wider church.”

4.3 It aims “that the local church might be such that:

- existing groups of Christian are growing in spiritual depth, numerically and in theological awareness;
- new forms of Christian presence and mission are emerging;
- local Christians are developing models of ministry that arise directly out of the context of social and economic regeneration;
- there is a strategic and economic use of existing buildings;
- there is a stimulating interaction with the communities of the East End and appropriate partnerships are being established with both statutory and voluntary agencies;
- those engaged in theological training, for lay and ordained ministries and in continuing ministerial education, are able both to share in the learning gained by local people and to make a significant contribution;
- theological reflection on the urban context takes place against a background generated by the interaction of all these factors.”

4.4 The Project has a three-pronged way of working:



- *Community engagement* – co-ordinating the church’s involvement in regeneration structures;
- *Church development* – evangelism, new ways of being church, growth of engagement with the community;
- *Theological education and training* – offering learning to others and learning from outside the area.

4.5 The next section of the report will discuss each of these in more detail but in many ways, as chapter 8 will discuss, their importance lies in the way they overlap, in their points of intersection and in their dynamic interrelationship. In other words, the three areas together form a hermeneutic key to the working of the project.

### **Staffing**

4.6 Each of the three original team members is responsible for one of these areas of work. For two of them, this is in addition to running parishes. This represented a different way of working across existing parish boundaries.

4.7 From the end of 2001 until autumn 2003, the Project employed a half-time Administrator who played a key role not only in setting up office systems but also in maintaining a presence and contact point in the office and providing formal and informal communication links within the team and between them and others.

### **Premises**

4.8 In the middle of 2001, the Project in collaboration with the local Community Development Team moved into the Partnership Building, centrally situated premises at the old police station in Walker. Obtaining the premises and the move were enabled by the East End Partnership but would not have happened if UMTP had not been there.

4.9 Having the office helped to give the project its own identity. It was much more difficult to do this whilst using clergy offices or relying on 'virtual' networking. The base made it easier to generate and sustain useful links with others. In addition, an identifiable base was not only a visible sign of the project's partnership basis but it also signalled that this was a matter of the church being corporately engaged, rather than just individual clergy involved in a few add-on activities. In this way, it may have served subtly to change expectations in the city about the role of the Church. City leaders had already seen Canon Bob Langley playing a significant role in regeneration initiatives from the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation onwards. UMTP's move into the Partnership Building was an important symbolic step towards institutionalising this engagement.

### **Steering Group**

4.10 A Project Steering Group first met in the summer of 1999 and continued to meet bi-monthly to oversee and guide the initial stages. Its members included representation of both the Newcastle and Durham Anglican Dioceses and two other denominations. Canon Bob Langley, then Newcastle Diocesan Director of Ministry and Training, chaired it. Other members were:

- Revd Colin Carr OP, Theological Consultant to the North East Churches;
- Canon Hazel Ditchburn, Rector of Blaydon and Rural Dean of Gateshead West,
- Revd Helen Jobling, Methodist Minister, Walker and Shieldfield;
- Canon Geoff Miller, Newcastle Diocesan Urban Officer;
- Bishop Paul Richardson, Assistant Bishop of Newcastle;
- Revd Peter Robinson;
- Professor Nick Sagovsky, William Leech Professor of Applied Theology, Newcastle University;
- Revd Michael Webb, Rural Dean, Newcastle East Deanery.

### **Management Committee**

4.11 UMTP's formal constitution as an unincorporated association was adopted at the Inaugural General Meeting in May 2001. Membership of the association is open to the Anglican parishes in the East End Deanery and any individual interested in furthering the Objects (4.2 above). Each member church has up to one clergy and three lay representatives, selected by the churches themselves.

4.12 At the time of adopting the constitution, UMTTP's Steering Group was wound up to be replaced by an Executive or Management Committee with some continuity of membership. The association members at the AGM elect this each year. It meets every six to eight weeks and comprises:

- six elected members: three of whom are also members of the Parishes Advisory Group (Chair plus one lay and one ordained) and one of whom is elected from Newcastle East Deanery Standing Committee;
- four nominated members: one being the Bishop of Newcastle or his nominated deputy and three nominated by Newcastle East Deanery (to be the three project postholders);
- three non-Anglican members, one each co-opted from Churches Together in Byker and Walker, Churches Together in Heaton and Churches Together in Shieldfield.

4.13 The Assistant Bishop of Newcastle has chaired the Management Committee from the outset. Its responsibility is to monitor progress against the stated values and desired outcomes of the Project.

4.14 The Roman Catholic member of the Management Committee is Colin Carr OP who is also part of the North East Christian Churches Together group.

### **Parishes Advisory Group**

4.15 A Parishes Advisory Group (PAG) was formed at about the same time as the Steering Group. This had roots first in the Ministry and Mission Group of the Deanery when it initially considered cluster formation and, secondly, in the consultations with individual churches during the time that project planning was taking place. In addition to the parish clergy, the five churches each nominated four 'core members' and one 'supporting member' to the PAG. It also has lay ecumenical observers. The PAG's aim was to co-ordinate the work of the Project across the churches. A prerequisite was to create a sense of ownership for UMTTP's vision in the churches so that they could participate fully in the development of its aims and objectives. But the Group also saw itself as providing support to the Team and all the parishes involved, feeding in ideas and, where appropriate, questioning, challenging and most importantly reflecting theologically together.

4.16 The PAG met about three times per year. It received reports and discussed and reflected on the work. At first, the Area Dean chaired it but later a lay member – the Church Warden of Christ Church - took over. She found there were advantages and disadvantages in being outside the core membership of the Project. On the one hand, she could bring greater detachment. On the other, she felt she lacked first hand knowledge.

4.17 At the start, many members of the group found the Project's way of thinking novel and quite complex. Although the 'three circles' were understandable, it was more difficult to unpack what each did and should contain. To some extent, this process of unpacking and finding new dimensions and interconnections was and is necessarily part of UMTTP's evolution. At times, the PAG has had outside speakers relevant to the overall thrust of the Project, for example, from Sure Start and Healthworks, as well as Team members talking about their work.

4.18 One view of the respective roles of the Management Committee and the PAG is that the former has responsibility for external relations whereas the latter focused more on internal issues. Although this may capture some distinction between them, it is nevertheless the case that both groups have been concerned with both external and internal questions although their 'audiences' – diocesan and parish - may be rather different.

### **Additional support**

4.19 As well as the formal management and advisory structures, as a means of focusing on the individual spheres of responsibility, each staff member has developed his/her own support arrangements or networks so that all the work is set within a wider frame of reference.

### **Funding**

4.20 The Project has not entailed additional cost for the diocese or deanery. Rather it uses existing resources allocated to the Deanery more creatively and has also raised new resources through:

- the CUF grant secured in 2000, which enabled the partnership with the local community development team and voluntary sector in the Partnership Building and made possible the appointment of an administrator for two years;
- CUF funding that has gone into various projects within the area;
- partnership with the Church Army;
- fundraising;
- generating income from activities including:
  - theological training provision;
  - acting as consultants to other organisations;
  - helping to set up and support the Community IT Academy, a project for long term unemployed people.

### **Website**

4.21 UMTTP has set up a website with details of the Project and also giving access to reports and publications.

4.22 The next section of the report looks in more detail at UMTTP's approach and portfolio of activities.

## PART II. THE PROJECT STRANDS

*Richard Sennett<sup>12</sup> tells how St Isidore of Seville (ca 560-636) traced the word city to its different sources. One is urbs, the stones of a city, laid for practical purposes such as shelter and commerce. The other root is civitas, about the emotions, rituals and convictions that take shape in a city. Surely the connections between these have to be remade in every age?<sup>13</sup>*

*Part of the subversive character of the Church is to continue reshaping itself in order to show society its true life, through making creative connections between the worlds of work, home and faith. This calls for the reconstruction of ecclesiology in such a way that it can draw into dynamic interaction worship, spirituality, the building up of a faith community and an engagement with the world with the expectation of calling out one another in love to be what God intends.<sup>14</sup>*

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*“Faith communities are a distinctive part of the voluntary and community sector. To realise their potential contribution to renewal and social inclusion is a challenging agenda both for faith communities and other stakeholders.”<sup>15</sup>*

*Economic regeneration can have a variety of effects: it can enable new social regeneration to occur, or it can damage existing communities and thus require new injections of social regeneration . . . The Church’s role here is surely to encourage the kind of economic regeneration that might promote social regeneration, and then to pursue a social regeneration agenda with all the partners it can find.<sup>16</sup>*

5.1 Jeremy Clark-King is the staff member responsible for the community engagement strand of UMTP. As Vicar of St Anthony’s, his own parish of 8,000-9,000 people spans the southern parts of two of Newcastle’s most deprived wards and in Spring 2000 the area was designated as one of the first *Going for Growth* areas in the city.

5.2 The community engagement aims are:

- “to create a setting where local people, Church and non-Church, can share what they have learnt about discovering God in the East End of Newcastle with each other and with people who come to learn;
- that those who come in and those who are already there learn from each other;
- that together, we can seek justice in the regeneration of our City, Church and country.”

5.3 The objectives are:

- “to co-ordinate the church’s involvement in regeneration initiatives across the Byker/Walker basin;
- to establish partnerships with local agencies and projects;
- to establish partnerships with local community groups;
- to increase the capacity of local residents for participation in the development of the local area;
- to draw local people into the project’s processes of action and reflection;
- to reflect theologically on community engagement;
- to share the Project’s methodology and outcomes with the wider community and church.”

5.4 There were also some principles of community engagement underpinning the approach:

- “start where we are – not where anyone else would want us to start;
- get away from the ‘goldfish bowl’;
- hold the tension between the parish and the project;
- hold the tension between the local and the global.”

5.5 Various aspects needed to be combined within this strand of work. First, it was important to co-ordinate the work of the Church across the Byker/Walker Basin and have structures in place to provide an overview of the East End so that gaps in the church’s coverage could be identified. This entailed developing relationships on various fronts:

- Good working relationships were built with other churches and, in particular, with the Methodist Community Development Worker (CDW).

- It was also necessary to form links with other organisations spanning the area and connect the work of the Church with the multitude of projects (see Box 5.1 for existing projects with Church investment) and regeneration schemes coming under the broad heading of social inclusion that were taking place in the area.
- Another critical set of linkages that had to be made was with local authority staff especially from the Community and Housing Directorate which, in 2001, was reaching the end of a restructuring exercise. Newcastle City Council was moving towards area management supported by area committees and the 'Outer East Area' coverage coincided with that of both the East End Partnership and UMTF.

**Box 5.1 Projects with considerable Church/CUF investment:**

- Greater Walker Community Trust (the elderly);
- Byker Advice and Information Project (all East End residents);
- Kids Kabin (primary school age children);
- Walker Open Learning and Fitness (training);
- John Boste Youth Centre (teenagers);
- Ouseburn Partnership (environmental and heritage involvement);
- East End Community Health Project (vulnerable of all ages).

**Regeneration**

5.6 However, it was not solely a matter of creating or strengthening operational links. UMTF wanted to have a strategic role; that is, that its intervention should influence the way in which policy makers, practitioners and residents alike came together to shape the local quality of life and the future development of the area. This meant making connections with key organisations such as the East End Partnership, Ouseburn Partnership and Healthworks East (Box 5.2). Individuals from the churches are represented in all of these.

**Box 5.2: Healthworks East**

Healthworks is a healthy living network made up of local residents, community groups and local workers which aims to tackle inequalities in health by supporting the development and delivery of local solutions to local problems. Funded through what was the New Opportunities Fund, Healthworks gives grants to local groups for healthy living activities (exercise; food and diet; drama and arts; complementary therapies; health information and events; support groups), works with communities to build their capacity to deliver healthy living activities and works within communities to research needs and develop responses to those needs.

5.7 Another important sphere for strategic engagement was in relation to the City Council's *Going for Growth* strategy. The strategy was controversial from the outset as much because of the weak consultation processes around its implementation as for the content of the strategy. Cities nowadays are generally trying to balance dual goals - economic competitiveness and social cohesion that, although arguably inseparable, do not necessarily sit easily together. The overall tone of the strategy conveyed a property-led approach and seemed to stress the competitive agenda more than inclusiveness. It therefore raised concerns in communities like Walker and Byker. The strategy continued to be a thorn in the

side of the Council and became a major electioneering topic in the June 2004 local elections when the Liberal Democrats overturned the large majority of the Labour administration. By then, however, much of the aggressive marketing around *Going for Growth* had been considerably tempered and it had to be seen alongside *The Newcastle Plan*, the first Community Strategy for the city, and the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

5.8 The *Going for Growth* Masterplan for the East End of the city was published in June 2000. It included proposals for far-reaching changes that, although they included actions such as improving training and job opportunities for local people, seemed to local people to focus more upon changing the nature of their communities, especially in Walker through the provision of luxury accommodation along the riverside. It talked about reviewing unpopular housing and the need for demolition which, given the number of voids, may have been necessary but which aroused much local anxiety particularly when put in the context of a very complex and mystifying overall plan. The East End Partnership had a number of meetings to inform people and solicit views but without feeling confident that Newcastle Council was taking any notice.

5.9 UMTF was also able to play a constructive part in extending the consultation process by organising events at which individuals could learn more about the plans and the possible implications for them personally and the churches could think further about what they might mean for parish life. A consultation about Walker Riverside facilitated by the New Economics Foundation was helpful for local people. At the time it generated some resentment amongst local councillors although later it was cited as a model of good practice. Jeremy was seen as having a very high profile as an advocate “and the only one making sense to local people”<sup>17</sup>.

### **Community development**

5.10 Community development has had a very chequered history on Newcastle. Much of it was led by the City Council which kept projects on a tight rein. In a reorganisation of Council structures, community development workers were put into the Housing Directorate. Not only did housing managers not necessarily understand or empathise with community development but also this was the Directorate responsible for *Going for Growth*. In addition, there were clearly some tensions between the attitudes of longstanding councillors and the expectations about community empowerment built into current policy initiatives.

5.11 This was the context in which the NCC community development team based in the Partnership Building had to operate. Early on, this Community Development Project had a Steering Group on which Peter Robinson served. Later the Council decided there was no need for a Steering Group although the CDWs themselves thought it had a valuable role in addressing issues such as workload and succession strategies and bringing in external perspectives on the project.

5.12 The CD Project found a strong community spirit in the area and a considerable number of organisations that could play an active part in regeneration. On the other hand, there were also gaps in specific geographic areas and for some interest groups. The CD staff had to balance their ‘bread and butter’ community development work with focusing on the Riverside Project, including the engagement of those people who were not represented through community groups. Groups also realised that they needed to band together to have the necessary muscle. As a result they formed an umbrella group, Walker and Riverside Community Network. The Network was able to play a role in the Walker Riverside masterplanning exercise undertaken by the Places for People Group for a £300 million regeneration project.

5.13 A lot of Jeremy Clark-King's time went into the Riverside Development Project and he was able to exercise considerable influence to ensure the involvement of local people. He was influential in the choice of Places for People. As a not-for-profit consortium experienced in this type of work, they were able to bind in a people-focused dimension to what might otherwise have been a very developer-led, physical project. He was also able to enhance the Community Network's participation in a number of ways by:

- giving general support and sharing concerns;
- providing links with a wider range of local people;
- identifying issues in a way that helped the network develop its own independent identity, for example, anticipating the danger of its being reduced to rubber stamping decisions made elsewhere;
- being in a position to raise certain issues which were difficult for the CDWs because they were Council employees.

#### **East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum**

5.14 If UMTP was able to contribute to the more effective communication of regeneration plans to local people, helping to build the local voluntary and community sector infrastructure was also seen as vital within the Community Engagement strand in order to help to increase local capacity to respond to such developments and articulate local views. An important vehicle for this was the East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (EECVSF) formed by the East End Partnership and in which Jeremy Clark-King played a major part. He was the Bishop's representative on the East End Partnership and fulfilled the role of Vice-Chair for the voluntary sector.

5.15 The community infrastructure in the East End had been heavily tied into the Council's area committee structure. The East End Partnership had four community representatives on the Board, one for each ward, who were elected through the consultative sub-committees of ward committees. In other words, the individuals were only in that position because they had the support of councillors. The advent of the Forum had the potential to bring a radical change in the dynamics. First, it could marshal the small and hitherto disparate voluntary sector and secondly it could "exert a massive influence over the community and help people to express themselves in ways not previously envisaged"<sup>18</sup>. Voluntary and community sector players could see that the establishment of the Forum was likely to arouse some suspicions within the Council.

5.16 The churches had a fundamental role in relation to the Forum partly arising from their strong and historic community links and partly because they have an independent platform from which to voice community views and they can demonstrate an integrity that is difficult to challenge. Apart from his own skills and commitment, this put Jeremy in a good position to take a lead. However, his role also put him squarely in the firing line for councillors and other organisations in the city that had reservations about the advent of the Forum and its role in providing a new voice for the local community,

5.17 The Forum has over 120 member groups. It has had a mixed history but has certainly been successful in gaining influence and exercising this to the benefit of local people. Turnover in the Forum's Steering Group/Executive and the distractions of other parallel initiatives meant that there were peaks and troughs in its activity and times when its continuing development stalled a little. There have also been issues about financial viability. The Forum really needed a dedicated member of staff and an assured existence after the formal end of the East End Partnership but seeking resources for these was a time-

consuming and ultimately frustrating process. As it is, the Forum has been heavily reliant on its Executive and the Forum itself has met less often than it might have done.

5.18 Jeremy had an additional responsibility. He held a School for Social Entrepreneurs Millennium Award on behalf of the Forum with a remit to develop a business plan and explore options for turning it into a sustainable enterprise. Although it did serve to underline the need for income generation and possibly introduced a more entrepreneurial approach, such a strong agenda around social enterprise was perhaps pursued rather at the expense of local development. The focus on getting a building and the associated (unsuccessful) funding bids certainly took time away from developing activities for members. One potential alternative future option is to amalgamate the Forum with Healthworks, which would probably lead to a switch of emphasis towards building membership and working with member groups.

5.19 However, the extent to which EECVSF has become an accepted part of the local institutional landscape and its role and standing accepted by others is illustrated by its seat on the Walker Riverside Partnership Board.

### **Regeneration Forum**

5.20 One of the external developments that then consumed time and attention was the formation of the city's Regeneration Forum. Jeremy established close links with this so that EECVSF is now seen as the local partner. Similarly, although there has been less involvement with the city-wide Community Empowerment Network, this would also see EECVSF as a legitimate local network through which to work.

5.21 The Newcastle Regeneration Forum became a significant area of activity for Jeremy. The Forum is run by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service and has a membership of over 200 voluntary groups from across the city and with interests in the range of concerns and policy areas encompassed by regeneration. Jeremy served one term as Vice-Chair of the Forum's Executive, which also meant that his influence extended to the Newcastle Local Strategic Partnership.

### **A continuing community voice**

5.22 Outside observers saw UMTF having huge respect and trust amongst local people especially because the staff were seen to stand up for them. This advocacy role did not create any ripples as long as local councillors agreed with what was being said but when there was controversy, this could lead not only to the views being disputed but also questioning about the role played.

5.23 The June 2004 local elections brought a change in Council control from Labour to Liberal Democrat, although Labour councillors were returned again in the UMTF area. This again changed the dynamics of relationships because local councillors are no longer part of the controlling group. It is rather too early to say yet how this will affect the wider local governance arrangements.

## 6. CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

*Perhaps in the old days, when local society was a monochrome and hierarchical structure, there was a coherent community and the Church of England could claim to be at the heart of it, if only because it was identified with the upper echelons of the structure. Now this pattern of social relationships has been broken, the only option seems to be to live within the fragments.<sup>19</sup>*

*The wideness of God's mercy and the generosity of God's welcome must frame our thinking about limits and boundaries. God's kindness continually challenges us to reconsider our commitments. Jesus and the stranger stand outside, asking our communities to enlarge their borders and to share their resources. As we welcome the poor, the stranger, the marginal person, they help us to remember that each of us is an alien and a stranger, welcome only by God's generous invitation. The practice of hospitality challenges the boundaries of a community while it simultaneously depends on that community's identity to make a space that nourishes life.<sup>20</sup>*

6.1 John Sadler came to the UMTTP to lead the church development strand of work with a background of urban parish ministry including a sabbatical reflecting upon 'new ways of being church'. He had also had recent private sector experience that not only taught him a lot about management but also brought new perspectives about visioning and the significance of risk taking.

6.2 The aim of this strand of work is to work with existing groups of Christians as they dream of what it means to be church and then to support, encourage and enable them as they begin to grow. In some ways, this is the most challenging (threatening?) dimension of the Project for the local congregations because, although it can be and has been supportive of them, it is also designed to question and disturb habitual and taken-for-granted ways of thinking. It therefore required a sensitive balance both between working alongside people to build their confidence and skills to take on lay ministry and being a *provocateur* and between fostering the fellowship within the churches and developing their wider community mission and ministry. Apart from John taking up his post later than the other two staff, this area of work needed time to take root.

6.3 Church Development was to involve aspects such as growing new church members and nurturing faith and discipleship and relation of these to the visible shape of the church's life. Issues include:

- the place of evangelism, that is, the constant re-orientation of church's life around its baptismal character;
- different models of being church – an opportunity for practical experiment in new ecclesial modes;
- regional/national networking with others developing new ways of being church in an urban context;
- reflection on different possible relationships between the church's community engagement and the life of faith in the worshipping congregation;
- developing the use of church buildings.

6.4 The objectives are to:

- establish a process of consultation and reflection in order to develop a dream;
- implement the process;
- prepare for the implementation of the dream (that is, planning the way forward);
- support the growing capacity of Christian communities so that skills and self-confidence are developed and the vocation of the community is identified and lived out;
- enable individuals to discover the gifts already within them and apply them to the outworking of the dream;
- reflect theologically on the whole area of Church Development.

6.5 The Church Development process:

- starts from theology;
- leads to realising a vision;
- leading onto ways to, and structures for, achieving the vision;
- which inevitably leads to risk taking; and
- all of these are expressed in liturgy.

6.6 Another way of expressing John's work is that it has three strands:

- working with the church communities to discover what it means to be church;
- thinking about church buildings;
- enabling the whole community to live an abundant life.

### **Methods of working**

6.7 John has had various ways of working alongside congregations:

- visioning exercises
- contextual bible study
- processes and actions associated with the development schemes;
- surveys of community needs.

6.8 If one major thrust of his work has been to work closely with church members, another has been to deal with some of the practicalities of determining the feasibility of different schemes, enabling congregations to find their way through proposals and tender documents, managing their planning and implementation, relieving church members of the burden of tasks such as applying for planning permission and getting to grips with funding applications. This has also involved him in working closely alongside partners.

6.9 There have been projects at all four core member churches in the Project area. Their stories show that 'church development' has been stimulated by very different factors in each one:

- sometimes by the 'threats' of declining numbers, financial problems or crumbling buildings;
- sometimes by 'opportunities' to extend the church's outreach and collaboration with community partners;
- sometimes by the challenges posed by the prospect of a local population likely to grow and have a wider social profile as a result of new housing in the area.

6.10 As a consequence, the journeys that have been taken by the local congregations and the ways that Church Development has been expressed in each parish have also been very different as the following brief descriptions indicate.

### **St Michael's Church**

6.11 St Michael's Church has a lofty position looking out over the River Tyne. Now surrounded by the Byker Wall and Estate, it is one of the few buildings left untouched during the redevelopment of Byker during the 1970s. By the late 1990s, the building was far too large for the congregation and had major structural problems.

6.12 The starting point was to think through and articulate the vision that the members had for their church (Box 6.1). When this was done, the next question was how the vision could be realised. In considering the future of the building, the first line of enquiry was to look at possibilities for shared use. There was a potential scheme to have housing for vulnerable people but this fell through prior to any feasibility study because the support that would have been necessary from the City Council was not forthcoming. The Council wanted instead to pursue a larger scale site assembly.

6.13 After the decision to cease worshipping in the church, a variety of options were explored for using the whole site, not just the buildings, in a flagship project for Byker. There was considerable consultation locally and in the city using consultants deploying a community development model of consultation. Ninety percent of the £18,000 costs came from SRB 6 and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Church put in the remainder.

**Box 6.1: Vision of St Michael with St Lawrence, Byker** from a series of meetings of the whole congregation in early 2002

*The Vision of our church is to be a loved, worshipping and faithful community, courageous enough to make known the already present love of God in Byker and St Peter's Basin communities, through a way of being that is accessible to all and offers*

- *welcome*
- *love*
- *openness to community needs*
- *and the tug that leads to changed lives.*

6.14 There was then the question of where the congregation should go. John Sadler identified a disused shop that, with the help of Newcastle City Council, the PCC agreed should be the new premises for what became the St Michael's Centre at Raby Cross in the centre of the Byker redevelopment. This is not only the new and more accessibly located base for the church but also a community facility open four days a week. The shop front opens out onto a square and the large windows make the worship fully visible to passers-by.

6.15 Members of the local community are invited to drop in for a drink and chat or to use the computer. The congregation have an after-school club one afternoon per week. Members of St Michael's and other churches also help the Roman Catholic St Cuthbert's Care drop-in for asylum seekers in the Centre.

6.16 There was some resentment amongst the congregation that St Michael's did not get an half-time Vicar but they came to terms with their position and appreciated John's and Peter's commitment. Their contributions were in a sense formalised at the beginning of John's

appointment in November 2001 when Peter became Priest-in-Charge and then in November 2002 when John began to work from the St Michael's Centre.

6.17 Following the consultation and feasibility study about the future of the St Michael's Mount site, it was evident that "there was strong local support for the continued presence of a worshipping community on the site, for the building to be made available for a wider range of uses and the potential of the site for re-development, with its splendid and exciting views over the quayside was revealed"<sup>21</sup>. The consultants advised the establishment of a partnership group with a large representation from the local community to take things forward. The working title for the project, *Byker to the World and the World to Byker*, reflects the more ethnically and religiously diverse composition of the present day Byker. A process was established for setting up St Michael's Partnership (later named 'Aspire'), a development trust independent of, but to work alongside, the PCC to stimulate building work on the site to serve the Byker community. One indication of the extent to which people are behind this development is that eighteen people stood for election onto the management Committee.

6.18 In the autumn of 2003 led by Captain Steve Dixon, a new group for children aged 8 to 12 years, The Crew, was started in order to focus the work with young children in a way that the drop-in on the four days a week after school was not able to do. It meets in St Michael's Centre and one of the aims is to integrate children through The Crew into the worshipping life of the wider church community. The experience of running The Crew has fed into the learning being gained in the 'Creating a Sustainable Church' project (see 6.33 below).

### **St Silas'**

6.19 St Silas' Church is near the bottom of Shields Road in a location that, in the aftermath of redevelopment, is in the middle of a car park, separated from Shields Road by derelict shops and cut off from the Byker Estate by a dual carriageway and the metro line. The last Vicar left in the middle 2001. The congregation is small and mainly elderly, half living inside and half outside the parish. John Sadler began working with the congregation looking at questions such as what were the implications of the changes in the area for the church and what would be the position in five years time. The thinking proceeded along three main avenues: about the church's mission to its community, about the buildings and about the possibility of acquiring a new Vicar.

6.20 First, this was the start of a period of creative thinking about the church's role in the area and about focusing more on weekday activities. In relation to the church buildings, Byker Bridge Housing Association was interested in taking over the hall to demolish it in order to build sheltered housing and in using part of the church for its own offices. The partnership with Byker Bridge added a new dimension to the congregation's local ministry through involvement with, and giving to, the Housing Association's work with the vulnerable and homeless.

6.21 Secondly, the building plan included developing a larger entrance area to accommodate a crèche and a quiet room. For the church, the re-ordered premises provide accessible space for worship, a large multi-purpose hall and a modern kitchen and toilets. The refurbishment not only gives more suitable accommodation for the church but also makes available new community facilities so that partnerships could be forged with groups such as Age Concern and the Woodcraft Folk.

6.22 Thirdly, John worked with one of the Church Wardens to prepare a parish profile with a view to pressing for a new clergy appointment. As a result of all these deliberations, the

Bishop approved a job description for a part-time Parish Priest who would also be linked with UMTF participating in networks in and around Shields Road and working on church development with John, in particular to facilitate a Local Ministry Team. Revd Sue Faulkner was appointed to this post in May 2003.

6.23 Paving the way to take forward the scheme with Byker Bridge Housing required making the church redundant and getting this done in time to meet the deadline for drawing down Housing Corporation funds. The development process went reasonably smoothly. However, the fact that it had to be very business-like caused some tensions between Byker Bridge Housing and the PCC partly because of contrasting styles of working and partly due to the fact that there were different understandings of their respective roles in raising the balance of £760,000 to match the church's contribution of £75,000. Sue Faulkner was in post by this time and was rather caught between the two sides, needing to nurture her own relationship with the PCC whilst also, supported by John Sadler, recognising the realities of the funding position and not wanting to jeopardise the scheme.

### **St Martin's Church**

6.24 St Martin's Church, Byker was built in the 1930s as a church hall. Seventy years later, it was still very centrally situated and church members could see the potential for embedding the life of the church better in the local neighbourhood and, by making better use of the building, developing a much deeper partnership with the wider community.

6.25 St Martin's already had a mission statement and John worked with members of the congregation to take this further. They looked at a ward profile which, together with a community consultation at the end of 2003, indicated a range of concerns. Although most were issues to do with children and young people, there were others: for example, the need for a meeting place for older people for informal and formal activities.

6.26 At the same time, the local Sure Start partnership (see Box 6.2) was realising that there was a lack of support networks in the area for parents with children under four years old, was starting to think about how these needs could be met and was able to bring some resources.

#### **Box 6.2: Sure Start**

Sure Start is a Government programme which aims to achieve better outcomes for children, parents and communities by:

- increasing the availability of childcare for all children
- improving health, education and emotional development for young children
- supporting parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment.

Sure Start Newcastle East covers parts of the Byker, Monkchester and Walker wards in the east end of the city and will reach 1,095 children under the age of 4. Local parents are key partners in assessing need, deciding what should be provided and in delivering and monitoring the programme. Its activities include a home visiting scheme by the health team to reach all families with children under the age of 4 in the area; a 'be-friendly' scheme so that local parents can support each other in a more structured way; outreach to ethnic minority groups; work with Dads. Sure Start Fossway is the neighbouring partnership (reaching 500 children) and includes the site of St Martin's.

6.27 St Martin's Partnership - *Children, Church and Community working together in partnership* - was formally constituted in April 2004. It comprises representatives from Sure

Start, Barnardos, members of St Martin's Church, parents of young and older children, other local people representing local residents' associations and representatives of the health and education sectors, including adult education. John Sadler chairs the Partnership.

6.28 The plan at St Martin's is to create a 'Community Place' which will be a Children's Centre, a Church and a place for the whole community to use:

- for the support of young children and their families including a nursery for 0-4s;
- with the church community continuing to meet there and involved in all that is going on;
- to include facilities for teenagers and older people alike – a meeting place, a place for meals, a place for children's and youth activities, a place for evening classes, a place used as a 'contact centre' for parents estranged from their children, a place concerned about the health and well-being of the community.

6.29 The current building has been adapted to house children's activities run by Sure Start and local community activities using the upstairs hall and a redecorated area at the back of the church as well as Church worship and church-related activities. The goal is to put together a funding package that will enable the present building to be demolished and replaced by a purpose built, multi-use centre to be known as St Martin's Centre. Its integrated design would reflect the emphasis on partnership.

### **St Anthony's**

6.30 St Anthony's faced the prospect of radical changes in the parish over the next few years, with plans for 2,500 houses, a new school and new shops. The lives of those remaining there would be considerably affected and there would be many new people moving in. This prompted church members to take a new look at the church and its mission.

6.31 John Sadler worked with them using a DIY Kit for Estates Ministry and Outreach:

*The Kit starts where we are comfortable and with what we know and takes us into new ways of looking at our faith, worship and our life together. We have seen that for a church to be healthy it needs to have worship, fellowship and outreach. The outreach means that we have to be confident in our faith, welcoming in our worship and caring to our neighbours.<sup>22</sup>*

6.32 Although this was a process of working alongside the congregation not entailing physical alterations or outside negotiations, it was significant that, in addition to his facilitation skills, John could bring dimensions to it that would not have been possible for Jeremy. He could come as an independent outsider to ask more challenging questions than the Vicar could easily have done to his own church members, but also it meant that Jeremy was at one with the congregation in being challenged.

### **Creating a Sustainable Church Project**

6.33 In July 2003, the Creating a Sustainable Church project was initiated using St Michael's Centre as a base. Captain Steve Dixon of the Church Army was appointed and began to live on the Byker Estate with his family. The project did not succeed in obtaining CUF funding. However, St Michael's PCC, UMTF and the Church Army worked together and agreed a funding package, with the Church Army making a substantial salary contribution, and sought supplementary funding. John Sadler manages the project as part of the Church Development role of UMTF and Steve Dixon reports to him although Peter Robinson as priest in charge of St Michael's oversees Steve's training and formation. Steve also works closely with Sue Faulkner on local ministry matters across the Byker parishes.

6.34 The central idea is to investigate the theme of church sustainability in urban areas, using St Michael's Centre as a 'seed bed' in which to learn good practice lessons that could be transferred to adjacent parishes. The Crew has not only been important in this exploration (see 6.18 above), but also a healthy eating lunch-time club called 'Food for Life' has been set up. Key themes are the meanings of the terms 'project', 'mission', 'ministry' and 'church' itself – all in the context of working towards sustainability. Sustainability is a concept that has environmental, community and financial implications and focuses the sharp breakdown of the traditional parish model at St Michael's as well as providing an overall theme for future development. It is a three year project with a possible two year extension (until 2008).

6.35 In July 2004, John Sadler and Steve Dixon shared some of their provisional findings with the Urban Theology seminar at the Urban Theology Unit on Sheffield. The Sustainable Church Project provides a practical base for Steve Dixon's MA dissertation at the Wilson Carlile College and there will be a report at the end of the three years.

### **CITA Project**

6.36 John devised an IT project in collaboration with a local person running an employment project for computer technicians. It arose out of the twin concerns about:

- the low levels of computer literacy in the congregations reflecting the local level in the area generally, and
- the higher than average unemployment levels in the Riverside areas of the city.

6.37 The project comprised:

- training long term unemployed people as hardware technicians leading them to permanent jobs;
- supplying refurbished computers to low income groups;
- providing much needed IT support for voluntary sector and community groups throughout Newcastle.

6.38 It required about £200,000 for the first two years, half of which was sought from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Included Communities Fund and employment services - to be matched by European Social Fund money. Five of the first six trainees (who finished in October 2004) moved straight into full-time employment or into setting up their own business. The size of the next intake was increased to eight and the training time shortened, which has effectively increased CITA's output by 150% per annum. John receives a consultancy fee for the time he spends on this project and this supports the funding of UMTF.

### **Co-worker on Local Ministry**

6.39 Sue Faulkner's post combines the role of Priest in Charge at St Silas with responsibility for the initiation and growth of urban ministry in the UMTF parishes. Her particular focus is on developing local persons' ministries:

- leading the investigation of the models of ministry that local Christian communities require also appropriate for the local regeneration context ;
- making proposals about the extent and pattern of local ministry in the Byker and Walker parishes;

- leading the establishment of local ministry teams.

6.40 This work is at a very early stage partly because the appointment is so recent but, in any case, this work needs to be dovetailed with the other developments in each of the churches and therefore needs to proceed at a measured pace.

6.41 John has also organised some activities with and for Churches Together in Byker and Walker. These include:

- Advent celebrations;
- two well supported, contextual Bible study Lent courses;
- a Low Sunday party that brought the Lent groups and asylum seekers together.

### ***A local church is unavoidably part of its own context***<sup>23</sup>

6.42 All these stories of church development illustrate how closely this area of work is integrated with the other Project strands. John brought a community development approach. One of the interviewees from a community organisation wished there were more opportunities to work with him “because he is so much on our wavelength”. Working on social audits with church members provided new insights by unpacking the meaning of social and economic change in personal terms and putting a human face on the language of urban trends.

6.43 Against this background, the development of ecclesial strategies is an essential counterpart to urban theology as an element in the theological training and education strand, which is the subject of the next chapter.

## **7. THEOLOGICAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

*Christian hope is never naïve wishful thinking, it always takes the mess seriously.*<sup>24</sup>

*The question must be faced again and again, ‘What is the form of Christ in the world? Christian theology and practice is always earthed in the particulars of time and place.’*<sup>25</sup>

*In the latter half of the twentieth century there was an evident upsurge of activity and interest in urban mission. It has to be admitted, however, that sometimes we suffered from having more passion than analysis and understanding, and a great deal of charismatic urban activity turned out in retrospect to be ineffectual at a sustainable and deeper level. We were sometimes eaten alive by the powers that be, vastly underestimating the urban complexity by which we were confronted.*<sup>26</sup>

7.1 Peter Robinson, Director of UMT, leads the Theological Training and Education dimension of the Project. He was a Programme Tutor on the MA in Applied Theology at Newcastle University and taught a module on the theology and practice of social and economic regeneration.

7.2 The aim of this strand is to offer learning processes of theological reflection and training in the context of social and economic regeneration thereby enabling the construction and doing of a local theology.

7.3 The objectives are to:

- develop resources for theological education in the urban setting in East Newcastle and beyond;
- draw lay persons into the theological training of others, enabling them to become co-trainers;
- link the work of UMTP to the emerging structures of theological education in the Anglican setting and beyond;
- create a learning and reflective community on social and economic regeneration issues;
- enable rigorous theological reflection on UMTP's local theology;
- share the theological outcomes with the wider church;
- learn from those who visit to share in our experience.

7.4 As the 2003 Annual Report stated, it was inevitable that the theological training and education area would develop more slowly than the others because "the local church's engagement with the processes of social and economic regeneration, the building of new forms of church presence and the interaction between the two activities form the context in which theological training takes place"<sup>27</sup>.

7.5 The 'first act' of training was seen to be the training of local persons, within congregations and wider community. "The ethos desired by the Project is that the training and education of visiting students will emerge naturally from the development of the life of the local churches . . . engaged in the local community, involved with the development of its corporate life and reflecting critically upon it. The hope is that the 'learning communities' will begin to share their learning with others who are subsequently drawn in – the 'second act'."<sup>28</sup>

7.6 This was the vision. The 'first act' would provide the essential foundation for the second and the 'second act' would be a stimulus and catalyst for the first. Encompassing the training of lay people for informal lay ministry and the education of congregations, it would explore the meaning of 'spiritual regeneration' for corporate and individual lives.

7.7 The methods were to develop education and training packages and a variety of delivery methods and to work in partnership with and support existing Diocesan advisors. The range of training outreach beyond the Project churches has extended to graduate and postgraduate ordinand training, reader training, the training of ordained local ministers, trainee Industrial Chaplains and third year theology undergraduates from Durham University on the social ethics course seeking insights into social exclusion.

### **Cranmer Hall**

7.8 After initial involvement at Newcastle University, Peter Robinson moved to Cranmer Hall, University of Durham to teach on first degree courses and to lead a module on the MA in Theology and Ministry, "Theology in the City: Regeneration in the Urban Context". The reason for its introduction is stated as:

*This module responds to an increase in interest from those in ordained and lay ministries who are wanting both to reflect on the complexities of the urban context*

*and to respond pastorally to government regeneration policy. It complements modules that relate justice to globalisation and the situation of the poor and enhances the justice route through the MA. It anticipates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Faith in the City (1985). The increasing emphasis on regional government, the bid for City of Culture 2008 by Gateshead and Newcastle and the policies and practices of regeneration in Newcastle City indicate a key local stimulus for the themes the module will cover.*

7.9 The aim is to:

*introduce students to social and economic issues that are relevant to the English urban context, to analyse these through a critical appropriation of government regeneration policy (national, regional and local) and, with this foundation, to enable theological reflection that leads to a practical theology and ethic for the local Christian church.*

7.10 Newcastle East End provides the specific context for the course and UMTF resources support its delivery. In addition to student visits to projects in the East End, the detailed data about the area and insights drawn from experience there inform and illustrate the lecture material.

7.11 Peter is noted for the academic rigour that he brings to his contribution, drawing on a wide range of literature about city trends and the evolving nature of urban life as well as policy documents, theological perspectives and practical experience. He is able to exploit his involvement in Byker at two levels: through his familiarity with regeneration strategies and how they work arising from his local engagement and through his work as a parish priest.

7.12 Students from the Pastoral Studies Unit have spent two weeks in Byker/Walker in successive years. Work with the students over the two years underlined that, for the engagement in neighbourhood regeneration to make sense to them and connect with their own starting points, it had to be earthed clearly in parochial ministry. This was what related to their initial driving motivation. Their interest tended to be primarily in the visible church. For the first set of students, UMTF may have seemed rather esoteric. It was different for the second cohort. First, Peter adapted the way he presented the course to take better account of where the students were coming from and their presuppositions about local ministry. Second, by then developments in the area had moved on. Witnessing the follow up to the closure of St Michael's, the use of shop premises for the church and then joining in worship was very exciting for the students.

7.13 It made tangible for them the Project's message that 'here are the realities we have to take seriously and we can only do theology effectively if we understand them'. The realities are messy. In addition to the social and economic factors are the issues around tiny congregations, the frequently peripheral place of the church in the eyes of most residents, and the need for partnership with a range of people and organisations. The experience of UMTF indicates that "proclaiming the Gospel may be more problematic than they think"<sup>29</sup>. At the same time, it presented a broader view that might be more likely to demonstrate to ordinands the challenge – in the best sense – of areas like Byker that would encourage them to seek to serve in an urban parish.

7.14 A notable change has taken place in the nature of lay participation in successive student and other visits to UMTF. At first, members of the congregations were keen to act

as hosts to the visitors but only saw themselves acting in a 'tea-making' capacity. This is no longer the case partly because they have grown in confidence but also because, as a result of the developments in the churches, they now have a story to tell about the various journeys they have been on.

### **New developments**

7.15 Peter is now presenting a module on Urban Theology within the Diocesan *Learning for Ministry* training for Readers and Ordained Local Ministers. This comprises 13 evening sessions in UMTTP's offices with additional visits to churches and projects elsewhere. The participants' work is assessed on the basis of a 3,000 word essay and an urban theology case study. Though only two people have taken it so far, the fact that they are already working in the Diocese brings a new and interesting dimension. There is also the prospect of a member of St Silas Church taking reader training, which would bring it even closer to home and provide the scope for this parishioner to take part in delivering the module.

7.16 There are also opportunities opening up to establish training links more broadly. Peter chairs the Diocesan Theological Education Task Group, which is seeking to shape training within the Diocese to fit with the Regional Training Partnership that is part of new regional structures for theological education<sup>30</sup>. An important development here will be the growth of the 'education for discipleship' course as a strategic element of this fit. One of the aims of the work is inclusivity across all types of parish and the presence of UMTTP staff on this new Task Group will benefit both the diocese and UMTTP's work.

### **Wider networks and dissemination**

7.17 In addition to direct training opportunities, the UMTTP team has used a variety of means to put the Project into a wider arena so that others can learn from and reflect on it and so that they are themselves open to dialogue, feedback, constructive criticism and different perceptions and insights. This has happened through:

- Articles, book reviews and other publications, for example in *Urban Bulletin* and *IMAgenda*. Peter Robinson also edited an edition of *Anvil* in which his editorial both reflected and implicitly drew upon his ministry in Byker and the UMTTP approach.
- Conference papers and presentations, for example, in addition to the Project presentation at a CUF Conference and to Diocesan Synod, Peter Robinson and Jeremy Clark-King spoke at Norwich Cathedral Institute on "Regeneration and Reconciliation: Is there still a role for the Church?" in 2001.
- Participation in networks seminars and networks bringing together academics and practitioners with an interest in urban ministry, for example through the William Temple Foundation and the Estates Church Network.
- Bringing speakers to Newcastle, such as Ken Leech, Laurie Green, John Atherton, Ann Morisy and Philip Sheldrake, as part of the Local Theology Series supported by the Urban Theology Network.

7.18 The theological education dimension of the project, the interest UMTTP has evoked, the dissemination activities and the deliberate attempt to network widely with others with similar interests have all helped towards a culture of reflection in UMTTP. There are, of course, limiting factors. The breadth of the project and wide range of issues it raises will inevitably outstrip the capacity to do them justice. There will always be a tension between the pressures of 'doing' – getting on with the activity and trying to make a difference – and taking

time to review progress and reflect on practice. There is a danger of having too many visitors coming as spectators so that, on the one hand, local people start to feel that they are in a goldfish bowl and, on the other, the tale becomes too pat. However, the Management Group and the Team are well aware of these dangers and guard against them both through retaining an ethos of openness and challenge within the project and through sustaining the balance and integration of all the strands of activity. The next chapter goes on to look at ways in which these strands overlap and intertwine.

## 8. WEAVING THE STRANDS TOGETHER

*It is in the overlaps between the three areas that one of the novel ways of working occurs.<sup>31</sup>*

### **Making the links**

8.1 This chapter looks at the way the three strands of UMTTP overlap and interlink. This happens because it was meant to happen. The Project was designed to be integrated and the staff meet monthly to safeguard and foster the interrelationships. It also happens because the Team work well together, exploit one another's talents and are not possessive about their individual remits.

8.2 Some of the activities that can be seen as being at the points at which the three circles intersect are:

- in the representation on outside bodies such as the East End Partnership, Healthworks and the Byker Estate Listing Group.
- the work of the Project's volunteer, Barney Palfrey, who lived and worked in Byker for a period when part way through postgraduate theological study. He attended St Michael's Church, helped with the Boys Brigade and attended Bible study meetings as well as being involved with the Asylum Seekers' Befriending project and the Clothing Store at St Anthony of Padua and with Kids Kabin. Part of his role was to help the staff work out a succession strategy for the Volunteer scheme.
- the involvement of Steve Dixon, a Church Army Captain, when he started living and working in the area in July 2003 with some dedicated funding to enable him to work at St Michael's.
- the day conferences held such as the one on *Going for Growth* and others on regeneration held jointly with third year undergraduate urban planners at Durham University with participants from the local authority and the voluntary sector.
- the day training events for trainee Industrial Chaplains focusing on regeneration in the local economy, at which they are taken around several local partnerships; visits that also serve to sustain UMTTP's relationship with them.
- the support to the Community Work Training Consortium that was set up to promote skills in the voluntary sector.

- the support to the East Area Asylum Seekers Support Group (first chaired by Peter Robinson, then by Chris Carroll, the Methodist Lay Worker and now by a lay person). In addition to giving direct help to asylum seekers, this was an important resource for local parishes that were regularly encountering the needs of asylum seekers and required advice about how to respond.

### **A unique position**

8.3 The integration of the different Project strands through their overlapping involvements is also apparent in the extent to which several partners work variously with all of the Team. They see UMTP as being in a fortunate position precisely because team members are driven more by the Project's goals and values than by detailed job descriptions. This means that they can have a more free floating and responsive role. In practice all are seen as being very active in becoming involved in projects and in representing communities.

8.4 UMTP is seen as one of the developmental organisations in the East End. Others with a developmental role see it as a partner not a competitor and there are multiple forms of contact. Chapter 5 discussed the involvement with the EECVS Forum. Another example of the intertwined links is Healthworks. Both Peter and Jeremy have been on the Healthworks Steering Group and the Healthworks Development Officer has been a member of EECVS Forum. Healthworks has a local Community Linkworker on placement at St Martin's and other Linkworkers in various other projects with which UMTP is associated. Through these there has also been contact with John. In a reciprocal way, the Development Officer has taken part in the annual visits by Industrial Missioners to discuss a social model of health with them.

8.5 Partners such as these are of course aware that this is a church-related Project. However, even ones without any religious affiliation do not find this off-putting nor is there any detection of an 'overt ideological overlay' or suspicion that the real motivation is to proselytise. They see the staff having a good understanding of other policy areas and working comfortably within a wider arena. One interviewee said, "if they say something theological, it doesn't jar." Some may see this as a rather backhanded compliment but it also seems to denote a strongly incarnational approach.

### **Speaking the same language**

8.6 Another clear sign of the way the different dimensions of the Project are integrated is resonance between the language of the aims and objectives of each sphere. The church development objectives echo the principles of community engagement and both of these seek to build theological reflection into what they are doing. A common feature of them all is what might be seen as 'earthing' the work. "Start from where we are" is a principle of community engagement. In an article on a key objective of church engagement – that of forming a vision – John Sadler stresses the importance of starting from basics, beginning with a blank sheet of paper, taking nothing for granted. He warns against a process that is imposed on people who then just become passive recipients and against language that sounds impressive but in reality obfuscates and is far removed from the language that they would themselves use or find meaningful. An underpinning goal of the theological education strand is to root reflection in the lived experience of local communities and churches and identify through this the insights relevant to shaping an urban theology for today (and tomorrow).

8.7 In other words, there is first order theological education going on within UMTP which is integral to its approach. This has changed the nature of the community and church engagement. It has ensured that all aspects go beyond story telling to reflection, that they

all have a developmental edge and that in articulating what they are doing, they are allowing UMTTP to be open to challenge in a way that opens the process up to others and extends the dialogue.

8.8 Similarly, the church development would have been different in the absence of the community development strand which provided a more in-depth account of the local context. The community engagement and church development strands together provide some of the raw material for theological reflection which could be made available for case studies, student visits and placements, involving church members and community partners, covering themes such as health and employment or focusing on groups such as children and young people.

8.9 The goal of the theological education and training task was to make use of UMTTP's data and experience to feed into training materials and learn from others visiting the Project. However, it was implicit that this could only happen if rigorous theological endeavour was inherent to the conduct of all aspects of the work. The ability of all the team as practitioners to reflect theologically and the extent to which they take the social sciences so seriously to inform their practical theology are distinguishing marks of the project. As the last chapter stressed, a key issue was the nature of interaction/potential synergy between the activity of theological education and the tasks of community engagement and church development.

### **Signs of empowerment**

8.10 One of the dangers of the Project was that it would rest primarily in the hands of the clergy and that the laity in their churches would remain outside the loop, the recipients of change rather than leading their own transformation. Inevitably, this wider involvement takes time to achieve. It is also likely to start with the few and only gradually permeate the wider church membership. Nevertheless, there are indications that people are feeling more empowered.

8.11 The most obvious way this is happening is through the Church Development processes, which start where participants are, do not put words in their mouth, proceed at their pace and in a consensual manner. Being informed is another means of empowerment: finding out through the Project what is happening in their neighbourhood in a form they can understand and which enables them to respond. Thirdly, the local church members have had the opportunity to be involved in the theological reflection that characterises the Project, meet the students on placement and others visiting the area, talk to them and hear their views and participate in presentations about UMTTP at events such as the CUF Conference in spring 2002 and Newcastle Diocesan Synod in March 2004.

### **Theology in the city**

8.12 UMTTP has fed into numerous policy debates inside and outside the Church in ways that are informed by the totality of the Project not just by single strands. One especially cogent example relates to Newcastle's bid to be European Capital of Culture 2008. Peter Robinson was one of the group leading the Durham and Newcastle Dioceses' proposal for an Inter-Faith Project. His draft paper on the proposal with its theme of making the connections between faith communities and the developing cultural environment is imbued with the UMTTP ethos, for example:

- promoting connections between local faith communities and cultural activities in local communities;
- empowering local church projects to participate in creative ways;

- supporting community groups to make connections between disadvantaged groups and cultural activities;
- exploring links between cultural involvement and local social and economic regeneration;
- theological reflection at all levels in faith communities and beyond on culture as a key category for understanding the relationship between faith and life;
- offering the contribution of small communities that would be at risk of low participation.

8.13 The proposal was accepted as one of fourteen flagship community projects in the bid. Although the bid failed, that need not spell the end of some of the ambitions expressed in the paper. Peter also reflected on the unsuccessful bid in an article for *Urban Bulletin*<sup>32</sup> in a way that could still set an agenda. He identified five issues of practical theology in the contemporary urban context that had surfaced during the process of working on the proposal:

- teasing out “the relationship between the physical renewal of the urban setting and the renewal of communities and even individuals”;
- whether the Church has the theological capacity to think positively about city living;
- whether faith communities are strong enough to turn a ‘doctrine of inclusion’ for deprived communities into the reality of inclusion;
- the challenge of churches and other faith communities working together towards common goals, exploring our common humanity together and reaching agreement on the shape a good city might take.

8.14 These are all issues that arise in microcosm in the UMTF area and the Project provides a model of how they can be addressed in an integrated way.

8.15 The next section of the report focuses on the effectiveness of the approach, its impact and lessons.

## **PART III. IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS**

*Surprisingly, there has been hardly any public debate on what cities are for and who should decide on their futures . . . If cities are for the many, then it is not for a few to legislate their form in advance.<sup>33</sup>*

*The churches' presence is an inclusive one and while many of the working class, post-industrial areas of Tyneside experience the withdrawal of resources and institutions, the church has been and is committed to remain physically present and active. The nature of this presence has meant that its network has shared in the reshaping of the region's social and economic life and the finding of hope for many communities out of the struggle to adjust to new realities.<sup>34</sup>*

## 9. COMMUNITY ROLE

*I have lived in Walker all my life and this is the first time I've heard of the Church involved in community life. This is really exciting. The Open Day for the Churches on 'Going for Growth' was the first time many people understood what was going on.*<sup>35</sup>

*The role of faith groups in community regeneration and renewal is vital.*<sup>36</sup>

### A formative influence

9.1 UMT, especially through Jeremy's work, has had a significant influence on both the local community infrastructure and regeneration policies and practice. It has helped to:

- create structures to enable community organisations to work together, have a co-ordinated voice and support one another;
- establish the importance of the role of the voluntary and community sectors and provide a space for deliberative, participative democracy;
- ensure that, at different levels of decision making, there is representation of "all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug"<sup>37</sup>.

9.2 The Regeneration Manager of the East End Partnership has commented on the contribution of the Church to urban regeneration in the East End which it is worth quoting at length<sup>38</sup>:

*. . . .the churches have occupied a central and fundamental role. Their relationship with local communities has been of enormous benefit and has been utilised to tremendous positive effect within the programme of regeneration. Representatives have been involved in every aspect of the practical running of the programme, individuals holding senior positions at Executive and full Board level. These individuals have been responsible for leadership of the Partnership's very important working groups, indeed its key working groups of Community Support and Education, Employment and Training. Furthermore in any collaborative venture or partnership arrangement, there is the inevitable potential for tension, if not conflict. Contributions made by the church have . . . poured oil on troubled waters – they have become arbiters, mediators and advocates.*

*The church has led, in the East End, the formation of an East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum. It has become the East End arm of the Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service. It is a network that continues to flourish and enables local organisations and groups the opportunity to influence the local regeneration agenda in a way in which they have not been able to in the past.*

*The churches' representatives then have provided an essential counterbalance and in doing so provided the Partnership with the necessary equilibrium required to deliver effectively and to become the success that it has.*

*I believe that the steadfast involvement of the church has brought a spirituality to partnership which is about a social conscience and morality, about the principles of*

*justice and equity in all things that might otherwise easily be overlooked in the world of capital programmes, performance indicators and outputs.*

*The influence and contribution made by the church to the SRB Programme and that which now follows has been of inestimable value. Clearly the continuation of such involvement will be a vital component in future successful and sustainable regeneration.*

9.3 One of the strengths that UMTP brought was its independence. It was not reliant upon or beholden to the City Council or other organisations. Although personal courage was still required, this could mean that it was possible to speak out when others might have wanted to take up the same issues but felt they had to be more circumspect. In effect Jeremy could clear a space in which they could work. The various occasions when Jeremy put his head above the parapet to good effect owed a lot to his personal ability and the standing of UMTP.

9.4 The position has been strengthened because UMTP has kept the goal of community engagement centrally in view: going beyond just involvement or a seat at the table, but rather with the emphasis upon purposeful engagement.

9.5 Another contribution came through providing continuity. Against a background of turnover amongst community development workers - three sets of CDWs in five years - the church could be seen as a symbol of stability that helped towards greater calmness during rather turbulent times.

### **Dilemmas**

9.6 This strand of UMTP raised many questions:

- First, it presented particularly difficult choices about how Jeremy should use his time and where to devote most energy. In part, the dilemmas sprang from the amount of developmental work there was to do. In part, it was a mark of his success because so many opportunities opened up to him to be involved not only in the voluntary and community sector within Byker and Walker but at the city level. The danger was in spreading himself so thinly that he spent all his time in meetings and some of the potential impact was dissipated.
- Secondly, there were questions around precisely how to exercise his role. For example, as a Vicar, how should he get the authority to develop involvements beyond the parish /deanery? Although, arguably, very little took him right outside the parish and even his wider involvement was in activities that will have an impact on the parish, what were the limits for him of being a 'regeneration worker'? Some of the visibility of what he is doing attaches more to him or the Forum than to the Church or UMTP. Does this matter?
- A third related set of questions revolved around how the parish commitments and community engagement fitted together. At a basic level, this was a matter of not being able to do everything and being conscious of what he was leaving undone. However, it also extended to ensuring that the two halves of his work fed one another to maximum effectiveness. On a personal level, he was convinced that he needed a parish base not least to counter the isolation that could result from his 'political' activities. Being attached to the parish also meant that he was clearly rooted in the area and gave him greater credibility. The extent to which his wider engagement brought benefit to his parishioners depended to some extent on how interested they were and, more fundamentally, how far they shared his vision of the role of the parish church. This shared vision may take

longer to develop and until then, combining the two roles entails keeping two very different balls in the air.

- Finally, there are issues around balancing participation – and partisanship – with a more detached position of *critical* engagement; advocacy ('my community right or wrong') with mediation.

### **Team strengths**

9.7 Chapter 8 underlined that, although, individual team members are responsible for different strands of UMTP, in practice they are all involved over a wider spectrum of activities. This applies as much in relation to the local community as to the church. The three core staff brought different strengths and made different sorts of contribution.

9.8 One of the difficulties in measuring the impact of the Project is that many of its effects are qualitative rather than quantitative. They are about processes and local capacity and dynamics. Interviews with a range of partners from local organisations elicited a number of perceived strengths:

- The staff can work and get on with a wide range of people "from the very sceptical to the very deferential". They have not conformed to some people's stereotype of clergy and this, coupled with an ability to articulate issues in ways that reflect others' views, has made people sit up and listen. They are good motivators.
- They are very engaged in the regeneration of the area and out of this have a good understanding of local politics and policies, the impact on local neighbourhoods and future implications.
- The team are viewed as good partners with others. For some people with a wide experience of trying to set up partner arrangements, "they have the best understanding of what partnership working means". They are prepared to solve problems whether, for example, this means overcoming the funding and other problems in relation to building schemes or overcoming obstacles in the way of developing the EECVS Forum.
- They are seen to be a close-knit team, with complementary skills, clearly mutually supportive and with a huge enthusiasm for their own and others' work.
- They are very thoughtful and knowledgeable and bring a fresh eye to discussions, which can be very challenging to others "but in a good way". In some ways, they have brought a different way of looking at issues because they have a different perspective not only stemming from an explicit framework of values, but also informed by their wide reading and their considered reflection on the language of regeneration.
- The nature of the Project gives them scope for a wide range of links and contacts that not many others have but the way that they have developed relationships is also an indication of their dedication, though "the time they put in borders on the mad"<sup>39</sup>.

### **Promoting inclusion – bonding and bridging**

9.9 The linkages between different aspects of UMTP and their effects on the local community are not confined to the direct community work of the Team. First, the reinvigoration of the congregations led to greater engagement in their communities which itself was a formative influence on life in the neighbourhoods. It was an example of trying to hold 'bonding' and 'bridging'<sup>40</sup> social capital together. The evident value base of the Project

has impressed some and the rhetoric of inclusiveness has been borne out in practice. One example that was cited in an interview was the receptiveness to a wide range of people using the building in the St Martin's Project - some of whom have substance misuse problems - that other organisations might have shunned. "St Martin's just said yes and women feel completely at ease there." This was surprising to those who would previously have assumed the church would have been more judgemental and shut them out, but the congregation has also supported this "practice of hospitality"<sup>41</sup>.

9.10 Secondly, UMTTP has not been afraid to be open about its values and beliefs or to bring theology into public discourse. Its theology has contributed to its 'conversation'<sup>42</sup> with its local context.

## 10. DEANERY, DIOCESAN AND WIDER CHURCH ROLE

*Just as our urban communities are caught up in processes and change on an unprecedented scale, we witness the Christian faith responding and changing in the context of new challenges and opportunities. The Church is part of the urban scene. As a voluntary institution it finds itself alongside social welfare, organising groups, and other faith communities as subject to changing trends in participation apparent in all parts of civil society.*<sup>43</sup>

*"The CofE spends a lot of time thinking about ministry, but not enough about communicating the gospel in terms that people understand in relation to the local culture: what does the gospel mean in this situation?"*<sup>44</sup>

10.1 This chapter turns to looking at the impact and significance of UMTTP for the church – locally, in the diocese and more widely.

### The Church and the urban

10.2 First, it is worth thinking a little about where the Church of England seems to be at the start of the twenty first century in relation to the urban and urban ministry. It is now nearly twenty years since *Faith in the City* was published. With its messages to government policy makers as well as the Church, this report brought a significant focus on urban priority areas (UPAs) in inner cities and on outer estates. It drew attention to the "grave and fundamental injustice" in UPAs. It resulted in significant developments within the Church such as the establishment of the Church Urban Fund. For a time there was a buzz about urban ministry and it married well with an understanding of urban mission driven by a strong poverty and justice agenda.

10.3 Now, however, it is arguable that there is not the same sense of priority attached to urban mission. The Decade of Evangelism and other developments during the 1990s rather shifted the focus towards growth and 'successful' churches.

*Our understanding of the urban context has changed very significantly over the past two decades. In 1985 it was possible to talk of 'Faith in the City' and 'Urban Priority Areas' with some confidence, knowing what these expressions meant. In the first years of the twenty-first century recent social and economic changes require that we*

*express ourselves more carefully. Now it is more appropriate, and even accurate, to speak about 'faiths in the cities' and the word urban is in the process of redefinition.*<sup>45</sup>

10.4 UMTTP represents another departure. It returns to the urban but brings a bigger, more rounded picture of the city. It moves on from the sometimes over-simple diagnosis of urban ills of the 1980s to grapple with the complexities of allying economic and social sustainability.

#### **Diocesan context**

10.5 Newcastle Diocese covers the County of Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside and therefore combines rural areas and market towns with the urban concentration on the north side of the River Tyne and along the coastal strip. The Diocesan Mission Statement says:

*The Diocese of Newcastle is part of the Universal Church and seeks to equip Christian individuals and communities in every area to wait upon God, and to proclaim and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

10.6 The marks of the Church will be:

- worship, evangelism and service present in each community
- commitment to learning and growth in discipleship
- connections made between faith and everyday life
- willingness to work in partnership with others
- listening to one another and honouring the diversity of Christian traditions
- giving and receiving beyond itself across parish, deanery and diocesan and denominational boundaries, nationally and internationally
- showing more concern for the reign of God in the world than for its own preservation.

#### **UMTP's significance for the Diocese**

10.7 UMTTP has had an evident influence on the Newcastle Diocese. This has been exercised directly through the education, training and dissemination activities of the Project. For instance, a presentation to CME training session reportedly produced a lot of very positive feedback that showed participants had been "fired up by the approach". It has also come about indirectly both through the team members' membership of Diocesan committees and through others actively involved in UMTTP's management and thinking, such as Bishop Paul, Bob Langley and Geoff Miller.

10.8 In February 2004, the Diocese produced *For the many not just the few*, a framework for action in areas of high multiple deprivation, in direct response to the Mission Statement. There is clear resonance between its approach and that of UMTTP – again no doubt partly because Peter helped to produce the framework and partly because Geoff Miller, the Urban Officer, has had close ties with UMTTP throughout the Project and is a member of the Management Committee.

10.9 UMTTP thinking is echoed especially in one of the objectives: "that the Church is influencing the shaping of contemporary urban living and of human flourishing in the city" and it is discernible in the section discussing the urban context. In addition to the Project churches being involved as urban parishes, UMTTP is specifically mentioned as one of the organisations likely to be a player in taking forward some of the framework's key action points, to:

- resource and support a network for urban parishes and clergy;
- assist the Diocese in reviewing how its activities impact upon the life of urban communities and where possible develop the support it offers;
- give an active critique of policies and trends that impinge on urban communities and contribute to future policy making.

10.10 One of the selling points of the Project to the local churches and to the diocese is that it increases the likelihood of being able to recruit clergy. More broadly, UMTTP provides an arena in which to think about new forms of ministry “without suggesting that stipendiary professional clergy are redundant”<sup>46</sup>.

10.11 John Sadler has also been able to utilise lessons from UMTTP within the Diocese as a member of the Buildings Review Group which is looking at the deployment of building resources in each deanery. He could not only bring insights about the use of church plant but also expertise about planning issues and financial packages and his experience of partnership working.

### **The Deanery**

10.12 The significance of the deanery in the life of UMTTP has already been noted. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the Project remains firmly owned by, and rooted in, the deanery. The Area Dean has a critical role and initially Michael Webb was crucial to UMTTP being established as was Tom Cowen, the Lay Chair. As a member of the Deanery Standing Committee, Peter Robinson has had an opportunity to ensure good feedback to and from the other parishes in the deanery.

10.13 Although for many people, including some within the Project’s congregations, ‘church development’ essentially means ‘bums on seats’, the benefits of the UMTTP approach do not necessarily include growth in the numbers attending church. Others would say “it’s not the be-all and end-all to fill churches but we want to have a positive effect on people’s lives”<sup>47</sup>. There remains a tension in the eyes of some church members about the danger of “doing too much in the community and not enough in church”. It can be asked whether, to some extent, irrespective of what has actually happened, this arises from a nostalgic wish “for our own Vicar”, a wish that given the present day staffing and financial constraints of the Church is becoming increasingly unattainable.

10.14 Within St Silas’ and St Michael’s, people were aware that they could not continue as they had been doing and, in St Silas’ at least, had already been thinking about change. But the active members had felt unsupported and unable to make progress until John was appointed. His input and detailed work with them has been seen as invaluable. More surprisingly, the view was expressed that an incumbent could not have fulfilled his role because it required someone who could extricate the development work from the core job of running a parish. John was also the main link into UMTTP, which otherwise was rather mystifying to some parishioners. The church development role was pivotal in demonstrating how UMTTP could bring them direct benefits. The wider contribution of the project’s approach gradually became clearer and more appreciated even if still difficult for some to articulate.

10.15 Early on, parishioners saw the indirect effects of the Project in what they thought was an excellent service at St Silas’ Church when John Sadler was inducted and the occasion was also used as a belated launch of UMTTP. Many more people attended from other churches and the wider community than would ordinarily have been expected.

10.16 St Anthony's is different. First, it did not have the immediate presenting need of any major structural or financial challenge. Second, it is a small church with a very solid core of workers. This makes for a high level of self-sufficiency. The downside is that it also tends towards a certain isolationism not helped by the levels of local deprivation and the continuing uncertainty about future developments in the area. For these reasons, it has been least visibly influenced by UMTTP. Nevertheless, as chapter 6 indicated, the church members at St Anthony's have embarked on a journey towards new expressions of church to meet the needs of their changing community.

### **What sort of change in local congregations?**

10.17 Early on in the evaluation, I posed a number of questions around the relationship of the project to the expectations of local church members:

- How far do the congregations support and embrace the vision of the Project?
- Do church members merely tolerate it in order to have a Vicar?
- Do they see the clergy's range of activities as appropriate or a distraction from their 'real' job?
- How far do they identify with the wider community?
- Will the Project change the character of the congregations either by changing existing perceptions or by bringing in new members and/or creating conflict?

10.18 It is probably still not possible to give firm or simple answers to all of these. However, it is the Project staff's conviction that a growing proportion of church members - but no doubt not all - have increasing sympathy with UMTTP's aims and outworking and it is informing their own thinking about ways of 'being church'. At the very least, they understand that by 'giving away' some of the stipend, they have been repaid in abundance. Community ties have strengthened and the church/community interface is more permeable. What is less clear is how far the congregations still see the steps they have taken primarily as a survival strategy in reaction to a state of being beleaguered or how far they are more positively motivated to create churches that are "local, outward looking and participating".<sup>48</sup> Inevitably, it is probably a mixture of the two.

### **An ecumenical dimension**

10.19 A question was raised at the first AGM about "the apparent non-inclusion of ecumenical partners or other agencies". The response was that "the constitution reflects where we came from and where we are now, and does not preclude where we might want to be in future. The constitution can be changed." However, as wider discussions held from late 2003 onwards recognised, this is an Anglican project working ecumenically rather than an ecumenical project.

10.20 Having Anglican roots has not inhibited its collaboration with other Christian churches or other faith groups. Following the CUF conference in September 2002, the idea grew for a day conference to explore the role that faith buildings can play in neighbourhood renewal across the Tyneside region. This culminated in *Building on Faith*, an interfaith conference in autumn 2003 attended by 133 delegates for which UMTTP acted as the accountable body.

### **Wider audiences**

10.22 In addition to the local ones, there are clearly wider audiences for UMTTP: bishops, especially but not exclusively urban ones, dioceses, parish clergy, readers, ecumenical partners and theological colleges.

10.23 There are also diverse messages. Arguably, in the wider Church, urban theology has been seen as an optional extra rather than integral in theological/ministerial training. UMTTP brings it to the fore and points to the significance of understanding the nature of cities and trends in urban society and urban policy. For example, a key focus of current government policy is intervention in failing housing markets coupled with attempts to create 'sustainable communities'. The Housing Market Renewal Initiative is the main mechanism being used in Newcastle and other areas and this has the potential to change urban geography significantly in ways that will pose questions for existing parish boundaries. The UMTTP approach, through the way that it is steeped in such urban trends, can help the Church develop tools to understand and respond to its changing context.

10.24 One question that can be asked is whether the UMTTP approach is relevant to other situations:

- to suburban or rural parishes; or
- to areas where there is not the same level of local pressures on both the community and the local church; or
- to ones that lack the background of a traditionally close-knit community, however much that may be being threatened now.

10.25 Yet the learning to be derived from the Project does not begin and end with the urban. First, in the *content* of its analysis, making the linkages from the global to the local is as pertinent to rural Northumberland as to the East End of Newcastle.

10.26 Secondly, there is the underlying message about the critical importance of taking the context of ministry seriously whatever that context may be like: understanding it and tailoring the role of the parish to meet its particular needs and opportunities. As a demonstration of this, the Estates Churches DIY Kit is now being used in parishes in very different situations across the Diocese.

10.27 Similarly, UMTTP's 'middle axiom' approach, which includes seeking consensus, involvement in wider debates and activities and being content with a low profile or even an invisible partnership role, is not confined to its specific circumstances. "Being alongside and engaging" is the style of UMTTP so that it also raises questions about concepts such as being incarnational, leadership, participation and experiential learning that are generic ones for anyone involved in mission and ministry to explore.

10.28 In other words, it is important to distinguish between UMTTP's 'methodology' and the specific actions that were taken in Byker and Walker. The Project does not offer a prescription to others. Many of the actions taken would not be appropriate elsewhere. However, the process or steps leading up to them do have much more general application.

## 11. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS

*An astonishing amount has been achieved in a short time ...[but] there is still a lot of dependence on the Team, therefore the message is to dig in for the longer term, sustain the vision and not risk it all being blown away.<sup>49</sup>*

11.1 It was always thought that it would take at least five years for UMTF to make any difference. Much has happened in rather less than five years. There is a diocesan review taking place currently that will determine the next stage of UMTF and one of the Team members is moving on which, in itself, prompts new considerations. What has also been underlined in this report, however, is that not only does much remain to be done, but also that this is not – or should not be - a time limited ‘project’. Rather it is an approach that needs to be embedded and sustained. Sustaining it does not mean going on doing the same things *ad infinitum*. It means continuing to apply the principles of starting from the present situation, confronting its particular reality and being open to what this may require in terms of adapting roles, job descriptions and activities.

### **A changing agenda in church and community?**

11.2 As the report has indicated, church development is taking various forms and is at different stages across the parishes. All are seeking to translate their visions into a new *modus operandi*, but they face diverse challenges: about how to utilise and move out from new church plant, how to take forward newly forged partnerships and forms of ministry, how to strengthen congregational life or how to respond to the loss of an incumbent. The church development role is inevitably an evolving one. It calls for sensitive judgements according to circumstances about how much and what kind of support to give in order to elicit local talents and build up congregational capacity.

11.3 At present, there are uncertainties about the future of community engagement in Newcastle generally. In the East End, much will depend upon what happens to the East End Partnership and also whether the EECVSF secures funding. If the Forum becomes sustainable, then its role will need to move beyond infrastructure development towards direct community engagement. This in turn would affect UMTF’s community role.

11.4 There are also new future possibilities in relation to the theological training and education strand of work. In addition to the growing participation in training within the Diocese and the region, there could be further involvement at Cranmer Hall when doctoral level courses start. These will cover appropriate research methods and this element is very likely to draw upon Byker.

### **Staffing**

11.5 One conclusion from this study is that it is important to retain a staff team at its current strength at least. Given the current resource constraints being suffered by most dioceses now, it would be unrealistic to argue for more staff but, in addition to the number of parishes involved and the amount of work entailed, there are reasons for maintaining the present level.

11.6 One factor to be taken into account is the still fluid urban renewal scene and, in particular, the impending changes in St Anthony’s parish that will result in a larger population and wider social mix. These mean that it is important to have a strong local presence to help to underpin local stability.

11.7 Another consideration is that team working has been a very significant element in the added value brought by the project so that it is vital to uphold the spread of skills and complementarity in order to continue to combine the three strands of work, to ensure that there is the critical mass both to make its corporate nature visible to others and to give a supportive framework for individual staff. In addition, there has been clear benefit in the two sorts of arrangement pertaining to team members: on the one hand, allying parish ministry to another responsibility and, on the other, having someone who can work independently on church development with all the churches involved.

11.8 The question of staffing is related to the geographic coverage of UMTF. A logical next step would be to include Christ Church, which has been very involved from the start and benefits from UMTF work.

11.9 One issue around the staff members' free-ranging community role is about continuity when someone leaves. First, if they have established their niche through personal as much as organisational credibility, then a successor will not necessarily inherit automatically the same respect and opportunities. This underlines the need to 'brand' the Project and foster multi-faceted relationships. Secondly, there is a risk that there may not be a systematic 'debriefing': to review what has been done. This is necessary partly to ensure that the learning is imparted in the relevant circles and that the various roles that are being relinquished can be adequately filled. Equally, as one interviewee pointed out, it is important to underline what has been achieved in order to counter any individual preoccupation with what has been left undone and still remains to be done.

11.10 Chapter 4 mentioned the valuable role played by the part-time Administrator employed for about eighteen months. UMTF has continued to benefit from the systems she put in place but in other ways it is highly desirable now to recruit a successor to take some of the load off the Team members and ensure the smooth running of the office.

11.11 One dimension of UMTF that has been implicit through the report is that it has a social enterprise strand. Different members of the Team have brought in income through fees for teaching and consultancy amounting now to nearly £10,000 per annum, an amount that covers the rent and contributes to administrative costs. The potential for this could increase. On the one hand, UMTF Team members should recognise that it is reasonable on occasions to charge for their time and expertise. On the other, income generation *per se* should not become the criterion for deciding whether or not to undertake the activities concerned.

## **Management**

11.12 It is appropriate at this stage in the Project's life to review the management structures. Chapter 4 indicated that the Management Committee and the Parishes Advisory Group have different responsibilities. In addition to its management role, the Committee is more concerned with external relations, especially with the Diocese, whereas the PAG has focused more upon the conduct of UMTF as it affects the parishes.

11.13 There is clearly a continuing need for a Management Committee. The changing circumstances as well as the increased reach and influence of UMTF also mean there is a greater need to help the Team think through the new ways to proceed whilst retaining the Project's value base. The Committee's membership should reflect key relationships: with the Diocese, the Deanery and ecumenical partners. It has a vital role in considering the way forward at this stage of the Project and in championing it in relation to these three

constituencies. It may also be appropriate at this stage to build in links with the theological training sphere beyond the Diocese.

11.14 The future of the Parishes Advisory Group was raised at the Management Committee in October 2003 and the PAG last met in the Summer 2004. The Group has served a very useful purpose and had some extremely committed members although there had been difficulties in getting attendance from two churches. Its role was to co-ordinate the work of UMTTP across the churches and to encourage participation as well as provide both challenge and support. After five years and given the extent to which UMTTP has become embedded in the lives of all the churches involved, there is now less need for such a group but it may be desirable to use other means of fostering internal cohesion and identification with the Project's management. One means, for example, would be through increasing the local churches' representation on the Management Committee. Other possibilities would be through tailoring the AGM with these purposes in mind, holding open forums and having *ad hoc* task groups across parish boundaries where appropriate.

### **Learning, sharing and looking ahead**

11.15 These are significant times for all aspects of the Project. The conclusions of the five-year review and the Diocesan response to its findings will be very important. At this point of looking back and looking forward and as increasingly UMTTP is deriving lessons and producing materials that merit wider use, it would also be timely for the Deanery and Diocese to look more systematically at how to harness and share the learning coming out of the Project in order to sustain, support and spread the UMTTP approach.

## **12. CONCLUSIONS, SUCCESS FACTORS AND WIDER QUESTIONS**

*We have . . . shown that there is a role for the local church, informed by a variety of partners, to continue in the mediation of understanding, identifying and resisting false interpretations that fail to challenge the marginalisation of the community . . . .*<sup>50</sup>

*Not least the Church of England faces questions about the lives being lived by its local congregations. What might 'spiritual regeneration' mean for individual Christians and for our ecclesial life? Indeed, what might it mean for the Church across the city, whether or not a congregation is based in an inner city area experiencing regeneration?*<sup>51</sup>

*. . . we are, at one and the same time, Christians who seek to understand the modern age, and contemporaries who seek to understand Christianity. There is a tension in this interaction, but it is a dynamic one. It is the Word of God becoming flesh in this world.*<sup>52</sup>

12.1 This is a long report that has so far combined description and critique. It is now appropriate to sum up the conclusions, try to identify the Project's critical success factors and indicate some wider questions.

12.2 First, it is important to underline that the evaluation has been conducted after only five years of what is designed to be a long term Project. The study and its conclusions therefore must be seen in the context of what it may be realistic to expect in such a comparatively short time.

12.3 Another cautionary note concerns the study methodology. Evaluation is not an exact science and attribution - establishing cause and effect – is always a central challenge. Precise measures seldom exist. Criteria tend to be slippery. Evidence of qualitative and quantitative change is not necessarily either available or comprehensive. There are ways of measuring social capital as well as socio-economic change, but the resources for this project did not stretch to setting a baseline at the outset that would have allowed such change to be tracked. In the end, in addition to examining the material that is available and the perceptions of key players, a large element of judgement is required. In this case, apart from trying to determine *what* is different and *why*, there is the issue of distinguishing between the influence of the UMTTP approach and that of the individual Team members.

12.4 To ask how far UMTTP is adding value begs the question of ‘from whose perspective?’. It also raises the issue of how far people need to accept the basic premises of the approach before they can recognise added value. If people remain wedded to old frameworks and ways of thinking, it can make it difficult to identify change. That said, it is very evident that an enormous amount has been achieved in a short time within all three areas of work and that this is widely recognised. UMTTP has had a very beneficial effect on local quality of life, local capacity to influence the future of the area and on the mission and ministry within the Project churches. Its influence extends further and can be seen in relation to city thinking on neighbourhood renewal, the Diocesan Framework for church development in areas of high multiple deprivation and in relation to training in and thinking about urban ministry.

12.5 Clearly, much of its value derives from UMTTP’s vision and approach and from the skills and contributions of the individuals involved. However, the project’s design, implementation and management all contain good practice lessons.

### **Project design**

12.6 A key question that is central to understanding UMTTP’s value is what it is offering that is different from what team ministries and/or other socially involved local churches would or should offer. The answer seems to lie in a combination of factors:

- Its situation in the Deanery: it is rooted in the Deanery and has had initial and continuing support for its vision and resourcing from the deanery.
- UMTTP started from a well developed vision about the role the church can play, a vision that sees community engagement in the widest sense as integral to that role, combined with detailed analysis about the local area and the wider socio-economic and policy context.
- There was recognition that the three areas of work are inter-related and interdependent, and that, combined, they should add up to more than the sum of the parts.
- UMTTP adopted an orderly and systematic approach with specific objectives, tasks, and responsibilities, performance measures and, where appropriate, milestones.
- Different members of staff exercise leadership in each strand by working across the whole of the East End, thus spanning parish boundaries and different neighbourhoods. They each had lead roles and drew others in. This is a participative team model that contrasts with the usual hierarchical structure. The term ‘Director’ defines a role, it does not signify a pecking order. Having a ‘team rector’ would have altered the dynamics.

Here the Director's parochial status as a priest in charge is incidental. There is a subtle but important difference between UMTP and a team ministry.

- Exchange, sharing and reflection were built into the project. It has taken time and discipline. Having an evaluation culture within the project was more important than the appointment of an independent evaluator. Without one, the potential of external evaluation would be diminished; with one, the ongoing internal reflection within the Project and openness to (self) criticism enhances the value of an independent observer.

12.7 One interviewee from a secular partner organisation, but who also has experience of working with other church groups, when asked 'what (if anything) is special about UMTP?' referred to the scope and integration of their contribution. The team are multi-skilled and they deploy their different skills without detracting from being an individual vicar with a parish. Together, they have also gained a wider grasp of strategic and community issues that they have been able to impart to others and apply locally.

### **Project implementation**

12.8 Getting the composition of the team right was essential. Internally, the critical factors were:

- the spread and complementarity of skills and interests;
- individuals getting on well with one another.

12.9 One of the challenges for the Project was to be able to capture the requirements in the person specifications. Although an ordained person currently occupies the Church Development role, it was open to either lay or ordained people. It was not possible to assemble all the Team at the outset: the Church Development post was not filled for two years. Delay followed by the right appointment was better than an early but inappropriate appointment.

12.10 Externally, it was also important to have individuals from theological/church traditions mirroring those of the parishes in the deanery. As one interviewee said, "It is exciting to see these clergy working together and representing progressive aspects of their different Church of England traditions."<sup>53</sup>

12.11 Good relationships amongst the Team members must partly rely upon chemistry, but the project structures have also helped to shape the relationships; in particular through:

- the clear articulation of common aims;
- carefully designed job descriptions;
- recruitment processes that aim to ensure that the individual can fulfil the role and fit within the team.

12.12 One aspect of ensuring clarity about what is entailed is realism about the situation in which people are working; for example, about parish demands that had to be understood and accepted from the outset and weighed against other priorities to avoid them becoming a source of friction and undermining the work. The team collectively and individually had to come to terms with the degree of 'compromise' they could and should accept for the sake of their more important objectives.

12.13 Having an Administrator was immensely valuable for setting up systems and establishing the office as the Project base. She was able to relieve the Team – especially the Project leader - of some of the paperwork and allow them to take on more activities.

12.14 The Project Office has helped to give the project its own corporate identity. It is a common meeting ground for the Team, an important visible sign of the Project's basis of partnership and provides a continuing focus for generating and sustaining useful links with others.

### ***Lay enabling***

12.15 Much has been said in this report about the leadership of the Team and the clergy roles. However, a defining feature of UMTP has been the development of the contribution of lay people in church and community based upon a broader view of ministry and discipleship.

### ***Partnership***

12.16 One of UMTP's critical success factors has been the attention to, and the success in, developing strong relationships, building partnership with a wide range of people and organisations and winning trust and respect from partners.

### ***Ongoing reflection***

12.17 The evolution of UMTP has underlined that people undertaking such approaches constantly face a wide range of choices about what to do and how best to use limited time and about their style of working. It has been necessary to keep contextual changes, external and internal demands and pressures under constant review, to consider their implications for staff roles and management structures and examine the wider questions they raise.

12.18 UMTP's experience also highlights the importance of considering all these issues in concert, recognising that the Project is more than a sum of its parts and therefore as much attention must be paid to the connecting strands as to the individual elements. For example:

- how to maintain a *distinctive* engagement role in community regeneration, to avoid being so sucked in that sight is lost of the original purpose and, leading on from this, asking what are the lessons and questions about 'critical engagement'?
- how to get the balance right in the training and dissemination aspects of the project – using the work as a learning laboratory but avoiding it becoming a goldfish bowl; not telling the tale so often that it oversimplifies what is a much more complex reality.
- thinking through the church development role in relation to the needs of different parishes.
- revisiting the structures and membership of the management arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose at different stages of the project's development.

12.19 Although keeping the work under critical review is an essential not a luxury, it will always be difficult because of competing pressures. In this case the staff are conscious of the need and have always tried to make the time.

### **Project organisation and management**

12.20 UMTP's management structures have fulfilled several purposes in addition to the explicit management role:

- developing greater understanding of issues related to the Project's goals and way of working;
- developing ownership of the project amongst different 'constituencies';
- building links and creating ambassadors;
- giving collective and individual support to – or a sounding board for – Team members;
- providing an arena for giving and being called to account.

12.21 The Management Committee chaired by the Assistant Bishop has ensured senior support from, and ownership within, the Diocese and its wider membership has strengthened the links with the Diocese, local congregations and with ecumenical partners. The Management Committee not only encompasses a range of interested parties, it also includes people from different levels – and different levels of decision-making - within the church.

12.22 The Parishes Advisory Group (PAG) has also served several purposes that were especially important during the formative period the Project:

- providing support to the Team;
- acting as a sounding board;
- being ambassadors for the Project within the parishes.

12.23 In addition to the formal, collective Project management, it has been important for the individual team members to have his/her own arrangements/networks for reference and personal support.

### **Lessons for CUF**

12.24 As well as lessons for other projects, there are messages here for project funders such as CUF. The relationship has been rather an unusual one characterised by a 'hands-off' approach. This was understandable because UMTP has coincided with an unsettled time for CUF and being left to get on with it was in some ways welcome. However, it also conveyed a certain lack of interest and support. There were ways in which both sides would have gained from closer ties. The CUF funding certainly enabled innovation and risk taking but there was no follow-up to test the outcomes. In addition, CUF only funded one dimension of UMTP but by walking more closely with the Project, CUF could have contributed to and benefited from some of the reflection on the entirety of the work as it was happening and helped to create a larger space for public discourse.

12.25 Projects such as UMTP provide not only good practice lessons but also messages to the wider church. UMTP has demonstrated that some of the factors that have inspired or generated the need for its approach in the first place remain significant challenges or barriers during the course of the work. If projects are cutting edge ones, they are likely to face ongoing frustration and a high level of contextual difficulty. Turning round an oil tanker is easy and instantaneous compared with changing the direction of the Church of England! CUF has a role in making the connections between the work on the ground and the emerging policy messages.

12.26 It can be argued that evaluation is one way of doing this. If this is the case and if in the widest sense evaluation is thought important, first it needs to be built into the way that CUF gives guidance of project design and appraises project proposals and second its funding/time allocation needs to take this requirement realistically into account.

### Endnote

12.27 The introduction to Part II of this report uses a quotation that talks about drawing “into dynamic interaction worship, spirituality, the building up of a faith community and an engagement with the world with the expectation of calling out one another in love to be what God intends”.<sup>54</sup> UMTP covers all of these but puts them in a different order – not necessarily a different order of priority but a different sequence – starting with the mission of God in the world, moving towards His work within the Church itself.

12.28 UMTP could, on the one hand, have become solely absorbed with the small and vulnerable congregations in Newcastle’s East End. Instead it has approached church development more tangentially: first being open to the complexity of life around, then developing a sense of ministry to the whole community. On the other hand, it could have restricted itself to speaking out about the policies and forces affecting local people. Instead, it has worked through institutions, including the Church, to accompany local people in their engagement with problems and challenges.

12.29 The Diocese of Newcastle Mission Statement “envisages a church committed to worship, evangelism and service, and at the same time rooted in local communities and engaged in their everyday life”.<sup>55</sup> The purpose of the *For the many, not just the few*, the Diocesan framework for action is to provide focus and direction but at the same time to:

- encourage a flexible and sensitive response to local context;
- affirm, encourage and gather local insight and activity;
- build upon the already excellent work that is undertaken throughout the diocese;
- be open to unexpected developments;
- acknowledge a changing and unfinished agenda.

12.30 These aspirations in the Framework also serve to capture the character and achievements of UMTP. It has been responsive to local context. It has affirmed ‘the local’ and worked in a bottom up way with and alongside others wherever fruitful partnerships could be forged. It has helped to set up local organisations without requiring any church label at the same time as developing the church community. It has remained alert to the ‘signs of the times’ and their wider implications.

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- <sup>2</sup> A quotation from the presentation UMTF made to Diocesan Synod ?? 2004.
- <sup>3</sup> Peter Robinson, *Profile of the Project in Urban Ministry and Theology, Newcastle East Deanery*, September 2000.
- <sup>4</sup> Michael Webb, Rural Dean, writing in March 2000 in Appendix 2 of the UMTF application to the CUF New Initiatives Working Party.
- <sup>5</sup> Resolutions A and B of the Women Priests Measure stated that a PCC may vote not to accept a woman priest to take services and not to accept a woman as their incumbent, priest-in-charge or team vicar.
- <sup>6</sup> A quotation from the presentation UMTF made to Diocesan Synod ?? 2004.
- <sup>7</sup> Ruth Lupton, *Poverty Street: The dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal*, The Policy Press, 2003, p.136.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p 195.
- <sup>9</sup> Ali Madanipour and Tanya Merridew, *Neighbourhood Governance: Capacity for Integration*, Walker Case Study, Global Urban Research Unit, University of Newcastle, 2003.
- <sup>10</sup> *For the many not just the few: Constructing a framework for church development in areas of high multiple deprivation*, Diocese of Newcastle, 2004, p.4
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- <sup>12</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: the Design and Social Life of Cities*, Faber and Faber, 1990, pp 10-11.
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- <sup>15</sup> ODFM Urban White paper, November 2000.
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- <sup>17</sup> A quote from an interviewee external to the Project
- <sup>18</sup> A quote from an interviewee external to the Project.
- <sup>19</sup> John Reader, *Local Theology: Church and Community in Dialogue*, SPCK, 1994, p.53
- <sup>20</sup> Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999, pp 129/30
- <sup>21</sup> from the UMTF Annual Report 2003
- <sup>22</sup> A quotation from the presentation UMTF made to Diocesan Synod ?? 2004.
- <sup>23</sup> Greenwood *op cit*, p.85
- <sup>24</sup> Thomas Cullinan, 'Eucharist and politics' in *The Passion of Political Love*, Sheed and Ward 1987, p.87.
- <sup>25</sup> Greenwood, *op cit*, p.84
- <sup>26</sup> Laurie Green in the foreword to Andrew Davey, *Urban Christianity and Global Order: Theological Resources for an Urban Future*, SPCK, 2001, p.x
- <sup>27</sup> from the UMTF Annual Report 2003
- <sup>28</sup> from the application to the Church Urban Fund, April 2000.
- <sup>29</sup> Interview
- <sup>30</sup> Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council, *Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church: The Structure and Funding of Ordination Training* (The Hind Report) GS Misc 745, Church House Publishing, 2004
- <sup>31</sup> from the UMTF Annual Report 2001-2002.
- <sup>32</sup> Peter Robinson, "Culture on the Tyne – Reflections on an unsuccessful bid", *Urban Bulletin*, Autumn 2003.
- <sup>33</sup> Ash Amin, Doreen Massey and Nigel Thrift, *Cities for the Many not the Few*, The Policy Press, 2000, pp 45/46.
- <sup>34</sup> Peter Robinson draft for the Dioceses of Newcastle and Durham Proposal for an Interfaith Project to the Newcastle-Gateshead European Capital of Culture 2008 Initiative, March 2002.
- <sup>35</sup> A statement from the floor at UMTF's Inaugural General Meeting in May 2001.
- <sup>36</sup> Paul Boateng, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, at the launch of the Commission on Urban Life and Faith, 02/02/04
- <sup>37</sup> This is a quotation from Edward Said in his Reith Lectures in 1993. He is describing the role of the intellectual - a description that could equally apply to a theologian - whose place he says, "is to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them) to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by government or corporations, and whose *raison d'être* is to represent all those people and issues who are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug".
- <sup>38</sup> Anthony Woods-Waters, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004.
- <sup>39</sup> A quote from an interviewee external to the Project.
- <sup>40</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Touchstone, Simon and Schuster, New York 2000 Bonding social capital denotes strong, exclusive ties that link people to the families, close friends or immediate circles and give them practical, social and psychological support. Bridging social capital signifies weaker yet more inclusive ties extending to more distant and disparate groups.

<sup>41</sup> see note 12

<sup>42</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Secularisation and Moral Change*, Oxford University Press, 1967.

<sup>43</sup> Andrew Davey, *Urban Christianity and Global Order: Theological Resources for an Urban Future*, SPCK, 2001, p.90.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with a member of the Management Committee.

<sup>45</sup> *For the many not just the few*. Diocese of Newcastle, 2004, p.10

<sup>46</sup> Interview

<sup>47</sup> Interview

<sup>48</sup> *Faith in the City*, The Report on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, 1985, p.74

<sup>49</sup> Interview

<sup>50</sup> Peter Robinson and Jeremy Clark-King, "Regeneration and Reconciliation: Is there still a role for the Church?", Norwich Cathedral Institute Address, July 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Bob Langley and Peter Robinson, "Sustainability and Regeneration in the East End of Newcastle" in *IMAgenda*, April 2000.

<sup>52</sup> Timothy Radcliffe, OP, "Church and World" in *I Call You Friends*, Continuum 2001.

<sup>53</sup> A quote from an interviewee external to the Project.

<sup>54</sup> see note 13

<sup>55</sup> *For the many not just the few*, Diocese of Newcastle, 2004, p.4