

## Phillip Jensen – SEGP Conference Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007

### Growing Churches Session 1

Well good morning again and here we are underway.

Today is very much a **practical, pragmatic** day with not much scripture in the programme from me, but a little bit at the beginning to give you a theological context for what we're doing, that is - talking about growing churches in terms of seeing a church grow and in terms of growing other churches - it's a nice ambiguity. In talking about growing churches, what I've been asked to do is to talk about the practicalities involved in growing churches, and to those who are pastors and those who are lay leaders in our congregations it's a terrifically important issue to understand the mechanics of what's involved in the doing of it, but we need to place it within a theological frame and context.

The context is really creation, that is, there is a strong connection between creation and salvation. And we need to make sure that we understand that we minister the gospel within this created order. We don't minister the gospel outside this created order but within this created order, and therefore it has the same patterns, constraints and programmes that the created order has. For God has created this world with us in his image to rule over this world. And how we act in this world is how we act in church. For example, you are listening to me amplified through a system that could be equally used at a political rally or a football ground - it could be used anywhere. It's the same system, but if we're going to amplify voices, that is the system we're going to use. It's got some screens, this newfangled thing that I've never seen before by which I am going to draw...which will be...well, it's going to be exciting....

But it's a system that could be used anywhere, there's nothing particularly Christian about this system, nor is there anything particularly anti-Christian about this system. It's part of the created order that we, created in his image, have been able to develop so that we are able to communicate with each other visually and audibly. Now that is the nature of the world we're in, from architecture to the lighting systems to the sound systems to the chairs you're sitting on, to the books we're reading, it's all part of the created order, but somehow we tend to think of ministry as being supernatural rather than natural. Now it has its supernatural element as indeed all creation has its supernatural element, because it's not a natural system, it's a divinely created system. I don't believe in nature, I believe in creation, it's a different language isn't it? So of course it's supernatural but it's still natural what we're doing, and it's the natural side that we're looking at.

Now the scriptures are full of natural advice, especially in the wisdom literature: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Job. For example, the other morning Helen was reading over breakfast the book of Proverbs and she reminded me of Proverbs 24 verse 27 about planting your fields first and then building your house. Now that's just a piece of worldly wisdom in a sense, a non-Christian could know that. Until you've got your job sorted and your income flow sorted you shouldn't be out building your house because if you get your house and your mortgage but haven't got a job - well you're in trouble aren't you? So which do you do first: you secure the

business first and then the house second - which many churches don't understand, they think that if you build the buildings 'they will come' like in *The Field of Dreams*. And that's what it is, it's the field of dreams, that's out in cloud-cuckoo land. You've got to make sure that you've got the business operating first and *then* you attend to the building. Well that's just worldly wisdom, but it's a worldly wisdom inspired by God who created the world by his wisdom. So we mustn't expect that what happens in church is going to be completely, utterly foreign to what happens in the world, because our God who is our creator is our God who is our Saviour. It is the same God and we must not separate creation and grace like that. So please turn with me to 2 Timothy 2 verses 1 – 7.

Here is the ministry of the gospel that we are to be engaged in. What Timothy has heard from Paul he is to teach others who will then be able to teach others. That is the nature of the genuine apostolic succession, namely the gospel handed from one generation to another generation. We are an apostolic Church, because we are preaching a tradition, the gospel, which was taught by the apostles in the first place. Handed down from generation to generation – there is the ministry. Now there is an unusual element to this task. Verse 3 says 'share in the suffering' - that's not your average job, most jobs don't ask you to share in suffering. That's because the gospel that we preach is the gospel of the crucified one and we are to take up our cross and follow him, so suffering is to be part of our exercise, our work.

But then notice he is able to illustrate this from the natural order, 'as good soldiers' - he can use an illustration from the world as there is a connection between how you minister and the world that God has created. Indeed he goes on 'no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits because his aim is to please the one who enlisted him', then he mentions an 'athlete', a 'farmer' and then v 7, (which is a slightly extraordinary verse, there's not much like verse 7 in the scriptures) **think**.

'Think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything'. There is an activity of *human thinking* involved in Christian ministry - indeed you are told to think and what you're thinking on are the things of this world, the soldier, the athlete, the farmer, for the way they operate is the way in which we must operate in Christian ministry. So we're not doing something that is totally foreign or alien to any other endeavour of the world, we're doing what you do *in* the world.

The hard working farmer is often mentioned in the book of Proverbs in contrast to the lazy farmer or the sluggard. And the lazy farmer doesn't get any crops, he goes into ruin, and the hard working farmer is the one who get the crops. All under the sovereignty of God remember, for it is God who gives the growth as we saw in Mark chapter 4. It's God who gives the growth, and indeed the hard working farmer can be wiped out by a flood and the lazy farmer might one year get more crops than the hard working farmer because the flood comes on one and not the other. That's the way of this world, it's not that we are sovereignly in control, it's that He is sovereignly in control but it's not that He is sovereignly in control and everything is kismet, so don't bother doing anything because He is in control and if He wants to grow the crops He'll grow the crops and if He doesn't want to grow the crops He won't and I'll stay at home and watch television. God exercises His control through us, we who are created in His image. And so in general it is true that the hard working farmer gets the crops, in general that's a proposition that is right, sufficiently right to encourage farmers to be hard working. It's the same with Christian ministry friends – the hard working minister

will see the results and the lazy one won't, but not always absolutely – sometimes in God's mercy a lazy minister will see people converted and the hard working minister will preach the gospel in season, out of season, day after day and year after year and see almost nothing - that's quite possible under the sovereignty of God - but what is *quite possible* is not *normal*. Normally the hard working one ...basically if you keep evangelising you're more likely to see people converted than if you give up evangelising. We mustn't move our right understanding of the sovereignty of God into a completely wrong understanding of fatalism. We are not fatalists. We believe in the sovereignty of God working through his creatures, created in his image and recreated through the gospel. So I'm going to be talking about how the world works today.

A lot of what's said could be applied to your Boy Scout group or football club etc – the principles are exactly the same. I've used ideas from the world in the first place, because how social groupings work is how social groupings work – the church is a social grouping. How voluntary associations work is how voluntary associations work and church is a voluntary association. How businesses work is how churches work because there is a business side to church, yet of course there are differences. The differences have to do with our godliness and the message that we're involved in and the core business that we're engaged in which is the prayerful proclamation of the word of God - that's our core business, not making gadgets or selling towels, **our core business is the prayerful proclamation of the gospel**. But with that core business, the way the world works is the way the world works, and so we've got to preach the gospel by which we evangelise non Christians and edify Christians.

Now we need to be careful not to be seduced to alternatives. And there is a slight danger in terms of talking about these pragmatics and practicalities that you can actually think that by pragmatics you can do the work, but you can't, you can only do the work by preaching the gospel prayerfully. You can build and grow great 'churches' without preaching the word prayerfully, without praying, without preaching or preaching an alternative word. It is quite possible to build a huge 'church'. In fact in some ways it's easier to grow a 'church' if I don't have to preach the gospel. I can do all kinds of things that I want to, I can pack it in – you know, call it a 'church' but run it as a casino. You can get thousands in the door regularly and consistently and make a lot of money, but of course that's not the 'church of God' because we're not prayerfully preaching the word. So there's a certain assumption base on a common evangelical ministry which because there's not time to do everything in one day I'm not spelling out for you.

I'm screening out a lot of things that I don't believe in, things you can sometimes see in the church growth literature, which I do not believe in. For example – one of the techniques of growing a church quickly is as soon as someone comes through the door, especially men, you give them a job. First thing to do on the day they arrive. If you do that you'll grow your church more quickly than you are at the moment. It works, it's true, it works without fail, it will grow your church much quicker; and I'm dead set opposed to it. But I know it works. Growing church is not the only thing we're operating on here. Though I can understand what grows churches, there are still some of those things to which I'd say 'but I'm not going to do that'. And I wouldn't do that example because what it does is confuses the newcomer - because although I haven't checked out whether he's a Christian or not, I've given him a job. Those who advocate this method of church growth tell you that you don't have to find out if he's a Christian or not, but you can sort that out later, just give him a job. My experience is that that

confuses him completely. Because he's given a job he assumes he's alright, he's a member of the club, he's in, he's a Christian. And so it actually makes evangelising him considerably more difficult because I've already just baptised him, effectively, more effectively than if I've used water. Because he has now been accepted, given a label, made one of the members, *he's got a job*.

Furthermore, the way he does the job will not be Christianly because he's not a Christian and so he will build his little empire. And because I've done that to everyone who's walked in recently, this one's building his empire, this one's building his empire, this one's building his empire and 5/10 years down the track what we've got is a bunch of non-Christian empires inside the church fighting and warring with each other and it's time to find a new parish to go to and leave the mess for the next man! It works in growing the church but it doesn't work actually as it's unhelpful for the prayerful proclamation of the gospel. So there's lots of things I can tell you to do that will grow your church which I'm not telling you to do because they're wrong and we just leave them out. Not all pragmatics are good pragmatics so what do we need, we need *principles* and pragmatics. And today we're talking about principled pragmatics. Pragmatics alone won't build a Christian church. They will build, but they will not build a Christian church. 'Principles' alone means that you will be holding a church in a phone box with you and your wife and every now and again you put her out because she's not quite kosher. So there's the kind of options of the caricatures at the extremes. It's principled pragmatism that I'm talking about and today most of it is the pragmatism side of it though I'll touch on the principles in later.

I'd like to give you a little background quickly on Sydney and the United Kingdom because you are going to have to translate today which will make a pleasant change – we watch your television and have to translate all the time and when you watch ours you just dream of the sun....so translations are necessary. Let me help you translate by telling you about Sydney and its similarities and differences. It's very similar of course because it's a British port city in the first place, but it's quite different. One third of Australians are Roman Catholics – that's a different thing for most of you here but for our friends from Ireland, well that's different too – it's more than a third there. One third is Roman Catholic – that is the largest single denomination, however, two thirds, or a little less, of Australians are protestants. And so it's a protestant nation with a huge Roman Catholic sector in it. We have no history of Christian revivalism or vivalism, we can't revive Australia because we haven't lived in the first place. And so there's very little history.

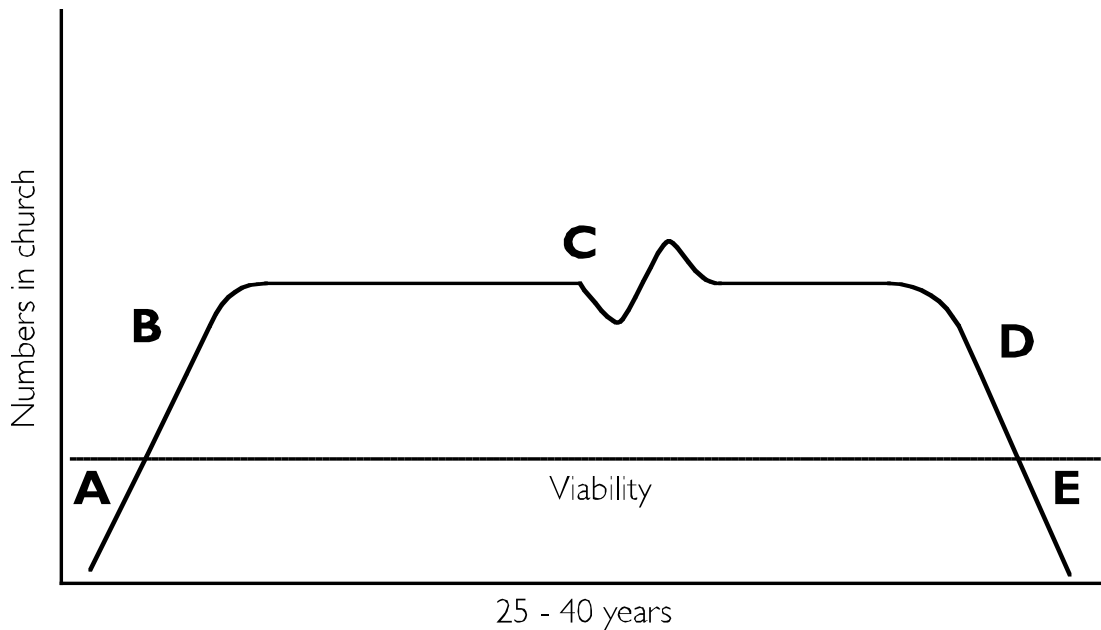
Remember where we come from - an easy way of understanding this is to compare us to the Americans. When Americans go to school they get taught about the Pilgrim Fathers coming as a matter of religious conscience finding a new nation that will be established as a city on the hill, a light to the Gentiles etc. They, on religious principles, at the end of their first year have a thanksgiving as a celebration to God for what's happened. Of course most Americans have not come from the Pilgrim Fathers, but that's the mythology by which they are taught to understand their nation. What's our mythology....you see the problem don't you? Convicts and gold diggers - that's where we came from. So you don't look back to Christian principle or Christian idealism or think yourselves with any religious ideals at in Australia, we are money-grabbing, off- scouring refugees , people the rest of the world didn't want but they sent us out here and they were too stupid not to realise where paradise was. We are a hedonistic, materialistic society – now that's like you but we got there a lot earlier than

you mob. We got there a lot quicker and we're further ahead. It's easier to enjoy yourself in the sun.

In terms of denominations we don't have an established church. I'm an Anglican, but Anglicans are free churches in Australia. So structurally, constitutionally we are much more like the FIEC than we are like the Church of England. And whereas we have bishops and archdeacons and deans, each congregation pays for its own ministry and basically selects its own minister under the good will of the archbishop, but he only has the right of veto, not the right of appointment. And we run our own affairs as local congregations, so it's a different thing. We also have one diocese of Sydney – so you think you're listening to an Australian – you're not, you're listening to a Sydney-sider. Australia I'll accept but Sydney is really my home, because Australia is just 5 cities remember and we're 600 miles from the closest one. And 600 miles is a long way away – like Inverness from here? It's a long way away. Perth is about Moscow. You can say they come from the same nation but it's a long way – many of us have never been to Perth and those who do can't find their way back home! So we're just 5 cities. Sydney has about 4 million people, it's about the same size as London but with 40% of the population. We're much more scattered out but we're talking a real city. 80-90% of Australians live in those 5 cities where the most urbanised nation in the world – you know all those outback pictures where nobody seems to be there – well that's because there's nobody there. You wouldn't want to be there either, we all live in cities, we're very urban, very citified, that's the character of what we're talking about.

Now in the city the Anglicans have one theological college, Moore College, to which all our candidates come and from where they are ordained. That means across the diocese we have 270 parishes and approx 230 of them are ministered to by evangelical Calvinists who preach the same gospel, were trained in the same college, are networked with each other, have the same philosophy of ministry as each other. And so as you go from one church to another you will hear the same gospel message and same mode of operation of preaching. This gives sociological studies tremendous ability because we can compare apples with apples, this parish with that parish because it's the same kind of ministry being conducted in both parishes. The question is then, why is Parish A growing and Parish B declining? Because it's not got to do with the gospel being preached because it's the same gospel; it's not got to do with the philosophy of ministry because it's the same philosophy of ministry; and indeed, when you swap the ministers over, A continues to grown and B continues to decline. So what is the factor or factors that lead to growth or decline?

You see, the beauty of Sydney as a place to do these kinds of studies is that we can hold constant some of the variables that we have because we're in the same family networked together. Over the last few years we've been studying the parishes very carefully and have done a lot of analysis on the 270 parishes and what is happening in them, and have come to some understanding about how churches work, how they function, how they grow and how they decline and die and that's what I'm talking to you about today. Now what you need to do is understand trends - and the trends follow this pattern:



We call this the Uluru (Ayers Rock) pattern. That is, churches will grow, plateau and decline over time. They grow because they have some growth dynamic in them. Now you and I would love that dynamic to be just the preaching of the gospel but our point is that *both* church B and Church D are preaching the gospel and church B grows but church D doesn't, so it's not just preaching the gospel. Preaching the gospel will see churches grow. Indeed we want them to grow by preaching the gospel, and we don't want them to get rid of the gospel just because there are other factors. But there is a growth dynamic in a church which can be all kinds of things.

Imagine a city suburb that was developed as the post war baby boom took place. So that's where the majority of the baby boomers were born. A church there in the 1950s and 1960s would have a large Sunday school. In the 1970s it would have a large youth fellowship and by the 1980s and 1990s they would have lots of weddings. By the end of the century they have the empty nesters getting too old to maintain the family homes and so selling up and a new ethnic grouping like the Chinese moving into that suburb. The church grew and plateaued and then declined in exactly the same accordance to the suburb. And so the growth dynamic was the suburban development.

Now that's a simple thing for you to grasp as an idea, but there are a lot of growth dynamics involved. For example, we planted a church a few years ago among journalists and media people. We found a radio journalist who was converted. He was a very keen evangelist, and so we got him trained up and put him out just to evangelise amongst journalists. So the growth dynamic was this man's evangelistic work amongst journalists. Journalists all live the same kind of lifestyle. They all seem to be in their 20s and they tend to live in the inner city. And so out of that evangelism we then planted a church amongst them. It was a Sunday night kind of church (as they all seemed to live that kind of lifestyle) just amongst the journalists/media people living in a particular area in the inner city. This has now attracted other people, so we've created a network church. With this example it's not so much that the suburb has grown, it's the evangelism among journalists that has grown.

In the Cathedral we planted a Chinese church - there are 30,000 people living between our rail station and the next station, and of those 30,000, 90% are Chinese or Korean. So we got some Korean and Chinese workers and they started greeting people on the door and after a while we've started seeing 80 or 90 people coming on a Sunday afternoon to our Chinese congregation. We've grown a church out of the ethnicity of the area. There are all kinds of growth dynamics why it could work.

Now as churches grow they cross a point of viability (V on diagram above). This is the point when they can pay for themselves basically, which is something like AS\$100,000 but here might be £60-70,000. This is the point at which you can afford to pay a minister, run a church building/hall, minister's accommodation and some secretarial help. The point of viability is the amount these costs run to – not to improve it or expand it, but just to run it. But that means then that there are different kinds of churches – an A church that is growing below viability, a B Church which is growing and above viability, a C church which has plateaued, a D church which is above viability but is now declining and an E church which is below viability and dying. And this takes place over a 25-40 year period generally. It's true in other voluntary associations. You know someone comes along and starts the boy scouts or a cricket club and over a 25-40 year period it will grow with the enthusiasm of the early members, it'll become an established part of the local community and then the ones who started it off will have moved on, the enthusiasm goes and it will die off over a period of time. You can certainly see it in church buildings in this land can't you, where in another period, age, time, they were meeting here in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and they clearly aren't any more.

Because of our particular situations we've also discovered that ministers go through a similar process. That is, over time ministers decline – it's actually what happens to humans – the enthusiasm, the excitement, the growth, the looking ahead, aspirations, hopes, happen until a person becomes a senior pastor...and then you start to learn reality. For many people their life starts to plateau – they experience a midlife crisis in those kind of work situations where you've arrived at the top and now that you're there you say 'is that all there is? And I've got to do this same thing for the next 30 years? Where's the next challenge, the next thing/qualification I'm supposed to do?' You reach the top and then over time life becomes more and more difficult and your physical and mental capacity start to slow down until they retire you and then bury you sometime. So there is a pattern of life that happens – now you match that in with the pattern of church life and you may have a declining minister ministering to a declining church then of course the thing is just going to run further down hill. Very often the churches that we call E churches find it hard to attract one of these energetic young men, they can only attract one of the old and tired men and so that reinforces it. Very often the old, tired churches don't *want* to have the young energetic men. They won't look at a 35 year old to come and pastor them. Sometimes of course they do have them and that leads to a massive explosion....which we'll talk about later.

We've also discovered in looking at our clergy and comparing them with other denominations that there are 3 periods of time which are really important. This is talking not about training ministers but senior ministers, those who are in charge of churches. When we surveyed them and compared them with other denominations across Australia we have discovered that in years 1-5 their own feeling about

themselves and the job is double positive. They are enthusiastic, they are looking forward to changes, they are putting in programmes they are going somewhere and they feel like they're going somewhere. In years 6-10 they slump straight into negativity. It's not as negative as the positive was positive – but their plans haven't born fruit, 30 fold, 60 fold hasn't happened yet. They have run out of new plans to do new programmes, they're now just doing the job and they don't know where to go and what to do. Sadly at that point in time, most of our ministers start changing churches and so when people are looking at a new minister, they're not allowed to look at someone in the first 5 years so they look at people who have been there 5-10 years, and because the ministers are fairly negative, that's when they move – they think 'I've done what I can do here, I can't do any more, I'll go somewhere else, because if I go somewhere else I'll get that old double positive feeling again'. But in their second parish it's not quite double positive and in their third parish it's only just positive and in their fourth parish they're retiring so there's that change.

So what happens to senior pastors when they've been around for 10+ years? Well our discovery is that they become positive. The 10+ people have actually come to terms with who they are, what their church is, what their ministry is and where they're going. That sounds really good doesn't it? Except that what we've discovered is that the 10+ people are positive *whether their church is growing or declining*. Their feeling is exactly the same. This is good when the church is good, but when the church is declining, all this means is that they've come to terms with the fact that the church is declining – and we need to work out how to get these brothers out of the work. As this isn't helping them or their churches to keep going. But they are positive, there's an acceptance value.

We've also discovered that the denominations with longer pastorates have greater growth than those with shorter pastorates. That's a very important piece of information to have, because most people think, 'change your minister and you'll solve your problems'. And now we've done the surveys across all the denominations across all of Australia and we've found if you change your minister you'll continue with your problems and have a new minister – it doesn't actually solve anything. It may on certain specific occasions – some ministers need to be sacked, but generally there's just as much chance that the church committee needs to be sacked as the minister – and if you sack the church committee as well as the minister well then you're really down the gurgler. So just hang on and learn to live with each other as it's the long term pastorates who actually see the real growth. Therefore the more ministers you can get into 10+ years, the more you will see growth in your particular association of churches or denomination– we're talking about groupings here. In a particular case that might not be the case, but across the general, this is what our aim should be.

Therefore for that 6-10 year period we really need to work out what to do. That is when to have your long service leave or have your study leave or sabbatical or whatever it might be, take 2 months off and think about what's happening. Get re-energised, read in a library for a while, go to some courses, and get some perspective on what's happening, as you need to get back into something that is now not as comfortable in order to break through into the 10+ phase. Rather than change church in that period of time, work at changing yourself.

Let's talk about the growing of churches. In the Bible the key area of growing churches is **godliness**. Ephesians 4, Colossians 2 – you grow up into Christ's

likeness, so the key of growth is growth in quality. However the bible also talks about growth in numbers – the numbers were added to the Lord daily. 3000, 5000 were converted at different times – the numbers are actually there and the numbers grew and on one or two occasions it talks about the number of churches growing, but generally the focus and locus of growth is the gospel. It's the word of God that grew – e.g. in the parable of the sower, Acts 6v6, 12v24, 19v20 – 'the word of God grew and spread'. Colossians 1 – Paul thanks God that the word of God is bearing fruit and growing amongst you. In 2 Thessalonians 3v1, Paul prays that the word of God may speed on and be glorified/conquer. But the word of God is the dynamic of growth in the scriptures so we must be committing ourselves to the word of God and that ministry, and the direction of the growth is towards God and godliness and Christ Jesus.

So what is A church like when it is growing? Well, there are certain characteristics to this church under viability. It's first generational and this is enormously helpful as it means it doesn't carry any baggage. First generation churches in general grow faster than any other churches. So when people look and say 'look, their church is really growing', it rarely has to do with the theology, it rarely has to do with the theory of ministry they're operating on, it nearly always has to do with the fact that it's a first generational church. New denominations grow faster than old denominations and new churches grow faster than old churches. Of course sometimes the first generational church is the re-generational church – a church has been dead for 50 years but starts again, but it's the first generation.

What are the advantages of first generation churches? **No baggage.** You generally have a group of people with a common, clearly defined purpose. They all know what they're doing, why they're here, where they're going, so a church plant is like that – you get a dozen people together saying 'let's see if we can evangelise that estate'. There's only a few of you, you sort out your personal relationships, every member is an active member, you're not carrying passengers, you're all working together here for that estate. We're not trying to evangelise the world, we're trying to reach this world and we're not interested in raising money for Red Cross or Greenpeace, we're trying to evangelise this estate. And that sense of common purpose, everyone being on board, being a worker, that is terrific and you're carrying none of the previous baggage. So I left St Matthias a couple of years ago and think of my poor successor - can you imagine – I was the first generational pastor, the congregation grew. Now when he comes in and says 'we need to do this', they say 'Phillip would never do that!' They don't know – the reason I didn't do it was that I never had the brains to think of it – if I'd thought of it I would have done it, but he can see it needs to be done but he's got baggage that I never had because when I said 'let's do this' people would say 'yeah, go on, let's do it'. But he can't do any of that because he's got the baggage called Phillip Jensen saddled on him (he's a terrific bloke doing a great job and the church has accepted all kinds of changes). But I'd prefer to be me than him any day of the week. In old churches, you can't kill anything. Everyone has authority to bring something into the church but no-one has authority to throw anything out of a church. So my granny dies, I inherit a lounge suite and I give it to the youth club. The youth club uses it and it gets wrecked and so they say let's through out that old lounge suite. I say 'hang on, that's my Granny's, I gave it in perpetuum, it's got her name on the side of it. When the Lord Jesus returns he's supposed to see that we gave that'. I've got authority to bring it in but you've not got any authority to throw it out.

What is true with furniture is true of institutions. Once you set a programme up that's it until the Lord returns isn't it? So no-one can stop anything that's started. But first generation churches don't have any baggage. They can do what they want and so first generation churches have **flexibility** – you can change you can move you can do different things. If you're not reaching this estate you can stop and say 'there's another one over there'. It doesn't matter; you can do that with a first generational church. You can say, 'Well let's stop meeting on Sunday morning and try Sunday evening. Let's scrap that and try Wednesday morning.' We can do whatever we like; whereas once you've been around for a generation or two the flexibility has gone. In the 1990s the Chinese community planted 50 churches in Sydney – a terrific outpouring of Chinese ministry evangelism, it was wonderful. Someone commented that as long as they stayed in public school halls their churches grew, but as soon as they buy land and build a building they stop growing. As long as you're in a hall, once you out grow the hall you go and find a bigger hall, you find a town hall. But once you put a building up, the building sets your vision.

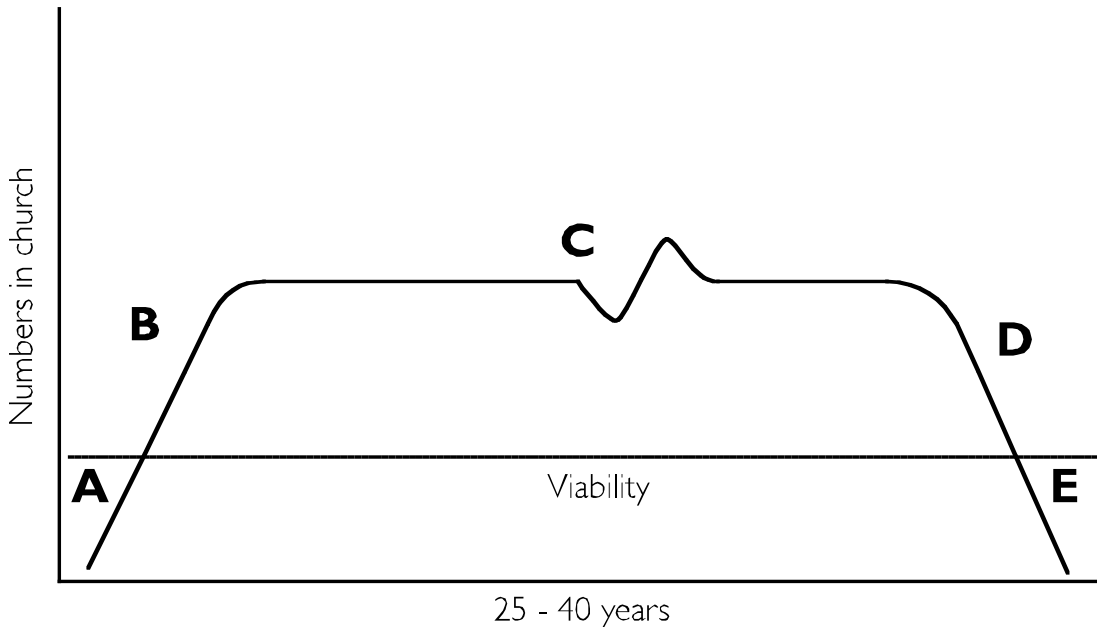
This is a massively successful meeting – we've filled this building. But the area we're looking at has something like 20 million people – this is not a big crowd, this is a big crowd in this building, but I've seen some workmen out there and they don't know we're here. This is a tiny little crowd, but the building sets the vision. Don't get me wrong, I've run churches in school halls and it's a real pain, you've got to get there early to set out the chairs you've got to stay an hour later to dismantle it all, you've got to find a garage to put all the stuff in every Sunday and it's a real pain. I know why people want buildings, but there are consequences to building buildings.

A churches have the flexibility which is why they keep growing, but the characteristic disadvantage of an A churches is that they have no resources, that's their problem. They are **under resourced** - they haven't reached viability and so they haven't got enough resources. Most denominations will give them some resources but the more resources you are given from outside the more grant dependant you become and grant dependant churches never grow up. That's the great problem of social welfare and its philosophy – it produces children. And you don't get to viability as long as there are grants. So whatever grants come from another church – they need to be tailored to stop as you need to help children grow up. In the end the church that is going to grow beyond viability has to find its own growth dynamic within itself.

So how does it find this ability, where is it? Well I've seen it, I've watched it – it lies in the church planter most commonly as there's a certain personality that can plant churches. And I've defined accurately now to my own satisfaction what the personality is. They are *scavengers*. You've got to find a Christian scavenger if you want to plant a church and grow a church because scavengers can find resources where nobody else can find them. And they just find it. Scavengers generally aren't interested in money; they walk away with the equipment. They scavenge out of university lecture theatres for nothing. A scavenger goes to the local community centre and persuades them that it would be good for the local community if his church met there. And so they close down the community centre on a Sunday morning to let him – he's a *scavenger*. Now in a church leader that's what we've got to look for. Now the growth dynamic isn't just that you faithfully minister the gospel because you can faithfully minister the gospel, but if it takes you 20 years to get to viability you'll be dead of starvation. You've got to faithfully minister the gospel *and* be a scavenger. It's not minister the gospel faithfully and have someone support you by pouring money in,

because that will teach you to be a child forever. Pouring some money in is worth doing, helping them in the initial phase is worth doing, but they've got to find it within themselves to be able to build the resource base past viability. That's an exciting ministry with huge advantages for growth but it has the no resources problem – that's the constant problem.

Now what happens when you go past viability – the B church?



Well the good news is that you are above viability and so now what you find yourself all the time is...**under-resourced**. You might say 'hang on, but you've just said we're above viability'. I'm saying yes, the B church is always by character under-resourced – that's its nature. When you have money in the bank you are no longer a B church. Every B church I know is struggling to make budget. And it will frequently be in the red. For those of you who are church treasurers this is a terrifying sight. Let's get off B as quickly as we can! Because every year I'm going to have to turn up and say 'I didn't make budget last year'. That's what you do if you're a B church. Now how can that be the case? Well, I'll tell you after lunch.....