THIS PLANTED VINE
A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NEW YORK
James Elliott Lindsley
Advance comments for *This Planted Vine*:

"This is a rare example of lively and well-written institutional history. It deals with many picturesque figures, and tells the tale of a New York changing through three centuries not only in its religious practices but in its values and ways of living. The book gives an appealing glimpse of mortals struggling, often amid insuperable worldly snares, to do the Lord's work."

—August Heckscher

"Well organized, highly readable, often entertaining, by an author who really has a feel for New York and its church life."

—David L. Holmes
Professor of Religion
College of William and Mary in Virginia

*JAMES ELLIOTT LINDSLEY* was born in Morristown, New Jersey, is a graduate of Bard College and the General Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1955. He is currently the Rector of St. Paul's in Tivoli, New York, and lives in Germantown with his wife and three children. He is the editor of *The Episcopal New Yorker*. 

*ISBN 0-06-015347-4*
This authoritative and engrossing volume is a lively account of the growth and development, the problems as well as the accomplishments, of the Diocese of New York under the stewardship of thirteen bishops. It was shortly after the American Revolution that a group of New Yorkers set up an independent branch of the Church of England in lower Manhattan. But the origins of the Episcopal Church in New York lay further back in the history of the Province, when English congregations gathered in “New York town,” Westchester and Albany. Trinity Parish, as it was known and remains to this day, was among the first of what became nearly a thousand Episcopal churches over the next two hundred years.

The early years, as the author points out, were beset by small numbers of communicants, inadequate funds—for a long time financial support, prayer books as well as new clergy were supplied from England—and, later, frictions over High and Low Church preferences. But in spite of these problems, which never completely disappeared over the following decades, the growth of the Episcopal Church kept pace with the expansion of American society. New churches were created farther uptown as the city grew, and a diocese was born that included the entire State of New York. The early bishops spent a great deal of their time visiting their far-off parishes by river steamer, canal boat and horse and wagon.

Mr. Lindsley follows the controversies and achievements during successive diocesan administrations. He explores the church’s role in a rapidly changing environment; its successful efforts in attending to medical needs with the establishment of St. Luke’s and other hospitals; its establishment of social services for the poor; its lack of enthusiasm for Abolition or support of the Union cause in the Civil War; and he describes its prominence among the elite of city and state.

The result is a book that in part is an insightful history of New York over more than two centuries, as well as a stimulating narrative about an outstanding religious institution and its leaders.

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To Barbara
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When Bishop Moore asked me to write a history of the Diocese of New York marking its two hundredth anniversary, I accepted the task with an eagerness born of naiveté. If he were to ask me now, I might respond with lessened enthusiasm, despite the cordiality and warmth of those who helped me prepare this history. For the wealth of material is great, as it should be, inasmuch as here we are considering one of our largest dioceses and one of the greatest cities of the world. Anyone who attempts to tell the story of the Diocese of New York is tempted to explore byways that, however pleasant and fascinating, interfere with the principal narrative. When these pages are delivered from my desk they leave a large aggregation of material that has not been used. This includes facets of diocesan life untouched here, worthy names neglected, parishes whose rich history must go unnoticed, organizations inadequately mentioned. The lode has simply been too rich.

Therefore, let me begin by an apology to those who search in vain for specific information about a favorite person or place: its inexistence is due either to its not coming to my notice, or to the obvious limitation of page space.

As I come to the end of preparing this history and begin to think of those who have helped me write it, a great host of names confronts me. First of all, there is Bishop Moore, who conceived the history and who, with his suffragans, Bishop Wetmore and Bishop Dennis, read much of the manuscript. I cannot claim that they approved it, but their encouragement was much appreciated, and their persistence about the bicentennial of the Diocese of New York deserves the appreciation of all of us.

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Nelson R. Burr is well-known for his in-depth research in American Church history. He has read much of this history when it was in its formative stage, and his valuable suggestions have been respected.

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matched by his commitment to the Church he served, and that is Thomas Muncaster, who was clerk of the works and general factotum of the cathedral during the episcopates of five bishops. He is proof that the clergy come and go, but the laity are here always.

I have also to thank the very many other people who have helped me, beginning with my wife, who encouraged me to embark upon the work and prepared an extensive bibliography; the librarians at the General Theological Seminary; Bishops Donegan, Boyntan, and Wood; the Rev. Messrs. Edwin C. Coleman, Carl Scovel, Allen Hinman, Kenneth R. Waldron, Raymond L. Harbort, William Reisman, D. Lincoln Harter, F. Lee Richards, A. Pierce Middleton, Wayne Schmitt, William Howard Melish, Douglas Glasspool, Thomas Pike, Marion J. Hatchett, Horatio N. Tragitt, and, particularly, my predecessor as historiographer, Leslie Lang. The Rev. Frederick H. Shriver, Jr., kindly read much of the manuscript and offered valuable comments.

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Shewgile

Germantown, New York

November 17, 1983