More educated people attend church but they require a rational approach to religion. Parker believes that unless educational institutions attempt to help students to accept eternal values in faith, not only will the church lose its members but society will be destroyed. He states that secular intellectualism and institutionalism are rapidly replacing the church and its ministries. The church has yielded to other agencies many of its functions. Consequently, since the church no longer offers what the people need, it no longer commands allegiance, respect, and support of the majority of the populace. Those who do not attend church come for the fellowship, not because they really want to worship. (4) Change in pastoral relationship discourages some from church attendance. The minister no longer is kept in high regard as in previous days, partly because his role and position in society have changed adversely. (5) The urban housing situation has caused deterioration of the home situation and members of the family have lost an affinity for one another. When the family is dissolving it affects the church attendance in numerous ways.

The responses to Parker's questionnaire present some interesting findings. For instance 76 percent no longer go to church because the spouse does not belong to the same church; 65 percent stay home because the spouse does not attend; 66 percent do not attend because the ministers are leaving. Some of the other main reasons given for dropping out of the church were: (1) the church takes no action in moral or political issues (55 percent); (2) Sunday is the only day available for rest (49 percent); (3) life
is out of harmony with church (45 percent); (4) the habit of attending is broken (40 percent); (5) the church induces guilt feelings (40 percent); (6) the church is outmoded (30 percent); and (7) there are too many political sermons (30 percent).

When parents were asked, "Why don't your children attend Sunday school or why do they attend irregularly?" typical answers were: (1) "The minister is leaving the church" (67 percent); (2) "They are not learning what we learned" (27 percent); (3) "Children do not go because we don't compel them to go" (25 percent); (4) "Both we and the children are too tired" (24 percent); and, (5) "Children are being taught revolution" (23 percent).

And when the parents were asked further, "What reasons do your children give for not wanting to attend Sunday School?" the replies were: (1) "The church is not the 'in-thing' these days" (87 percent); (2) "nobody at home goes anymore" (50 percent); (3) "My friends do not go there" (38 percent); and (4) "We can't make friends" (25 percent).

The most searching question was: "Is the church following the principles laid down by Christ?" A total of 823 nonattending members answered the question. Of these, 87 percent answered no; 7 percent answered yes; and 6 percent were indifferent to the question. In comparison, 89 percent declared their faith in Jesus Christ and the Gospel, and only 9 percent had no faith in Christ, while 2 percent were indifferent to the question.

In evaluating Parker's findings among inactive parishioners, it should be considered that (1) his study was carried out in urban
churches subject to all the problems of the city; (2) he obtained his responses from seven major denominations which may have more in common than at variance; (3) coinciding with the sending out of the questionnaire, a prominent clergyman, active in social and political affairs, resigned suddenly from the ministry to the shock and dismay of the general public in the area; (4) he used a questionnaire with twelve questions only and failed to obtain other supporting data which would have made the study more valuable; and (5) only three or four questions were directly related to the problem of church drop out.

Parker comes to some very drastic conclusions. The church is negligent, careless, obstinate, and resists change. The external reasons submitted for the decline of church membership are symptomatic of internal dysfunction. The root of the trouble is that the church has failed to teach the faith once delivered. It has placed the emphasis on the things that would attract people rather than on what would hold them. He sees little hope because the church has lost its concepts of true love, mercy, and sympathy; the members no longer enjoy praying and communing with God as much as they enjoy bazaars and rummage sales. Therefore, the church, if it must again be a viable institution, must teach and practice the faith once delivered. But it is too docile, dormant, cautious, and reticent. ¹

¹Ibid., pp. 115-18.
Ila Zbaraschuk (1973) interviewed a group of young Adventists for a church paper to inquire why they dropped out of the church. Some of the reasons given are presented but not necessarily listed in the sequence of importance:

1. Premature baptism in order to please parents, teachers, and others.
2. Indifference to what went on in the church.
3. Concern that they be regarded as hypocrites.
4. Church is too large, no chance to share. Place where people hide.
5. Leaders press for money.
6. Parents and church leaders have the form of religion but not the spirit. Nominalism. Insincerity.
7. Inconsistencies and double standards.
8. Religion is a social event rather than personal experience.

In talking with teachers and dormitory deans who were well acquainted with the thinking of the young people, Zbaraschuk obtained some additional opinions. Young people drop out of church because:

1. They feel that church services are boring. They are unable to stand the quality of the sermons and the poor quality of the preaching. Sermons sound like re-runs.
2. They complain of "misplaced emphasis" in the church.

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3. They believe the church is not relevant to their needs.
4. They think the church has failed to teach the young to think for themselves.
5. They suffer from inactivity.

It should be noticed that disagreement with Adventist doctrines was not mentioned as a factor influencing them to leave the church. Many of the reasons stated by Zbaraschuk correlate well with the factors leading to disassociation as perceived by the respondents in this study.

The report by the **Gallup Opinion Index** (1975) may aid in understanding the trends in contemporary attitudes toward religion, religious practices, and characteristics of church members. The survey indicates that the long slide in religious interest and participation, beginning in the late 60s, is coming to a halt. Gallup found that 31 percent of the American society believe religion is increasing its influence on the American society (up from 14 percent in 1970). Fifty-six percent of the people interviewed say that they believe religion is losing influence (down from 75 percent in 1970). If the opinions of people are indicators, it seems that a long-time trend has been reversed.

One point of interest in this report is a comparison of reasons for defections. How can the effect of the church be improved to prevent people from leaving the church? *The church must not only reach out to new people, but it must also not lose*

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those already within the church who may be drifting away through 
DISINTEREST, INACTIVITY OR NEGLECT."

Loss of interest in religion among Roman Catholics over 
the past decade, especially the young persons, is ascribed to the 
feelings held by two opposite groups, those who feel that the 
church is (1) behind the times and (2) too inflexible on social 
issues. And those who feel the church is (1) allowing for too 
rapid changes and (2) lowering the standards. The discontent 
among clergy and laity does not arise from a weakening of religious 
convictions, but from a reluctance to accept certain aspects of 
institutionalized religion.

In 1975 regular church attendance was reported by various 
denominations as follows: (1) Baptists, 37 percent; (2) Methodists, 
30 percent; (3) Lutherans, 37 percent; (4) Presbyterians, 32 per-
cent; (5) Episcopalians, 26 percent.

Analysis of the study on church attendance reveals that age 
is a key factor. Persons under thirty are considerably less 
likely to attend church in any given week than those thirty or 
older. Women are more likely to attend than men. Churchgoing is 
less frequent in the far West than in other major regions. Married 
persons of like faith have a better attendance record than do 
single persons. Of single Protestant males only 23 percent 
attended church during an average week. Annual Gallup Audits of 
church attendance conducted over a twenty-year period, and based on

1Ibid., p. 52.
107 individual surveys which reached more than 150,000 adults, show that attendance in the United States reached its peak during the Lenten months of February, March, and April and is at the lowest level in midsummer.

The Index presents a comparison of religiosity and churchgoing which is of interest to this investigation:¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who say they are:</th>
<th>Attending church</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very religious</td>
<td>79 percent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly religious</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all religious</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion in America (1976).² This Gallup report attempts to present Americans as extraordinarily religious people. One evidence of this is the high ranking of the United States compared to all other countries included in the study with regard to answers to questions on religious beliefs and practices. The findings of this year's survey also seem to indicate that the level of belief and practice in the United States has remained more or less constant, while there have been significant changes in other parts of the world.

The study shows that the decline in church attendance of the past decade has leveled off; little change has been recorded over the past fifteen years in Protestant church attendance. The national decline in religious interest and participation was largely a

¹Ibid., p. 6.
Catholic phenomenon. Certain Protestant denominations have suffered stagnation or membership losses in recent years, but the picture for the nation as a whole has changed very little the past forty years, according to the Gallup Opinion Index. A most interesting aspect of the report is the claim that the churches seem to be successful in reaching young people and that the younger generation have the will to believe and the desire to help others.

According to the findings of the survey, the disenchantment with religion among young people during the 1960s appears to have subsided. Church attendance among Protestants has stabilized about 38 percent (fluctuating only 1-2 percent from 1964 to 1975). However, Catholic attendance has changed dramatically from 71 percent in 1964 to 54 percent in 1975. The Jews have experienced a slight increase from 17 percent in 1964 to 20 percent in 1975. The twenty-one-year average in America was 44 percent.

A closer look at the Protestant attendance shows a 34 percent male and 42 percent female attendance, indicating that women are more likely to attend church than men, a fact that has remained constant for many years. College students attend church more faithfully than the students in secondary schools (40 percent compared to 36 percent). The people of the South (44 percent) and the Midwest (40 percent) are the most faithful church attenders, while people in the East (34 percent) attend a little less, and those in the West (28 percent) are attending the least. Gallup also finds that there is a correlation between age and church
attendance. The older people attend more faithfully than the younger ones. The percentages are as follows: 18-24 years--30 percent; 25-29 years--33 percent; 30-49 years--38 percent; and 50 and older--42 percent. The socio-economic levels have some influence with the lowest attendance among the highest income brackets and the highest attendance among the lowest income families. Obviously this does not necessarily indicate that the poor and the low-income people are the most faithful attenders. Probably in many instances it is a reflection of the large number of retired people who attend church and have lower incomes. The middle-class income of $15,000-$20,000 ranks the highest for the entire country in attendance. With regard to occupation, it appeared that the nonlabor force (apparently largely retired people) are the most frequent attenders (41 percent); followed by people from the professions and business (40 percent); clerical and sales persons (39 percent); and manual workers (35 percent). This is extremely interesting and may be an indicator that social prestige accounts for the high church attendance in the United States. The rural areas have the highest attendance (42 percent), while cities of one million or more have the lowest attendance (31 percent). Considering marital status, the percentages of attendance were: married--39 percent; single--31 percent; divorced/separated--39 percent; and widowed--44 percent.

When this project was being printed, the writer became acquainted with a recently published research report from Germany.
Andreas Feige¹ (1976) has reported on his outstanding sociological investigation of the causes and conditions for leaving the Lutheran Church of Berlin West.

His empirical research, based on a sample of 129 representatively selected persons, is an analysis of the approximately 20,000 people who in 1971 left the church. The respondents were interviewed by means of a questionnaire and the findings were correlated according to age, sex, occupation, education, church affiliation of spouse, and so forth.

The question he tried to get answered was: who tends when and under what circumstances to dissolve his, by this time, formal membership in the Lutheran Church?

His findings were that those who leave the church appear in many respects only as the more consistent part of the much larger group of disassociated church members, that is, those who have no active relationship to their church.

The group of apostates is made up predominantly of:

1. The younger generation from 18-22 years of age (50 percent)

2. Unmarried persons who work for a living
3. Men who work and support their families
4. Blue- and white-collar working people
5. Academically trained people.

These disassociators do not consider themselves as leaving a communion or fellowship, but rather an organization in which they were anonymous members. Therefore, they did not give up a church family or a group of friends, or anything which they considered worthwhile.

Their act does not constitute an open protest against a too-powerful church, nor do they leave the church because they have adopted an anti-church or anti-Christian world view. In other words, they may oppose the traditional views of the church and may be indifferent to the traditional church doctrines, but they do not leave because they have adopted a new anti-Christian philosophy. As a matter of fact, their views about the church are not strongly distinguishable from those of remaining church members.

The main motivation to leave the church, according to Feige, lies in the negative result of a costs/expenses-profit/gain/advantage analysis (Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse) made by these people. Such a situation is usually caused by circumstances in which the persons are faced with changed or changing personal or economic data which influence them to a reorientation of their values, preferences, and habits.

Their decision is often influenced by their personal contacts with friends and relatives, or by the example set by others. For example, the husband may choose to leave the church and the wife will follow him after some years.

It was noticeable that most of these people came from a background that was indifferent toward the church and disinterested
in it. Therefore, they face no opposition from their families by
dissolving their formal membership in a church to which their
parents already had only a formal relationship.

Andreas Feige has no illusions for the future and expects
the current trends to continue.

Literature Related to the Problem
of Church Disassociation

Louis Bultena¹ (1944) studied the church membership and
attendance of 24,489 individuals eighteen years of age or older,
from eighteen Protestant churches, including the Seventh-day Ad-
ventists, in Madison, Wisconsin.

He found that many of the churches had a majority of women
members. In the Adventist church the ratio was 62 men per 100
women, in the Lutheran church the ratio was 79.5, and in the Gospel
Tabernacle it was 91.7. Attendance per month varied from .59 to
3.27. The Adventists averaged 2.39, while the Episcopalians indi-
cated an attendance of 1.52, and the Presbyterians 1.54. According
to his findings, 10 percent of the no-church people attended some
church, 43 percent of the Protestants and 80 percent of the
Catholics attended church.

Bultena takes issue with the following generalizations:

1. That certain socio-economic classes attend more than
others. His study shows no significant difference between

¹Louis Bultena, "Church Membership and Church Attendance
384-389.
attendance of members from various occupational, economic, and educational levels.

2. That church membership is a middle-class phenomenon, that laboring, professional, and "upper class" people do not belong to the churches in as large proportions as do the members of the "middle classes." His study indicated that in Madison about equal proportions from the various socio-economic classes belong to the church and their attendance does not differ significantly.

3. That a large number of people attend church is inflated statistics. For example, Madison Roman Catholic churches could seat 4,750 persons, and yet 11,120 were reported to attend church per Sunday (a ratio of attendants to seating of 2.36). Granted that some Catholics attend church services more than once on Sunday, but the statistics still appear inflated.

Charles D. Martin (1963)\(^1\) conducted a survey of 628 teenage youth in four Adventist academies. His findings indicated that 12.7 percent of these young people only go to church because the parents make them; 78.2 percent attend because they want to; and 9 percent do not attend. The same group revealed that 55.5 percent understand and believe the doctrines, while 15.3 percent do not; 35.6 percent have personal devotions, and 56.0 percent do not. Of those who responded, 39.6 percent have devotions at home, and 55.9 percent do not; 21.8 percent feel that the church has too many restrictions, but 65.6 percent do not feel restricted by the church.

Also 54.9 percent admit that the church leaders help them with their problems, while 40.6 report no help. And 73.1 percent of the students expressed that sufficient spiritual activities were provided.

Herve Carrier (1965)\(^1\) reports on disbelief and loss of membership. From the point of view of social psychology, he discusses what influences people to make negative changes and break with the church.

Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark (1965)\(^2\) participate in the debate on whether the United States has experienced a revival in religion or not the past three decades. They question the value of the statistics on which the case for revival rests, and they show that those who contend that there has been a revival in religion give greatest weight to the ritualistic dimension, that is, the proportion of church members in the population, average attendance, and contributions. This dimension is not the only indicator of religiosity. Therefore they suggest that all of their famous five dimensions of religiousness should be considered. They are: the experimental, the ritualistic, the ideological, the intellectual, and the consequential dimensions.

Joseph E. Faulkner and Gordon F. De Jong (1966)\(^3\) constructed behavioral descriptions for each of Glock and Stark's five dimensions.

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of religiosity. These may also be applied to the religiousness concept of Seventh-day Adventists and could be stated as the following dimensions:

1. **Ideological.** The belief in distinctive Adventist doctrines and prophetic interpretations peculiar to the denomination.

2. **Intellectual.** The acquisition of at least a minimum of religious information about the religious tenets of the church and some basic understanding of the Scriptures. It is not a prerequisite for belief.

3. **Ritualistic.** A reference to a person's appreciation and valuing of Bible reading, devotional literature, hymn singing, worship, prayers, church attendance, Sabbath School and other church participations, communion service, baptism, and a commitment to the mission of the church. These are all the practices people do to carry out their religion.

4. **Experiential.** The purpose a person finds for his existence in a lifestyle which is committed to the complete surrender of the total person to Jesus Christ. It includes feelings, perceptions, and a religious experience that makes him live close to the Lord in complete trust and dependence.

5. **Consequential.** The person's attitude is that he desires to order his life in full compliance with the revealed will of God and the beliefs and standards of the church, and that all his values are based upon the revelation of God.
Barbara Brinsfield Pittard (1966) describes a theoretical and methodological framework for the empirical study of commitment to the church. It was developed in connection with her study of two Methodist parishes in 1960-62. The increasing interest in the doctrines of the church, the religiosity of the members and the statistical evidence of defections and decline in the rate of growth in some Protestant denominations, makes a study of commitment important to the minister.

She focuses upon the participant member as he provides evidence of the degree to which he has internalized the norms, beliefs, practices, and goals of the church. That is, the members are committed to the church. The meaning of commitment was found to be on three levels, the individual, the collective, and the actual. Primarily, commitment is expressed through the participant's performance of his membership role within the activities of the church, in and through group involvement, the faith response within the community of the people of God. Consequently, the internal task of gathering and nurturing the life of the members becomes extremely important.

Martin E. Marty (1968) evaluates the Gallup polls on American religion. He discusses the radical changes in religion and the trend toward religious revolution. Comparing two field studies

1Barbara Brinsfield Pittard, "The Meaning and Measurement of Commitment to the Church" (Research Paper Number 13, Georgia State College, February 1966).

from 1952 and 1965, he presents the findings about the religious beliefs and practices of Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews.

Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock (1968) report on a study of religious commitment. They believe that the ambiguity of what religiousness really is, has led to serious failures in research and writing on religious commitment. Therefore, they propose the application of their five dimensions. Religiosity can be expressed in diversity of ways which they sum up in five core dimensions: belief, practice, knowledge, experience, and consequences.

Chapter 10, "The Switchers: Changes of Denomination," is of special interest. Stark and Glock found that in the United States there is considerable movement across the boundaries of the three main religious traditions, and that the Protestants switch churches more than the Roman Catholics and the Jews. The switching is often random and idiosyncratic. Forty-six percent of the Protestant respondents had previously been members of at least one other denomination.

Among the ten denominational groups studied in California, the most stable were the Episcopalians (83 percent remained in the church), followed by Missouri Lutherans (75 percent), American Lutheran (70 percent), Presbyterians (64 percent), and the Sects (60 percent). The least stable were the Congregationalists (35 percent remained and 65 percent changed church), Disciples of

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Christ (39 percent), Methodists (52 percent), Southern Baptists (53 percent), and American Baptists (55 percent).

However, the viability of a denomination is not just to hold its members but to attract new ones. The net losses were reported to be as follows: Southern Baptists, 34 percent; Disciples of Christ, 32 percent; Methodists, 17 percent; Sects, 9 percent; American Baptists, 8 percent; and Lutherans, 5 percent. Those with net gain in percentages were: Episcopalians, 40 percent; Presbyterians, 22 percent, and Congregationalists, 2 percent.

While the Congregationalists were the least stable, they were extremely successful in attracting new members and therefore able to report a small gain. Lutherans were unable to make up their losses; Southern Baptists were hit the hardest; and Episcopalians seem to be able to hold their members and also attract new ones.

Stark and Glock infer that people who change their church tend to move from conservative bodies to theologically more liberal ones. This does not agree with the findings by the National Council of Churches and Kelly, who believe the opposite trend prevails.

When Stark and Glock compared a national survey to their California findings, they discovered that 40 percent of American Protestants are not in the same denomination as were their fathers. The Baptists and the Lutherans had retained the largest proportion of their original members (72 and 65 percent, respectively), while the others retained from 51-57 percent of their born members.
Malcolm Boyd (1968) and other contributors to his book advocate the need for radical changes in the church, otherwise it will lose its grasp on the members and especially the youth. The church is being accused of being legalistic, institutionalized, self-protective, and dishonest. It is unwilling to change and renew itself, and as a result the underground church has developed.

Donald G. Bloesch (1969) examined the contemporary religious situation and evaluated the reasons why people are leaving the churches. His thesis is that the deeper cause of dissatisfaction in the church is that people are not hearing the Word of God and therefore are not being convicted of sin.

Theology has become secularized and lacks spiritual authority and power. The new apostasy, which is to Bloesch the secular theology and the social gospel, is a fruit of the old apostasy in which the mission of the church was isolated from the secular world. Moral lectures have taken the place of the gospel proclamation and social engineering has supplanted evangelism. Therefore, people are dying of spiritual starvation because the preaching gives evidence that the ministers do not search the Scriptures. People are disenchanted with the church because its mission has become secularized. Bloesch comes on the strongest in his conclusion: "It is no disaster that many withdraw from the church," and, quoting Emil Brunner, "what we need are ministers who will drive

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people out of the church by the preaching of the Biblical gospel which is a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Greeks." But the fact is that people are not being alienated from the church by the scandal of the cross, but by false stumbling blocks such as the union of religion and a welfare-state ideology.  

Pierre Babin (1969) examines the religious values of Catholic youth who have become critical of their church. In a rapid changing society some young people think that the church is an obstacle to freedom, that it blocks growth and development, and that it is bound to an archaic cultural system. But people no longer want to be restricted to membership in some esoteric group. They want to be free, to live, and they don't want to be separated from the world. They often feel that the church is too remote from the thinking, feeling, praying, and loving of modern man. Many young people reason that it is not necessary to belong to the church to be saved.

Thomas F. O'Dea (1970) discussed the institutionalization of religion which alienates many people from the church. He concludes that many professing Christians:

1. Join the church out of the wrong motivation.
2. Fail to make worship a personal experience based on individual needs.

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1Ibid., p. 101.


3. Adopt tradition and accept bureaucracy.

4. Substitute letter for the spirit of the religious message.

5. Fail to relate religion to everyday life and one's values.

6. Have not experienced conversion.

Gerald G. Bachman (1971)\(^1\) reports on a six-year study on the causes and effects of dropping out of high school. Many of the findings can be applied to the church. The study shows that dropping out is not so much a problem in itself as it is a symptom or an indicator of other problems which have their origin earlier in life. More specifically, dropping out is symptomatic of certain background and ability characteristics, experiences, and traits of personality and behavior.

The study shows a strong correlation between drop out and family background, which is viewed as a cluster of powerful forces that do much to shape an individual's capacities and accomplishments throughout his lifetime. The findings of this study confirm that dropouts are low in self-esteem and high in negative states such as depression, resentment, and anomie, which precede the drop out. Furthermore, many of these individuals are high in need for independence, and some have strong impulses to aggression. Consequently, such persons are always more likely than others to

drop out. Delinquent behavior in school is a strong predictor of dropping out.¹

Stark-Foster-Glock-Quinly (1971)² refer to clergy defecting at an estimated 7 percent a year and point out that it is primarily the New Breed who are not interested and have made very little impact in the parish ministry anyway. These researchers claim that among the laity it is those most inclined to theological modernism and ethical commitment who are drifting into inactivity and out of the church altogether. The backbone of the church remains very conservative. Denominationalism, Orthodoxy, and Particularism continue to be strong in United States churches.

Douglass W. Johnson and George W. Cornell (1972)³ conducted a study to find out what 26 million Protestants in North America think about the church. A representative sample of 3,454 persons from fifteen different denominations (including the Seventh-day Adventists) were selected at random and interviewed by 150 persons for an average of 75 minutes. The interview schedule contained 23 pages of questions.

Of special interest to this study was the reasons people gave for losing interest in the church, as that is a strong indicator for future drop out. The rankings given, in order of most


significant cause, are based on scale averages from 1-7, with reasons getting the heaviest concentration of upper choices attaining the lower score and thus the higher rank. Responses are listed by both laity and clergy (see list of responses below).

The clergy stress that church is no longer important to people, but the laity does not buy that line. They put it down as a seventh-rate factor. What turns the people off seems to be pressure of time and other compelling interests. Therefore it is a question of priorities in a diversified society of many benefic causes that compete for everyone's time. It is obvious that if the church no longer meets the needs of the members for growth and service, and if the church does not keep them interested and involved, they will soon drift out and discontinue the attendance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Laity</th>
<th>Clergy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No time for church</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More interested in nonchurch organization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike pastor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost faith in church</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program not appealing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent financial appeal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church not important in modern life</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike church leaders</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church people are hypocritical</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members no longer involved</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age or ill health</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctrinal differences</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social involvement by church</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No social involvement by church</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church facilities inadequate</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Failure to support the church financially was reportedly due to (1) the urge for more affluent living, for the good things of life that money can buy (83.2 percent); (2) money needed for extra family obligations; (3) irregular or unpredictable income; (4) unemployment; (5) money used for education. Dislike of the minister was ranked ninth, and dislike of church leader was tenth.

Marjorie Lewis Lloyd (1972)\textsuperscript{1} wrote a small book, *Why the Back Door Swings*. It is included in this review because it is a sensitive presentation of the feelings and frustrations of new converts listening to twentieth-century preachers convey the Gospel using nineteenth-century language and approaches. The temptation comes to all to take the eyes off Christ and start looking at the minister, the leaders, and other members who are only too human. This is the first step on the road to defeat—and defeated Christians soon leave the church. Another step backwards is the failure to live up to expectations of the church because they failed to understand that salvation is by faith in Jesus rather than by works. And, a final step is that, even if they know and love all the doctrines, they did not permit the Holy Spirit to transform their lives according to His will.

John P. Alston (1972)\textsuperscript{2} reviews various surveys from the Roper Public Opinion Research Center and the Gallup Organization.\textsuperscript{1,2}


Four surveys were from 1969 and one from 1966. Among the findings were that church attendance is associated with (1) orthodoxy, (2) middle age, 35-44, (3) low family income, and (4) education, but it is not dependent upon size of the city or town.

Dean M. Kelley (1972) \(^1\) attempts to show that mainline churches in the United States have declined in membership and religious activities for the past decade. He considers church statistics unreliable, inflated, incommensurable, and invalid. That is, they do not really measure what they are supposed to measure. For example, a church may tighten up its discipline and standard of membership and as a result lose substandard members, but is that really a loss?

His thesis is that strictness is the only way to conserve the strength of the church. Those who are serious about their faith make high demands of those admitted to the organization that bears the faith, and they do not include or allow to continue within it those who are not fully committed to it.

Hollis L. Green (1972) \(^2\) identifies thirty-five reasons "Why Churches Die" and proposes remedial action for each. He has arranged the problems with the churches into five categories:

1. Program-centered problems
2. Personnel-centered problems
3. Organizational-centered problems


4. Fellowship-centered problems

5. Renewal-centered problems

Ralph Neighbor (1972)\(^1\) presents a bleak picture of the congregation and wonders why the people remain together as a church. He states that some men attend only to please their wives. Some are the good guys who do all the work and keep the church running. The pastor spends his time with them. They all get to know each other and they learn to get along and associate outside the church. Others are the dirty hypocrites who go to the bar on Saturday and church on Sunday. They are despised by the others, considered a disgrace to God. Their names are on the books but they rarely attend. Many do not really care about each other; they do not love or understand each other, perhaps because they do not share a common commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Harold E. Quinley (1974)\(^2\) assessed the mood within the churches by studying 1580 parish ministers (1968). He found, like several other researchers, that the conservative churches are growing, while the liberal denominations are in the midst of severe, financial crisis, and that Protestant laymen resist the notion of a critical, action-oriented church.

He states that most Protestants attend church to be comforted rather than challenged, to feel better about themselves.


rather than to be lectured on the wrongs of society. Many laymen would like greater attention to be given to the personal meaning of commitment.

Quinley concludes that the activism of the 1960s posed a severe threat to the organizational growth and stability of the denominations served by socially active ministers. He thinks that this will result in greater pressures from church leaders on the ethically committed clergy to be less outspoken in expressing their views and to give encouragement to the activities within the denomination.

Gottfried Oosterwal (1976)\(^1\) reports on the findings of a number of pilot studies on the factors involved in church growth in selected Adventist churches. One of the negative aspects of church growth is the loss of church members either through death, transfer, disappearance, or disassociation. Among the findings of his study which more directly relate to this project are:

1. Transfer of membership accounts for a very large percentage of growth or nongrowth in certain parts of the United States.

2. Migrating people are more receptive to change of denomination than those who live within a general area all their lives.

3. Churches in rural areas and in large metropolitan areas show less growth and often decline, while churches in small towns and cities have larger growth.

4. Church attendance was best in churches situated in towns and small cities, rural areas, and large cities, in the sequence listed. Likewise, middle-sized churches have better attendance than large churches. Small churches have better attendance than the large but less attendance than middle-sized churches.

5. There is a causal relationship between church growth and the size of the church, and the medium-sized church (250-350) has the best potentials.

6. The laity is the greatest soul-winning agency of the Adventist Church.

7. Relatives are the single most important factor of church growth in Adventist congregations.

8. Church fellowship is a strong factor influencing church growth.

9. Adventist churches have a majority of female members.

10. The age group which is least represented in the church is the 25-40-year-old group who either do not join during this period or disassociate from the church during or prior to that time.

11. Non-Adventist friends, colleagues, and neighbors are known to exert a strong influence on people in this age group to not join the church or to drop their membership.

12. A prevalent problem for people from this age group seems to be their lack of time for church and their absorption in other interests.

13. That a healthier balance between males and females would reduce the rate of apostasy.
14. That the church needs to be aware of the problem that a surplus number of women may cause many to leave the church in order to marry outside the church or to leave after an intermarriage took place.

15. That the church often fails to help the new members relate Adventist doctrines and righteousness by faith, thus causing some to become discouraged, to cease spiritual growth, and to separate from the church.

Roger L. Dudley (1977) studied the relationship between alienation from religion and other selected variables. His sample was four hundred students from Seventh-day Adventist academies in the United States who were asked to reply to a written Youth Perceptual Inventory with 154 statements.

He found that 16 percent of these adolescents were alienated from religion in general, while 52 percent were alienated from some aspect of religion. The items which elicited the most negative alienation responses were: Sabbath sermons, church membership, experiences with the church, Bible classes, and church restrictions on the life style. He also discovered that poor relationship with parents, authoritarianism in parents, lack of family harmony, lack of parental religious sincerity, failure to achieve emancipation from parents, and harsh parental discipline are all positively correlated with alienation from religion. Parental noncompliance

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with church standards is not significantly correlated with religious alienation, according to Dudley.

Among the school influences which correlated positively with alienation from religion were lack of religious sincerity in teachers, little personal interest of teachers, poor relationship with teachers, harsh school discipline, authoritarianism in school, and teachers' noncompliance with church standards. He also found the concept of religion as legalism rather than relationship and the expressed unbelief in Adventist doctrines positively correlated with alienation from religion. Alienation from religion in adolescents attending the Adventist academies is highly correlated with the quality of their relationship with parents and other authority figures. Therefore, to prevent alienation which leads to disassociation, parents and spiritual leaders need to improve the quality of their interaction with the youth of the church.

Review of Seventh-day Adventist Periodicals

Articles Appearing in "The Ministry"
Magazine from 1928–1975

The Ministry is the official professional journal for the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association. It is a monthly magazine and has appeared since 1928.

The problem of backsliding and apostasy has for a long time concerned the Adventist minister. Therefore, over the years more than eighty articles and references appeared in The Ministry. No attempt was made to report in detail on the review of these many articles, but for the interested reader a complete list of
references appears in appendix E. An attempt was made to glean from the articles the principal factors leading to disassociation from the church as they were perceived by the clergy. They were tabulated and appear in appendix G.

In the late twenties Adventist leaders were concerned about the heavy losses in membership which they considered an inexcusable reproach to the evangelist and an imposition upon the church.¹ L. H. King referred to the "annual slaughter to clear the church rolls of non-producing and non-attending members."² Workers were subject to accountability for those who apostatized, and they were frequently blamed for the heavy losses in membership because of neglect and superficiality.³ The pressures were strong to bring in large numbers of new converts, and when many defected it was blamed on inadequate prebaptismal indoctrination and lack of bringing people into a personal relationship with Christ. The emphasis was on evangelism and proselytization of new members rather than on shepherding and pastoral nurture to retain members of the church.

Nevertheless, many ministers were deeply concerned about the spiritual fate of those who defected or were disfellowshipped. A pastor wrote, "I never see a person dropped from my church roll

without feeling that in some measure I have failed in my ministry to that person.¹ In the twenties, thirties, and forties the ministers were often told that they brought into church membership unconverted people; that their preaching was inadequate; that they neglected the youth; and that they failed to visit the homes, to give proper guidance, and to train strong church leaders. It appears, from the content of the articles in The Ministry, that in those days much of the blame for apostasies was placed on the ministers. They did not live lives worthy of their high calling, they did not build bridges between themselves and the new converts brought in by the evangelists, and, consequently, many new converts dropped out again. Many people were "converted to the evangelist or preacher" rather than to Christ. When he transferred to another area they left the church.

The local church was charged with indifference, "double standards," having too many interpersonal conflicts, and harboring a critical and judgmental attitude towards those who did not meet their approval. There was a lack of male leadership in many of the churches. Many members drifted out of the church because they were kept inactive. Such factors as loss of faith in the doctrines, dissatisfaction with the standards of Christian living, socio-economic difficulties, educational problems, and moral issues were mentioned less often than any of the other factors leading to