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EVANS, LARRY ROBERT

TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY
FOR THE LOCAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NORTH
AMERICA

Andrews University

D.MIN. 1981

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TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHURCH
PLANTING STRATEGY FOR THE LOCAL
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Larry R. Evans

July 1981

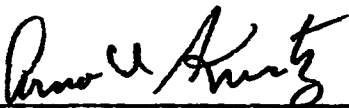
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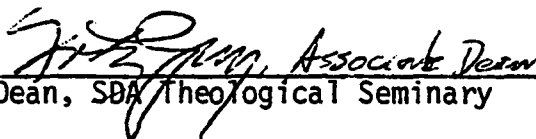
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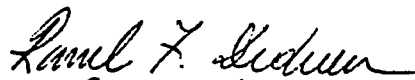
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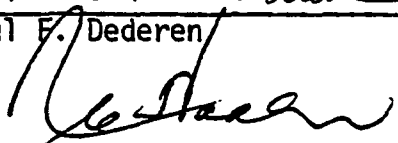
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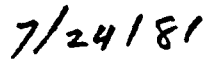
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ABSTRACT

**TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHURCH
PLANTING STRATEGY FOR THE LOCAL
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA**

by

Larry R. Evans

Chairperson: Arnold A. Kurtz

ABSTRACT OF SEMINARY STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

Theological Seminary

Title: TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY FOR THE
LOCAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

Name of researcher: Larry R. Evans

Name and title of faculty adviser: Arnold A. Kurtz, Ph.D.

Date completed: July 1981

Historically the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been a mission-oriented movement. In harmony with this emphasis church planting is beginning to gain a higher priority in some parts of North America. Very little evidence has been gathered, however, which supports this practice as being an effective means of evangelism. Furthermore, virtually no guidance has been offered to local SDA churches explaining why church planting should be considered or how it should be accomplished.

Empirical data are gathered from various denominations, including the Adventist denomination, regarding the relationship of new church development and membership growth. With positive correlations confirming the place of this practice in a comprehensive plan

for evangelism in North America, the report then seeks to develop a strategy which would be helpful for those who will be engaged in this ministry. In order to gain the necessary insights for a holistic and effective approach to church planting two studies are conducted. The first is a description of church growth as recorded in the biblical book of Acts. The second is an analysis and a critique of an actual church-planting experience, the organization of the Spokane South Hill SDA Church, according to "church growth" literature. The principles gained from these two studies provide the framework for a proposed strategy for the placement and development of new congregations in North America.

The strategy is designed to be of primary value for those churches which have memberships of 250 or more. The report contends that churches of this size can plant a church by sending a group of dedicated members, approximately fifty, to help form a nucleus for the new church--thereby providing an immediate presence for evangelism and nurture. The strategy is designed to facilitate this process by preparing the mother church theologically and missionally for the eventual church planting. The organizational aspects are then dealt with which lead to the actual formation of the new church. To accentuate the on-going process, flow charts have been prepared to relate the parts to the whole. A theological rationale for this process is presented as an extension of a shared ministry of reconciliation which is also characterized as an incarnational ministry for specific communities and "people groups." The joint roles of the clergy and the laity are integrated in both parts of the strategy. Some general

recommendations are made which are directed towards creating a more intentional climate for church planting in North America.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The proclamation of the "three angels' messages" of Rev. 14 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church is basic to its mission. The church has long been interested in church growth as an indication of the progress that it is making towards its mission. Church growth as understood by Adventists, however, does not stop with proclamation nor does it stop when an individual has been added to church membership. Church growth is a life-long process. It has "to do with the process of sanctification, the transformation of character, and of all of life in Christ Jesus; it means 'progress in spiritual experience'".¹ Each local church, then, must evaluate its role of ministry in terms of an overall objective of discipling. How is the individual Adventist and prospective Adventist expected to

grow and change, learning the divine perceptions, attitudes, emotions, values, and behaviors? If likeness is our concern--if discipling is our goal--then we need to focus our educational efforts not on isolated verbalizations of Truth, but on shaping a community in which Truth is lived as reality. We need to focus our educational efforts on understanding and using the Church, the Body of Christ, as a culture within which persons who receive the gift of God's life are to be involved, and through this involvement be socialized into all that it means to be like Him.²

¹Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of SDA Church Growth in North America (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976), p. 14.

²Lawrence O. Richards, A Theology of Christian Education (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), pp. 77, 78.

The local Adventist church provides the natural setting for this discipling process. It is the major center in the denomination where both evangelism and nurture take place. The need for more of these "caring communities" is imperative if the "holistic mission" of the church is to make a long-term impact upon North America.

Justification of the Project Report

Since 1975 there has been an increased emphasis in "church planting" by Seventh-day Adventists in North America. The recent Faith Action Advance document has listed church planting as an integral part of its overall evangelistic strategy for North America.¹ However, there is very little information from an Adventist perspective to assist the local Adventist pastor and congregation in this work.

If church planting is to play a significant role in the mission of the Adventist church then some assistance will be needed to help guide local conferences and churches in this activity. The kind of assistance needed is not the recommendation of a "standard solution approach" towards church planting. Rather, an approach is needed which attempts to set forth an example based upon biblical, pragmatic, and "church growth" principles which can be modified to meet various situations.

Thesis and Task of the Project Report

The thesis of this project report contends that church planting is a key aspect for a comprehensive North American strategy

¹Faith Action Advance (Wash. D. C.: North American Division of SDA, 1979).

which has the objective of both nurture and evangelism. Furthermore, Seventh-day Adventist churches which can be initially planted with 50 or more members by means of "church swarming" should be the primary objectives of a church planting offensive. The task, therefore, is to determine empirically if church planting has proven to be an effective evangelistic method in North America and if so, to suggest an approach for future church plantings which are initiated by church swarmings. A case study of the organization of the South Hill Church in Spokane, Washington, will help provide a pragmatic foundation.

Organization of the Project Report

In order to provide the necessary foundation for a strategy designed to assist the process of church planting, three separate but related studies will be presented. The first of these studies, chapter two, is a report of the practice of church planting in North America by several denominations including Adventists. Chapter three will discuss the phenomenon of church growth as described in the book of Acts. The third foundational study, chapter four, will be a critique of an actual church planting experience according to the principles set forth by the "church growth" school of thought. This three-fold investigation will provide an empirical, biblical, and pragmatic foundation for a recommended strategy of starting new churches. This strategy is divided into two major parts. Chapter five presents a strategy for preparing the local Adventist church with two hundred fifty members or more for an eventual church planting. The steps leading from a prepared "mother church" to the actual organization of the "daughter church" are outlined in the sixth chapter. Both chapters by virtue of their orientation will provide a

basic theological rationale from which the strategies flow. A key premise throughout the project report is the belief that the local Seventh-day Adventist church is strategically located as a base for evangelism and nurture. The final chapter contains a general summary and specific recommendations for a denominational church planting strategy.

Definition of Terms as used in
the Project Report

"Actual Growth" is equal to the net increase of membership. It includes transfers in as well as baptisms but subtracts both apostasy/missing and transfers out.

Adventist is an abbreviation for Seventh-day Adventist.

Annual Growth Rate is the percentage of growth for a one year period.

Axioms of Church Growth are considered to be essential preconditions to growth.

Assimilation Factors are conditions, attitudes, and practices which assist in the incorporation of individuals into the main body of believers in such a way so as to give them a sense of belonging and meaning.

Biological Growth Rate is the percentage increase, based on the whole membership figure, that a church experiences from the numerical membership growth that results from the children or spouse of church members being accepted into membership. Twenty five percent per decade has been accepted as a rule of thumb for estimating this kind of growth.

Church Development Syndrome refers to the natural desire to build up and strengthen what a church already has to the exclusion of evangelism and church planting.

"Church Growth" is a technical term which refers to a particular school of thought originally founded by Donald A. McGavran and now identified with Fuller Theological Seminary. The term denotes the application of biblical, theological, anthropological, and sociological principles to congregations, denominations, and communities through planned activity in order to bring the greatest number of people into a meaningful relationship with Christ and his church.

Church Growth is a non-technical term which encompasses all aspects of growth--numerical, qualitative, organizational, extension, etc.--that is involved in the ministry of individuals and organized bodies for the purpose of reaching those who are outside a meaningful and responsible relationship with Christ, and for strengthening those who do have this relationship.

Church Planting is the development and placement of congregations in communities where there is an ineffective or inadequate gospel witness by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Church Planting Strategy is a comprehensive plan that describes how the goal of planting new churches will be approached.

Church Swarming is the formation of a new church or company of believers when several members from surrounding churches band together and form a church where one did not exist previously.

Communicant Membership is the number of those who are in full standing in regards to church membership (for Adventists it would be equal to the clerks total for membership).

Composite Membership is the average of communicant membership, Sabbath School attendance, and Sabbath morning worship attendance.

Classes of Leadership:

Class 1 Worker is a leader whose energies primarily turn inward toward the service of existing Christians and existing church structures.

Class 2 Worker is a leader whose energies primarily turn outward toward non-Christians in an effort to bring them into the Body of Christ.

Class 3 Worker is a leader who is unpaid or partially paid and who shepherds new small churches.

Class 4 Worker is a leader who is a full-time, paid professional staff member of an on-going church.

Class 5 Worker is a denominational or interdenominational leader.

"Conservative Church" is a technical term used to denote a religious group whose members adhere to the group's beliefs to the degree that they would be willing to suffer persecution, to sacrifice status, possessions, safety, and life itself for the organization, its convictions, its goals.

Conversion Growth Rate is the percentage increase that relates to the entire membership as the 100 percent base. This increase is

calculated only on those who are accepted into membership who had no immediate family connections with the church.

Correlation in statistics is an interdependence of two or more variable quantities such that a change in the value of one is associated with a change in the value or the expectation of others.

Correlation Coefficient is a number which ranges from the lowest possible correlation of -1 to the highest possible correlation of +1 and is so calculated so as to represent the linear interdependence of two variables or two sets of data.

Church Pathology is the study of factors which disqualify the church from being a "healthy church" and therefore inhibit or limit its growth.

Church Vital Signs are characteristics in a particular church which help determine if it is healthy--assuming that the health of a church is related to its ability to grow.

Decadal Growth Rate states how many individuals were added to the church or denomination per one hundred members in a ten year period. It is based on the beginning membership of the time period studied. Its value is that it converts the growth for any period of time to a percentage which expresses what the growth rate would have been for ten years and thus allows a ready comparison for diagnostic evaluations. The formula used allows this projection to be based upon a span of two or more years.

Disciple (noun) is a person who has made a commitment to Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord, who is learning and practicing His

teaching, and who maintains an obedient and responsible relationship with the church and its mission.

(To) Disciple (verb) is the whole process of bringing a person to faith in Christ and obedience to him through membership in his church. It involves both evangelism and nurture.

Daughter Church is a church that was initiated and nurtured especially in the early stages by another church, sometimes called a mother church.

Demographic Study is the statistical study of population in regards to size, density, distribution and vital statistics.

Engel Scale is a model depicting the spiritual decision process that is followed as one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ and grows in the faith. The numbering begins with -8 and goes beyond +5 with +2, meaning incorporation into church membership.

Evangelism, Classifications of (as defined by the "church growth" school of thought)

E-0 is winning nominal Christians back to fervent faith.

E-1 is evangelization of non-Christians in one's own language and culture.

E-2 is evangelization of non-Christians in a similar language and culture.

E-3 is evangelization of non-Christians of a radically different language and culture.

Expansion Growth is a technical term which refers to growth of the church by the evangelization of non-Christians within its ministry area.

Extension Growth is the growth of the church by the establishment of new churches within similar homogeneous or people groups and within the same general geographical area.

Healthy Church is a church that is not suffering any "disease", has all four axioms of church growth operating, and maintains the vital signs of a growing church.

Homogeneous Group is a group of people who all share a common characteristic and feel that they belong.

Institutionalism results when institutions absorb too much of a denomination's energy, personnel, and money thereby preventing or hindering the church's missionary outreach.

Internal Growth is a technical term which refers to growth of Christians in grace, relationship to God, and to one another.

"Kingdom Growth" is calculated by subtracting the number of apostasies and missing members from the number of baptisms and professions of faith.

Mean Membership Per Organized Church is calculated by dividing the total membership by the total number of organized churches, resulting in an average. The average represents the number of members per church if the membership were to be distributed evenly among the churches.

Mother Church is a congregation that extends its outreach by mobilizing its resources in such a way so as to raise up and establish a new church, sometimes called a daughter church.

People Groups are defined as significantly large sociological groupings of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another. The stress is upon the subjective

sense of peoplehood or identity in contrast to the more objective emphasis on characteristic or trait as stressed in "homogeneous group" terminology.

Premature Birth refers to starting a new church before proper preparation was made either by the mother church or those planning for the church planting thus creating unnecessary complications for either the "mother" or "daughter" church.

Responsible Members are members of the Body of Christ who are in constant communication with Him and strive to function in such a way so as to exemplify Christ to both those who have a relationship with Him and to those who do not.

Seed Families are families who have a concern for the lost and who are willing to form a nucleus for a church planting.

The Three Angels' Message refers to the three angels and their particular message in Rev. 14:6-12 and which has been understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a foundation for its distinctive mission.

Transfer Growth is when members of an Adventist church leave and join with another Adventist church.

CHAPTER II

CHURCH PLANTING IN NORTH AMERICA--A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Charles Chaney observes that in 1776 there were fewer than 3,000 churches in America but in 1979 there were more than 300,000.¹ This proliferation of churches and their accompanying denominations and sects has caused many skeptics to call a halt to church planting in North America. Some of the arguments and attitudes against church planting can be summarized as follows:²

1. It is the scandal of modern Christianity to emphasize the division of Christianity into local congregations of varying convictions.

2. Superior roadways and transportation have increased the accessibility of meeting places in distant communities.

3. The struggle to overcome all forms of segregation idealizes conglomerate churches.

4. The presence of an "Americanized comity" principle negates this emphasis.

5. An infatuation with the "giant churches" has directed attention away from the young fledgling church.

¹Charles Chaney, "How to Create a Climate for Church Planting," Church Growth: America, Summer 1979, pp. 4-7.

²Ibid., p. 5.

There are, of course, other arguments. These are sufficient to make the point that church planting is not a priority for every church group. For others, however, the presence of so many "un-churched" in America is a compelling incentive for multiplying the number of congregations. Estimates for the number of unchurched in America vary, but the Princeton Religion Research Center estimates the number at 61 million.¹ In addition to the number of unchurched Chaney suggests that there are 60 million more that are "affiliated with Christian churches but are non-resident and/or inactive."² If these facts are true then North America is one of the world's largest mission fields--only five other nations in the world have a total population larger than 120 million.³

One of the leading proponents of church planting, Donald A. McGavran, urges this method of reaching the unchurched. With a strong emphasis on outreach to ethnic groups he proposes the development of a large base of "E2" missionaries--"tens of thousands" of them.

For example, North American Christians ought to keep at work among the 300,000 Italians in Toronto 100 E2 North American missionaries. These would speak Italian fluently and have spent a couple of years in Italy in the districts from which the

¹The working definition of the unchurched is "a person who is not a member of a church or synagogue or who has not attended church or synagogue in the last six months, apart from weddings, funerals, or special holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Yom Kippur." These unchurched are 18 years and older and make up 41 percent of the adult population, pp. 2, 3. The Princeton Religion Research Center and The Gallup Organization, Inc., The Unchurched American (Princeton, New Jersey: The Princeton Religion Research Center, 1978), p. 1.

²Chaney, p. 5.

³Information Please Almanac, 35th ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), pp. 127, 128.

Toronto immigrants have come. They would be engaged in planting at least one thousand Italian churches. . . . In a similar fashion, E2 missionaries should set to work in all unchurched segments of every ethnic and linguistic population in every state and province.¹

The Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization has sought to emphasize the need for ministering to these "unreached peoples." They have defined "unreached peoples" as "any group with less than 20 percent practicing Christians."² The reason for such a guideline is for the purpose of defining the church's mission and for recruiting qualified workers to fulfill the mission of E2 or E3 evangelism. The Committee goes on to suggest that when the 20 percent is reached and "the growth rate is healthy, the cross-cultural ministry may be terminated because the church probably has the potential to evangelize the people."³

While in one sense America can be considered 100 percent ethnic, for the sake of clarifying the potential for cross-cultural church planting Peter Wagner suggests a more useful approach. Basing his conclusions on the 1974 Census reports he suggests that the population of the United States be divided into two major segments: "56.4 percent who have been assimilated into the dominant Anglo-American culture and 43.6 percent who can be defined as 'unmelted', or in some sense ethnic."⁴

¹Donald McGavran, "Church Growth in North America," Church Growth Bulletin, May 1975, p. 452.

²Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, Planning Strategies for World Evangelization (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 97.

³Ibid., p. 98.

⁴C. Peter Wagner, Our Kind of People (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), p. 37.

McGavran, the Lausanne Committee, and Wagner have each emphasized directly or indirectly the need of considering the many opportunities and challenges of planting churches for ethnic groups. What becomes clear is that the mere presence of church structures is not a guarantee that a given segment of society is "churched." On the other hand mission strategy committees must not limit their thinking to the building of more structures. Whatever evangelistic strategy is undertaken, "people groups" must be recognized and incorporated into the mission statement. The implications for church planting are immense.

Recent Trends in Non-Adventist Church Plantings

From a purely numerical perspective the denominations that are planting churches are also the ones that are growing. While it can be debated, "Which comes first, the membership growth or the planting of churches?", one point becomes clear: Growing denominations are not advocating a reduction in the number of churches. To the contrary, they are the active church planters.

McGavran has observed a dynamic relationship between membership growth and church planting. He suggests that when there is a wide margin of difference between the membership growth rate and that of church planting there is very likely too much emphasis being placed on existing congregations. He says that a "sure sign" that a denomination is not planting enough churches is

when the average membership per church starts rising rapidly or when the denominational rate of growth for membership greatly exceeds the rate of growth for new churches. This is an indi-

cation that too much emphasis is being placed on caring for existing congregations and not enough on extension growth.¹

Peter Wagner adds further that denominational policies can make the difference between a growing denomination and a declining one. In an assessment of the trends of "church growth" in North America he has seen the sixties as a decade of transition. The momentum of growth from the fifties carried over until 1965.

Then the most severe decline in church membership and attendance in the history of mainstream denominations began as if on cue.

In this decade of transition one highly significant fact must be noted: not all American churches began losing members in the mid-sixties.²

For Wagner

the chief causes of the great decline were national institutional factors, meaning decisions made by denominational bureaucracies and translated into policies, programs, and budgetary allocations.³

Figures 8-10 (app. A) reveal how the growth rates of six rather dissimilar denominations compare and contrast during the same time period--1965 to 1978.⁴ These denominations are compared by

¹James H. Montgomery and Donald A. McGavran, The Discipling of a Nation (n.p.: Global Church Growth Bulletin, 1980), p. 49.

²C. Peter Wagner, "Aiming at Church Growth in the Eighties," Christianity Today, November 21, 1980, pp. 24-27.

³Ibid. In contrast to Wagner's position is a study commissioned by the Hartford Seminary Foundation of which he was a member--Dean R. Hoge and David A. Roozen, eds., Understanding Church Growth and Decline, 1950-1978 (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1979). The study generally attributed the drop in membership to local and national contextual factors. Wagner disagrees because, "While mainstream denominations were declining, in the same contexts evangelical denominations were growing." Ibid.

⁴The statistical data have been taken from Yearbook of American Churches, ed. Constant H. Jacquet, Jr. (New York: Department of Publication Services National Council of the Churches of Christ in

rates of membership growth and rates of growth of organized churches. The insight of McGavran and Wagner that denominational policies and priorities have a corresponding effect upon a denominations "church growth" seem to be upheld. While it is not within the scope of this paper to identify the various factors that are involved in the growth or decline of these churches, some general observations can be made relevant to church planting.

1. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) consistently had a higher decline rate for the number of organized churches than for membership, while the opposite was true for the Reformed Church in America. In both cases, however, the decline rate in the number of organized churches and the membership decline rate show a correlation.

2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) showed a burst of growth in membership (over 100 percent); in each instance church planting increased to over 50 percent.

3. Only once did any growing church show a greater increase in church planting than in membership (LDS:1970-1975) and that was followed by a giant burst in both membership and church planting (1975-1978). The JWs did show greater church planting growth in 1975-1978 but their membership was negative growth. A possible reason for this sharp decline in membership was their prophetic disap-

the U.S.A., 1967, 1972) and Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, ed. H. Jacquet, Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977 and 1980).

pointment in 1975.¹ Both the LDS and JWs indicate a high priority for church planting.

4. Of the six denominations studied only the SDA and LDS were above the Biological Growth Rate level for all three periods.

5. The SDA and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) showed the steadiest growth rates--although not the highest.

6. During the first two time periods the SDA's showed a growing discrepancy between church planting and membership growth. A surge in church planting can be seen in 1975-1978.

In summary, those churches that are growing do not appear to be advocating the practice of building fewer churches. The point here is not necessarily to try to make a direct correlation between membership growth and organized church growth. There are some indications that do suggest this. Church growth, however, is complex and cannot be confined to merely planting new churches. The point that does need to be made is the observation that some of the most active and mission oriented churches in North America have a particular "mind-set." They, according to their fruits, view mission as extending the church's influence by establishing more, not fewer, churches.

The Reformed Church in America, a church with a declining membership growth rate, and the Southern Baptist Convention, a church with a positive membership growth rate, have recently pointed out the importance of church planting.

¹Joseph F. Zygmunt, "Jehovah's Witnesses in the U.S.A., 1942-1976," Social Compass, 24 (part 1, 1977), p. 55.

Two Examples of a Church Planting Offensive
by Non-Adventists

The Reformed Church in America

The Reformed Church in America, concerned about decreasing membership figures, broke from traditional methods of church mission and launched what is called its "Dallas Project". The goal set by church leaders of planting twenty-five new churches a year came from a \$6 million, five year church growth drive by this 315,000 member denomination. The "Dallas Project" was the initial thrust for this new mission endeavor. The strategy behind this church planting emphasis involved a complex program of statistical research, telephone surveys, and media promotion.

Dallas was selected from a demographic research of several U.S. cities because the area is "dominated by well-educated, well-paid nuclear families" and "this is the ministry we know how to do." Initially, the objective was to establish three congregations of at least 1,000 members, but the people have requested smaller churches.¹

The Southern Baptist Convention

Between 1968 and 1978 the Southern Baptist Convention added 1,860,918 members to their church in North America²--but in actuality they were losing ground. With what Wagner has called "church growth eyes" this figure represents a decadal growth rate of only 16.4 per-

¹"Planting Churches: The Calculated Approach," Christianity Today, Jan. 19, 1979, p. 38.

²See Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed., Yearbook of American Churches, 1970 (New York: Council Press, 1970), p. 192; Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed., Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1980 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), p. 225.

cent which is 8.6 percent under the Biological Growth Rate of 25 percent. Thus while adding nearly two million members, the momentum was losing ground. During the same time period 1,082 churches were planted,¹ a decadal growth rate of 3.2 percent.

Ron S. Lewis, the Chairman of the Development Division, Illinois Baptist State Association, Springfield, Illinois, is not pleased with the church planting record in his area. He explains how local-national institutional factors have impeded growth.

We have hovered between 880-900 churches between 1966 and 1974. Why? In 1962, we began to talk of developing a College or Seminary in Chicago. We talked of a Hospital and a Golden Age Home. From that time, New Unit expansion began to level off. This is not to be interpreted as saying institutions kill new units, but it is fair to say we often take the energy given to new unit thinking and loan it to institutional thinking.

Institutions cannot call men from death to life as well and as rapidly as new unit Sunday Schools, churches, and missions. And remember that the truest measurable church growth is conversion growth--'new units, new people'.²

Lewis explains further that the new unit principle plays an important role in evangelism efficiency. In 1962 when they were aggressively multiplying new churches they averaged 5 baptisms per 100 church members. As the rate for new church establishment dropped, the number of baptisms also dropped to 3.9 converts for each 100 members.³

Phillip Barron Jones in his analysis of the national statistics for the Southern Baptist Convention confirms the report by

¹Jacquet, American Churches, 1970 and American and Canadian Churches, 1980.

²Ron S. Lewis, "Christian Leaders and Fundamentals of Growth," Church Growth Bulletin, May 1975, p. 456.

³Ibid.

Lewis.¹ Table 1 (app. A) reveals that the bulk of growth in 1976 came from the older, more established churches; 77.3 percent of the baptisms came from churches twenty-one years or older. While the greatest number of baptisms may have come from the older churches, table 2 (app. A) reveals that evangelistic efficiency per 100 members was greatest in younger churches--9.5 for those younger than eleven years compared with 3.7 for those forty or more years. Jones admits it might be inferred that the baptismal percentage is a function of size rather than age. When the church size is controlled, however, the same relationship between baptism rate and age of the church holds (table 3, app. A).

These Baptist leaders are convinced that new church development is an important factor for the growth of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Denominational Trends in Church Plantings
as Revealed in the Seventh-day
Adventist Church

Building more churches, erecting modern medical facilities, and providing schools for our children has never been and hopefully will never become the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To measure the success of mission by either the number of churches, buildings, countries or counties entered can be misleading. Goals such as these are easily substituted for the goals of God's mission because they tend to reflect the Western mind-set of success. These goals are not wrong in themselves unless the mission process ends at

¹Phillip Barron Jones, "An Examination of the Statistical Growth of the Southern Baptist Convention," (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, The Southern Baptist Convention, 1977), not paged.

the dedication ceremony. Mission must characterize every phase of this never-ending process. Discipling with the purpose of extending the glory of God to every "nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6) must be the desire of every church member.

C. Mervyn Maxwell notes that Adventists "have always felt a 'sense of mission'. Article V of the short 1863 General Conference constitution required the three-man executive committee to act as a 'missionary board'."¹ The fact that it was eleven years before the new organization sent its first foreign missionary indicates that North America was a ripe field for "home missionaries."

Gottfried Oosterwal, on the other hand, points out that the church has gone through four different phases of understanding this "sense of mission."² Briefly summarized they are as follows:

1. 1844 to early 1850's-- Mission was confined to those converted Christians who already believed in the soon coming of Christ and who had gone through the experience of the Great Disappointment.
2. The Late 1850's and 1860's--Mission was directed towards individual Christians of corporate bodies which had rejected the "three angels' messages." The mission was "America-centered in outreach, scope, and fulfillment."³ In both the first and second phases the conception of the Church was as "the way of salvation."⁴

¹C. Mervyn Maxwell, Tell It To The World, rev. ed. (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc.), p. 152.

²Gottfried Oosterwal, Mission Possible (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1972), pp. 23-43.

³Ibid., p. 25.

⁴Ibid., p. 31.

3. 1874-1950's--The Church expanded geographically into all the world--beyond the boundaries of North America with the presupposition of literacy. The Church took on characteristics of the "ark of salvation" in contrast to "the way of salvation."¹

4. Late 1950's--The non-Christian world was recognized and mission gained impetus for reaching the non-Christian overseas. Emphasis was placed on Christ as the center of "present truth".

The concept of mission has undergone change as the church has grown. The growth process has not all been bad. The first eleven years of organized existence helped to provide a foundation by which North America could send missionaries around the world. This mission thrust has been fruitful with over 80 percent of the church's membership now outside of North America.

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church comes from the belief that the angel in Rev. 14:6, 7 represents their movement in proclaiming an "Everlasting Gospel" to all those who live on the earth.² Its mission is not restricted to reaching the unchurched,

¹Ibid.

²See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. Francis D. Nichol, 7 vols. (Wash. D. C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1957), 7:827.

P. Gerard Damsteegt explains the development of the SDA theological understanding of mission.

"Initially the SDA theology of mission had two focal points: (1) The affirmation of the validity of the Advent experience of 1844; (2) the necessity of a restoration of certain neglected Bible doctrines (particularly the Sabbath) before the occurrence of the parousia. It was especially the aspect of restoration which came to play an increasingly important role in the self-understanding of SDA. . . .

"Later developments . . . indicated a growing emphasis on non-apocalyptic motives for mission . . . The post-1874 basic structure of the theology of mission came to be interpreted in a more Christo-centric manner without, however, diminishing or denying eschatological import."

however, the recent report by George Gallup, Jr. should add further impetus for a North American mission offensive aimed at this group. Of special interest is the report that of the 61 million unchurched Americans at least half (52 percent) "say they could see a situation where they could become a 'fairly active member of a church now' and would be open to an invitation from the church community."¹ In addition to this "as many as 74 percent of the unchurched" . . . "would want a child of theirs to receive religious education."²

How then is the church in North America relating to the challenge of mission in its homeland? The question is a difficult one because it incorporates all aspects of growth and nurture. It is beyond the limits of this project to give a definitive answer, but we can gain some helpful insights.

Fig. 11 (app. A) compares the decadal growth rates for North America from 1910-1979. The decadal growth rate for the entire period is as follows: membership, 39.4 percent, and number of organized churches, 11.7 percent.³ As the graph indicates there has been a great deal of fluctuation in and between these growth rates during this time period. Of special significance for this study is the fairly wide margin between the growth rate of membership and that of

P. Gerard Damsteegt, Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 295, 296.

¹The Princeton Religion Research Center and The Gallup Organization, Inc., The Unchurched American (Princeton, New Jersey: The Princeton Religious Research Center, 1978), p. 16.

²Ibid., p. 12.

³The statistical data have been taken from the various editions (1910-1979) of the Annual Statistical Reports (Washington, D. C.: General Conference of S.D.A.).

church planting. It is not expected that the two should be equal, but when there is consistently a wide margin it can be a sign of what is called the "church development syndrome." "This refers to the natural desire to build up and strengthen what we already have to the exclusion of evangelism and church planting."¹ This was the conclusion reported by the Southern Baptist leader, Ron Lewis, as noted earlier, when an emphasis was made on institutional development. He warned that energy for this development is drained from "new unit expansion." An Adventist author, Gottfried Oosterwal, develops a similar caution.

If institutions absorb too much of a movement's money and personnel, stagnation results. We call it institutionalism. The expensive multiplication of colleges and universities, their concentration in a very small area of the world field, that is, in North America, the duplication of programs, the administrative overhead, the strong emphasis on big hospital work--all of these tend to hinder the church's outreach.²

Is there evidence that this is happening to the mission work in North America? Fig. 11 tends to suggest this by illustrating that church planting has not kept up with membership growth. There is, however, an encouraging trend since 1975.

Fig. 12 (app. A) gives a breakdown by union conferences for 1965-1979. This graph illustrates an alarming trend. Of the eleven unions two are under the 25 percent biological growth rate level for membership growth and two more indicate that they are barely over this mark. All unions reveal a very wide margin between the membership and organized church growth rates. One union, the Northern Union, indicated a loss of churches, while at the same time showing

¹Montgomery and McGavran, p. 84.

²Oosterwal, p. 59.

a membership growth of 11 percent. With the large influx of immigrants in the Canadian Union the planting of ethnic churches will become even more imperative than revealed by the graph.¹

Another indicator of the "church development syndrome" is revealed by fig. 13 (app. A), the mean membership per organized church. This illustrates what the cumulative effects are when church planting has not been keeping pace with the membership growth. In 1915 the mean membership per organized church was 36.8 members. Fifty years later (1965) the mean had increased by 77.4 members to 114.2, and by 1979, fourteen years later, it had increased another 34.6 members to a total of 148.8 members per church. The mean size of churches has drastically increased since the days of our pioneers.

Table 5 (app. A) indicates that the dangers of "the church development syndrome" and institutionalism are practically identical. This table demonstrates that an average of only 11.2 percent of the total working force was involved in pastoral and direct evangelistic work. In other words, it was taking 88.8 percent of our denominational employees to direct, support, and assist the 11.2 percent who were hired to engage in extending and nurturing the church.² There is no question that some evangelism was done by the 88.8 percent, but

¹See table 4 (app. A) for a comparison of local conferences within these union conferences.

²These figures do not include General Conference workers. Bible instructors were not listed until 1979; so they were omitted for the sake of uniformity. It is assumed that these reports include secretarial and miscellaneous help when it refers to "others" under administration and promotional. This does not weaken the main argument that institutionalism has set in. Institutional workers include: 1) University, college and secondary school teachers; 2) church school teachers; 3) others in educational institutions; 4) food company; 5) health care institutions. Annual Statistical Reports (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of S.D.A., 1965-1979).

one is led to question the efficiency of the ratio. What becomes clear is that a very high proportion of time and energy was being extended towards the maintenance and expansion of existing institutions. Another interesting observation is that for every 1 1/3 worker in the field there is one employee from the ranks of administration, promotional, or other office help. As churches have grown in size and in number, many specialists have been called to assist the pastors/evangelists in the management of the church's business.

Perhaps one of the clearest indicators that church planting should be considered a priority by the North American Division is the very strong correlation between the growth of the number of organized churches and the actual membership growth (see table 4, app. A).¹ The ten unions and fifty-nine conferences in North America were compared by their decadal growth rates--growth/decline in the number of organized churches and in membership. The correlation is .951 on the union level and .803 on the local conference level, both of which are significant at the .001 level.² This is not to be interpreted as a direct relationship, but the significant association of the two should cause pastor and administrator alike to consider church planting as a priority in any comprehensive evangelistic strategy.

¹Roger Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., in their "North American Church Growth Study" found that there is "a very strong correlation between actual and kingdom growth. This would be expected since the former includes the latter. The correlation is .804 which is significant at the .001 level." Roger L. Dudley, and Des Cummings, Jr., "A Study of Factors Relating to Church Growth in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists," Andrews University, The Institute of Church Ministry, Berrien Springs, MI, April 1981, p. 32. (Mimeographed.)

²The significance of a correlation at the .001 level means that there is one chance in one thousand that the results are by consequence, which in statistics is a small probability.

In summary then, the North American Division of S.D.A.--the great sending organization which has helped extend the borders of her mission station to 190 nations and 567 languages¹--has a great need of extending her influence to the 120 million unchurched and weakly committed church members here at home. This is not to suggest that North America cease her mission to the rest of the world. What is being suggested is that she reconsider her priorities and revive the early pioneer spirit. Encouraging signs such as the 1976 Annual Council and the formulation of the Faith Action Advance Manual are strong indications that there are serious plans for a renewed emphasis on evangelism. While outreach evangelism gains momentum it is hoped that the number of church communities will also be increased.

These new churches, however, must be seen both as evangelistic and nurturing communities. If a healthy relationship between evangelism and nurture is not maintained then the dangers of apostasy will plague the newly planted churches.

Any church planting strategy that is devised must take into consideration the holistic growth of the Body of Christ. Church planting is an important part of this growth process, but it is not the goal. The book of Acts places church planting within the holistic thrust of God's mission. The biblical description of growth in Acts, therefore, is helpful in devising a comprehensive approach to the development of new church communities.

¹Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook, 1980 (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), p. 4.

CHAPTER III

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH GROWTH PHENOMENON IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

A Climate for Growth

The Apostolic Leadership

One of the influential characteristics of church growth in the early apostolic Church is in the choice of leadership. Seemingly overlooked were the scribes, priests, and other religious leaders of the day. For centuries the priestly line had been revered, but now the Church was in the midst of a transition. Leadership now rested upon those who had witnessed the resurrection of Christ (1:22). With the exception of Paul, the men chosen were recognized as being "uneducated, common men" (4:13) and by their own admission had no silver or gold (3:5). These men not only lacked some of the "extras" of life but they also seemed to have difficulties with the religious and civil leaders of the day. Even viewed from their own perspective as disciples of Christ they should not have been chosen. The denial by Peter, the doubts of Thomas, and the general cowardice of the others during the trial of Christ would have seemingly disqualified them for any responsible position. Yet these men were chosen to do what Israel of old had not done. They were to be God's witnesses to the ends of the earth (1:8).

The Church grew, nevertheless, as these "common" men earned the accusation, "These men who have turned the world upside down. . ." (17:6). Closely associated with the growth of the early Church is the transformation of these men from those who once gathered "for fear of the Jews" (John 10:19) to those who boldly faced persecution and even death. Perhaps more than anything was the realization that Christ had accepted them despite their lack of credentials and their seeming failures (1:2-8). This acceptance by Christ led them to proclaim the good news of peace through Jesus (10:36). For the disciples the question in their mission centered not in "What do we proclaim? nor How do we proclaim? but Whom do we proclaim?"¹ Over and over again Luke informs us that the good news found its focal point in the person of Jesus. He reminds us that the apostles talked of Jesus as the one "approved of God" (2:22), "glorified by God" (3:13), "raised by God" (3:26), and "standing at the right hand of God" (7:55). For the apostles this assurance in Christ was not a contradiction of Scripture but actually its fulfillment (7; 13:14-39). They could speak with certainty of the Lordship and the resurrection of Jesus (11:20; 17:18). So certain were they of their gospel that "there is salvation in no one else" (4:12). Michael Green summarized the apostolic message well when he said, "The one who came preaching the good news has become the content of the good news!"²

¹James B. Torrence, "The Place of Jesus Christ in Worship," in Theological Foundations for Ministry, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 358.

²Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 51.

The apostles carefully guarded the "content of the good news." They were jealous for the purity of the gospel (15:6-29). At times when it seemed that their ministry rather than Christ was becoming the object of praise (3:12; 14:8-18), or when the power of the Holy Spirit was in danger of being misused (8:18-22), they spoke out firmly. These men may have been "common" in one sense, but in another they were very "uncommon". They knew they had been called by Christ and they were willing to be instruments in His hands (9:15).

In addition to proclaiming a person was the proclamation of a gift that was made possible by that Person. Two elements of this gift were offered to every believer regardless of their national heritage. The gift included both forgiveness and the reception of the Holy Spirit (2:38; 9:17; 10:43, 45). "Pardon for the past and power for the future were two prominent aspects of the gift of God which the apostles proclaimed."¹

Growth, however, was stimulated not only by the preaching of the Person of Christ and the corresponding gifts but also by the expectation of the apostles that men and women would respond to their message. Their preaching and teaching was no mere formality. Their presentation breathed with a sense of urgency that expected some kind of response. Even King Agrippa came under the evangelistic fervor of Paul, "In a short time you think to make me a Christian!" (26:28). So fervent and clear were their teachings that the hearers sometimes responded with, "What shall we do?" (2:27; 16:30). The answer was no less vague; they were to repent (2:38; 3:19; 26:20). This repentance led priests to be "obedient to the faith" (6:7), led believers to

¹Ibid., p. 151.

walk in "the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (9:31), directed others to "search the Scriptures daily" (17:11), and urged some to publically burn books that were not compatible with their new found faith (19:18, 19).

The primary reason then for the enthusiastic missionary drive of the apostolic Church was their new grasp of the person and work of Christ. These men had been in the company of Jesus. They had seen Him work unselfishly. They heard Him rebuke them for misunderstanding His mission. "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). They recalled how He agonized in prayer so that "his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). They saw that His kingdom was not to be established by the sword (Matt 26:51-54). Slowly they began to comprehend that there was good news in Christ's kind of kingdom (Acts 8:12). Their motivation for evangelism was "rooted in what God is and what he has done for man through the coming and the death and the resurrection of Jesus."¹ Their motivation for service came from a deep sense of gratitude and devotion to the Lord who had rescued and accepted them despite their slowness of heart. Their witness was not based on some arbitrary command but rather came from a deep abiding love for Christ.² Their own testimony confirms this, "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (4:20).

There is also, however, a sense of responsibility that seems to have been felt by these early leaders. In Acts 1:8 Luke reminds

¹Ibid., p. 237.

²Ibid., see pp. 239, 242, 243.

us that they were to be "witnesses". Peter later reflects on this sense of responsibility when he said, "And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify . . ." (10:42). Paul refers to a similar understanding in Acts 20:24.

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Still another theme which compelled the apostles to evangelize was their concern for the "unsaved". With the belief that there is salvation in no other name but Christ's (4:20) the apostles found an incentive for church growth. Adding to the Church became symbolic of those who had indeed accepted Christ (2:21, 47). The discussion of the Jerusalem Council concerning the taking of the gospel to the Gentiles centered around a real concern for the salvation of the Gentiles (14:27; 15:11). Implicit in that concern was the actual sending of Paul and Barnabas as missionaries to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles.

Thus a climate for church growth was established. The apostles, by their lives, their message, and their understanding of their mission, gave to the early Church a sense of expectancy that was not limited by the abilities or resources of the men themselves. Christ was both the object and the enabling force behind the apostolic mission.

The Body of Believers

To suppose that all evangelism was done by the official "apostolate" is to miss the very spirit of the early Church. The role of the apostle was very important and the new believers recog-

nized this by "devoting themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship" (2:42). Yet the evangelistic dynamic also is seen in the lives of the believers.

The example of Stephen in Acts 6 and 7 implies that being an effective witness was not confined to being part of the apostolate.¹ Although Stephen was among the seven who were chosen to "serve tables" (6:2), he could not confine his witness to that responsibility. So dedicated was he to the mission of Christ that he was willing to risk his life for the sake of proclaiming the gospel. So genuine was his experience that it could be said that "his face was like the face of an angel" (6:15). The persecution following the death of Stephen scattered the believers throughout "the region of Judea and Samaria" (8:1) and as "far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch" (11:19). These believers preached the Lord Jesus to both the Jews and Greeks and, as a result, "a great number that believed turned to the Lord" (11:21). This news soon reached Jerusalem and resulted in the sending of Barnabas.

¹The example of Stephen is not conclusive proof that every member was a witness. In one sense Stephen was an official, in that he was one of the seven to be chosen for special service, but on the other hand, he was not qualified to be among the official apostolate. His example in Acts 6 and 7 reveals that he went far beyond his elected service.

Blaiklock adds further that Luke's "major theme" in Acts was to demonstrate through Paul's ministry that Christianity superseded Judaism (cf. Luke 5:36-39). E. M. Blaiklock, Acts: The Birth of the Church (Old Tappan, N. J.: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1980), p. 54. This reference to Stephen and to others who participated in evangelism (8:4; 5; 13:48, 49) is even more significant. Paul's ministry may have been a "major theme" for Luke, but some of the information given to support that theme seems to imply that bearing witness was not actively confined to those who had seen the risen Christ.

Paul recognized the influence that these other believers had and often took them with him on his missionary journeys. In one instance Gaius and Aristarchus were dragged along with Paul into a city's theater where for nearly two hours the city was in an uproar because the gospel had been presented (19:28-41). Paul also took with him Timothy, whose mother was a Jew and whose father was a Greek. The wisdom of this choice is seen when the "churches were strengthened in the faith" and when "they increased in numbers daily" (16:1-5).

The influence of the gospel was not made known through only formal discourses but through the lives of the believers themselves. It can be inferred for example, that after Peter healed Aeneas who had been paralyzed for eight years, that Aeneas shared with the residents of Lydda and Sharon his good news which ultimately led them to turn "to the Lord" (9:35). His witness was indirect but, like the apostles, he could give a dramatic first hand experience of what the gospel had done for him. Tabitha, or Dorcas, was known for her "good works and acts of charity" (9:36, 39), as seen, for example, in the coats and garments that she made.

The early Church was also characterized by its fellowship. Even before Pentecost there is a sense of oneness among the believers (1:14). This oneness is described as having "all things in common" and in distributing "their possessions and goods" to any who had need (2:44, 45). Some individuals even sold their land and houses to provide for the needy (4:34). Luke also describes these believers as "attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes" (2:46). The example of Ananias and Sapphira is given in contrast to

the honesty and sacrifice of the other believers (5:1-11).

The homes of these early believers were avenues by which the Church was strengthened and the gospel spread. Their homes were opened for group prayer sessions (12:12), as places for lodging by the apostles (21:8), as places for communion and fellowship (2:46, 47), for a whole evening of worship and instruction (20:7), for organized and impromptu meetings (5:42; 10:22; 16:32), and as a logical place for explaining the gospel more fully (18:26).¹

In addition to supportive relationships with one another, the early Church gives ample evidence that their source of power came from beyond human resources. Scripture and prayer are referred to often. The Scriptures played an important part in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:32, 35), were used by Paul to show the necessity for Christ's death and resurrection (17:2), were examined daily by the Jews in Thessalonica (17:11), and were used by Apollos to teach "the things concerning Jesus" and to confute "the Jews in public" (18:24, 28). There are also many references to prayer in Acts. Prayers were offered in the temple (22:17), on a beach (21:5), on a housetop (10:9), outside a city by a riverside (16:13), in the house of Mary (12:12), and even in prison (16:24, 25). There were prayers associated with the appointment of elders and deacons (14:23; 6:6), with petitions in behalf of the sick and the raising of the dead (28:8; 9:40), and even with farewells (20:36). Prayer is also associated with fasting and singing (13:3; 14:23; 16:25). The many different contexts within which prayer and Scripture are referred

¹For a more thorough treatment of the use of the home in early Church evangelism, see Green, pp. 216-223.

illustrate that they were part and parcel of the early Christian experience.

Thus the body of believers along with the leadership of the Church helped create a climate for church growth. The climate, however, was not their doing for they were but acting in response to the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, they did respond and with that God "turned the world upside down" (17:6).

Growth as the Work of God

Throughout Acts growth is presented as the result of divine providence. It should be remembered that Acts is the second part of an attempt by Luke to give "an orderly account" of the teachings and work of Jesus and the apostles (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-11). This divine providence would enable his disciples to be his witnesses "to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). J. Verkuyl observes that Luke "views the events in Jesus' life recorded in the first book as the base and starting point for the work of the early church described in the second."¹ Without the divine intervention into the history of man there would have been no apostolic mission. Without the gospel there would have been no message to proclaim. Without Pentecost there would have been no power to proclaim the story to the ends of the earth. The growth of the Church was a result of God's initiation, not man's. The completion of Christ's mission is described throughout Acts as the work of God.

Luke in Acts begins by portraying God as the Divine Equipper of the apostles so that they might minister effectively. First God

¹J. Verkuyl, Contemporary Missiology, trans. Dale Cooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 110.

charged the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promised power of the Holy Spirit (1:4, 8). When they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they realized that they were enabled "to speak in other tongues" so that "men from every nation" were able to hear in their "own language" (2:4-6). Peter acknowledged this as a prophetic gift promised by God to Joel. A gift that God, himself, would "pour out" and which would result in the salvation of those who would call "on the name of the Lord" (2:15-21). This process is seen throughout the book of Acts. God initiates a ministry, uses His chosen messengers as His spokesmen, and then works in the recipients so that they might respond to His initiative.

This divine plan is seen in the recordings of the actual growth of the Church. The Lord is seen as adding to their number "those who were being saved" (2:47). It was by "the hand of the Lord" that a great number "believed" and "turned to the Lord" (11:21). It was an angel of the Lord that told Philip to meet the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26, 27) and who instructed Cornelius in a vision to meet with Peter (10:3-6), and it was Jesus who met Saul on the Damascus road (9:6). God is personally involved in every aspect of mission.

While God did indeed take the initiative for mission, He did not bypass his servants. He so qualified them that the work of God and the work of his apostles became a common ministry, and the result was the growth of the Church. The successful preaching of the apostles is clearly attributed to the Lord. The power of the spoken word of God resulted in multiplying the number of disciples in Jerusalem (6:7), brought multitudes into accord with what Philip taught

(8:4-6), and enabled Paul to persuade Jews, "devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women" (17:4). The enabling Pentecostal power led to belief in Christ as the Saviour and this strengthened and enlarged the Church. So clearly was the association between the apostolic preaching and Jesus that those who persisted in their unbelief were compelled to recognize that the apostles "had been with Jesus" (4:13).

The Lord was not only involved in the preaching of the Word but was actually opening and closing doors for evangelism. Luke's objective as he wrote Acts was to trace the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.¹ Persecution in Jerusalem led to the penetration of Judea and Samaria (8:1) and this led Peter and his companions to praise God by saying, "'Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life'" (11:18). Luke informs us that Paul had been directed to Antioch by God. On a return trip to Antioch, Paul declared before the gathered church "all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (14:26, 27) (emphasis supplied). Doors, however, were not only opened; they were also closed. Paul and Timothy were directed to Macedonia after the Holy Spirit forbade them to go to Asia and Bithynia (16:6-10). The closing of doors was a means of directing the evangelistic activities of the apostles.

The growth of the Church, therefore, was primarily the result of God's initiative. Not only did He call his apostles to their ministry and enable them to accomplish His mission but He was also in-

¹F. F. Bruce, The Book of Acts, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), pp. 535, 536.

volved in the actual process itself. Clearly the apostolic ministry endowed with Pentecostal power was the ordained extension of Christ's own ministry. Growth, then, is the result of Christ's never-ending ministry of reconciliation.¹ Evidence of this ministry can be seen in at least three different kinds of growth.

Kinds of Growth

Numerical Growth

Numerical growth is a visible evidence of Christ's ministry at work. As Luke traces the victorious expansion of the Christian Church from Jerusalem to Rome, he often alludes to the numerical growth of the Church.

The post-resurrection community in Jerusalem began with about one hundred and twenty who had gathered in the upper room (1:15). After the Pentecostal experience three thousand were baptized in a single day--many more than Jesus seems to have secured after three years of ministry. This, of course, was a fulfillment of the promise made by Jesus in John 14:12: "I say to you, he who believes in me

¹If this is true then the logical question is "Why aren't all churches growing and why do some grow better than others?" George W. Peters suggests that the growth of a church can be impeded by man--both by his response to Christ personally and by his practice of ministry.

"A church may have the right message and a faithful and true servant of God and yet remain stagnant and dwarfed. There is no such thing as automatic, spontaneous growth. In the natural world only weeds seem to grow spontaneously. Cultivation is necessary for proper growth and is therefore a biblical concept. . . . Not every church grows, nor can every church be made to grow unless it is willing to meet specific divine requirements for growth. Growth takes much careful and diligent cultivation." George W. Peters, A Theology of Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 133, 134.).

will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father."

The "Lord added to their number day by day" (Acts 2:47) until the number reached five thousand men, not counting women and children (4:4). Multitudes of both men and women "were added to the Lord" (5:14). Acts 6 calls the new believers "disciples" (vv. 6, 7) and says that their number "multiplied". It is significant that here multiplication has been substituted by Luke for addition. This seems to indicate large and regular growth.

With chap. 8 Luke begins to trace the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria. The persecution of the Church brought with it a great scattering throughout the region. Philip discovered after "preaching the word" in Samaria that "multitudes with one accord gave heed" to his teaching (8:6) which resulted in both men and women being baptized (8:11). The account of the Ethiopian eunuch, a single baptism, was important because it illustrated an advance in the work for the Gentiles (8:38). As a summary statement of the progress in "Judea and Galilee and Samaria," Luke says that the Church "had been multiplied" (9:31).

Acts 9:32 ushers in Peter's ministry and the beginning of the work in semi-Gentile territory. The first numerical growth among Gentiles referred to is in v. 35 where "all the residents of Lydda and Sharon . . . turned to the Lord" as a result of the healing of Aeneas. Whether this is an overstatement or not, Luke's enthusiasm is evident. Later when Tabitha was raised from the dead in Joppa, Luke tells us that many more believed (9:42). Most likely the proselytes of Peter up to this point had been Jews. The baptism of Cor-

nelius along with his kinsmen and close friends (10:24, 48) marked the real beginning for a work among the Gentiles.

Some of those who were forced to scatter because of the persecution following Stephen's death preached to the Greeks at Antioch in Syria. In that Greek city the result was that "a great number that believed turned to the Lord" (11:21). When Barnabas arrived the great number is described as a "large company" and they were "added to the Lord" (11:24). There may have been a few instances prior to this when Gentiles were added to the Church, but nothing on this scale is recorded. As the persecution came to an end with the death of Herod, the work of God is described as growing and multiplying (11:24).

Paul and Barnabas were then sent out on Paul's first missionary journey. The first evidence of any evangelistic results was at Paphos, a city on the island of Cyprus. The Roman proconsul "believed" when he saw Elymas, the magician, struck with blindness for trying to turn him away "from the faith" (13:8-12).

In Antioch of Pisidia the results were even more profound. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region" (13:48, 49). At Iconium "a great company believed, both of Jews and of Greeks" (14:1) and in Derbe they "made many disciples" (14:21).

On the second missionary journey Paul and Barnabas decided to go separate ways. Paul took Silas with him while Barnabas took John Mark. Paul visited many of the churches which he had helped plant earlier and shared with them the decision of the Jerusalem Council. As a result of their ministry, "the churches were strengthened in the

faith, and they increased in numbers daily" (16:5).

Responding to a vision Paul and his companions went over to Macedonia. Here in the city of Philippi they met a woman named Lydia. She and her household were baptized (16:15). The Roman jailer and his household were also baptized (16:25-34). In Thessalonica they were able to persuade some Jews as well as "a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women" (17:4). It is here that the evangelistic thrust became so successful that this handful of missionaries were charged with turning the world upside down. There is evidence that their reputation of success preceded them (17:6). In Beroea many Jews who had been eagerly examining the Scriptures believed. Included in this group were "not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men" (17:12). In Athens "some men" believed, among whom were "Dionys'ius and Areop'agite and a woman named Dam'aris and others with them" (17:34). At Corinth Paul went to the synagogue and persuaded Jews and Greeks and later baptized Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue along "with all his household" (18:4, 8).

On Paul's third missionary journey he came to Ephesus where he found some disciples who had never heard of the Holy Spirit. When Paul explained that John was the forerunner of Jesus, these decided to be baptized into "the name of the Lord Jesus," and after Paul laid his hands upon them "they spoke with tongues and prophesied. . . . There were about twelve in all" (19:5-7). Additional evangelistic numbers are not explicit, but after two years "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord" and it "grew and prevailed mightily" (19:10, 20).

At the close of his third missionary journey Paul gave a report to the brethren in Jerusalem. "You see how many thousands [literally tens of thousands] there are among the Jews of those who have believed" (21:20). The final report we receive is when Paul was in Rome where visitors came to him "in great numbers," some of whom "were convinced" (28:23, 24).

Numerical growth was significant to Luke. The suggestion that he was "relatively indifferent to church statistics" (emphasis supplied), because of his "seeming predilection for numbers,"¹ seems to miss the reason for their inclusion in Acts. Luke does confine his use of specific statistics to the expansion of the Church in Jerusalem. This does not, however, suggest that he was not interested in numbers, but rather that the data were not available. With the rapid expansion of the Church and with the lack of sophisticated church organization, we are even more impressed with what specific information Luke did have to give to his friend Theophilus. His inclusion of both specific and general statistics portrays the rapid growth of the Church from the Jews in Jerusalem to the Gentile believers in Rome. Church statistics, then, were important to Luke for illustrating the obedience of the early Church to the mission mandate given by Jesus in Acts 1:8. With the Pentecostal power the Church

¹E. Luther Copeland, "Church Growth in Acts," Missiology: An International Review, 4 (January 1976):18. F. F. Bruce sees a fulfillment of Jesus words "greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father" (John 14:12) in the baptism of the three thousand (Acts 2:41). "Their numbers amounted to three thousand--a much larger company won in a single day than Jesus had secured to His allegiance in two or three years of public ministry." (F. F. Bruce, p. 79). Numerical statistics provided among other things the awareness that Christ's promise was being fulfilled by the early Church.

witnessed growth (1) in Jerusalem, (2) in all Judea, (3) in Samaria, and (4) to the ends of the earth. The statistics given, whether they be reflected in men or women, single individuals, households, or entire cities, all support Luke's basic theme that the Church is successfully acting in response to Christ's enabling power. Unashamedly Luke speaks of numerical growth but with the purpose of exalting the risen Christ.

Qualitative Growth¹

In tracing the progress of the triumphant Christian Church, Luke demonstrates that the spread of Christianity involved much more than numerical additions to an organization or, on the other hand, the mere propagation of an intellectual and ethical idea.² Christianity meant an adherence to the Person Jesus Christ and this adherence resulted in discipleship. By describing the content of the ap-

¹Qualitative growth is a broad term. Jitsuo Morikawa, for example, speaks of "reflective growth". (Biblical Dimensions of Church Growth [Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979], pp. 45-51). Reflective growth to him means the development of "reflective powers, powers of comprehension, wisdom, and knowledge." (Ibid. p. 46).

On the other hand, while Lawrence O. Richards in his book A Theology of Christian Education does not speak of "growth" per se the entire volume is built around ministering to the "whole person".

These examples are given to illustrate the idea that "qualitative growth" can be considered as a whole or as many parts of a whole which ultimately is characterized as Christian maturity.

²Frank Stagg suggests that Luke's "major purpose in Acts" is "to show the expansion of a concept, the liberation of the gospel as it breaks through barriers that are religious, racial, and national." (The Book of Acts Nashville: Broadman Press, 1955, p. 12). What Stagg means by "concept" is not clear. A more complete description of Luke's purpose is found in the SDA Bible Commentary. "He therefore sets his hand to describe the continuation of Christ's work through the ministry of His disciples" (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1957, 6:114). The idea of an "expansion of a concept" does not seem to give room for the emphasis on mature discipleship found repeatedly in Acts.

ostolic message, the practice of apostolic ministry and the corresponding response of faith in those to whom they ministered, Luke implies that a key aspect of the mission of the Church was the making of responsible disciples.

Discipleship¹ as an objective of apostolic teaching and preaching

As illustrated earlier in this chapter, the apostles preached and taught with the purpose of bringing about a response.² They, themselves, were disciples of Christ. They had been confronted by Christ's ministry and were so challenged and changed by it that they could not but speak of what they had seen and heard (4:20). The content of their preaching and teaching reveals that they testified not only of the historical resurrection but also believed that this historical event should change the lives of those who listened to them. They sought to bring about belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah of the OT (2:22-36; 7), as the only one in whom there is salvation (4:12), as the one who heals (3:5; 10:38), and as the one who raises the dead (9:36-42). This belief, however, meant more than a mental

¹Discipleship is used here in a broad sense.

"In the NT, the words connected with discipleship are applied chiefly to the followers of Jesus and describe the life of faith. akolouthēō (follow) denotes the action of a man answering the call of Jesus whose whole life is redirected in obedience. A mathētēs (disciple) is one who has heard the call of Jesus and joins him. mimeomai (imitate) can be distinguished, in so far as it mainly emphasizes the nature of a particular kind of behaviour, modelled (sic) on someone else. The prep. opisō (after) is characteristic of the call to follow Jesus." Colin Brown, ed., "Disciple, Follow, Imitate, After" in The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:480.

²See page 30.

assent to doctrine. The life of Christ was so clearly revealed and so clearly applied to the meaning of life that those confronted with the implications of their message sometimes asked, "What shall we do?" (2:37; 16:30).

Associated with belief in the apostolic preaching and teaching was the objective of repentance. Repentance is linked with faith by Paul in Acts 20:21, "testifying both to Jews and Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance "is regarded both as an act open to man and as a duty. It is a possibility given to man by God as an eschatological gift of grace, and it is also a duty required of him"¹ (13:24; 19:4). Thus we find Luke recording repentance as the expected response of the disciples. We also find such admonitions as "repent and be baptized" (2:38), "repent . . . and be converted" (3:19), "repent and turn to God" (26:20), and repent from worshiping idols (17:16-31). These responses indicate that for the apostles the gospel message radically altered one's way of life. When Paul explained the nature of preaching and teaching to both the Jews and the Greeks, he demonstrated that he expected his message to penetrate society and change the very lives of those who believed. He expected "that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance" (26:20).

The apostolic preaching and teaching centered in the exalted and risen Christ. They did not, however, view their teachings as mere "theory" but as the very touchstone for practical living. "The

¹J. Goetzmann, "μετάνοια," in The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vols., ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:358.

essence of discipleship lies in the disciple's fulfillment of his duty to be a witness to his Lord in his entire life."¹ For this the disciples in Antioch were called "Christians" (11:26).

Discipleship as an objective of apostolic ministry

The way the apostles went about their ministry also indicates that they saw their responsibility as more than proclaiming salvation. They were deeply concerned for the personal growth of their new believers to remain firm in their relationship with Christ. We find them encouraging the disciples "to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose" (11:23) as well as "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith" (14:22). As a result we find the brethren "strengthened" (15:32), including whole churches (15:41). Luke also ties together qualitative and quantitative growth in Acts 16:5. "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily."

This concern for the personal growth of these new believers is revealed in the ministry of the apostles in yet another way. In Acts 6, Luke describes the Church as growing--"disciples were increasing in numbers" (Acts 6:1). We discover, however, that while the Church was growing numerically it was faced with the danger of neglecting the more temporal needs of some widows. The twelve apostles seeing the importance of having these needs met suggested that seven men of "good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (6:3), be

¹D. Müller, "μαθητής," in The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vols., ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:490.

appointed to this duty. This incident not only reveals that the twelve refused to be pulled away from devoting themselves "to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (6:4) but also illustrates that they expected some of the more secular needs to be met as well. The appointment of the seven indicates that discipleship means caring for the whole person.

One of the ways of strengthening a new disciple's faith is by staying with him long enough to ensure his comprehension of the message. This was also the practice of the apostles on several different occasions. After Philip had "preached the good news about the kingdom of God" and baptized "both men and women" (8:12), the apostles in Jerusalem decided to send Peter and John to follow up these new disciples. When they arrived they prayed for them and laid their hands on them so that they might receive the Holy Spirit (8:14-17). In another incident the scattered disciples found a great number in Antioch who believed and turned to the Lord. The Jerusalem church heard of this and sent Barnabas to pursue the interest. He then asked Paul to join him there and together they stayed in Antioch for a whole year teaching "a large company of people" (11:27). It seems that usually the apostles felt a real need to work in a community for an extended period of time where an interest had been developed.¹ After baptizing the ruler of the synagogue and all his household in

¹Allen prefers to state this practice more strongly. "The facts are these: St. Paul preached in a place for five or six months and then left behind him a church, not indeed free from the need of guidance, but capable of growth and expansion." Roland Allen, Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 84. This, however, was not always the case. The persecution of Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia caused them to leave prematurely (13:48-51). Their visit in Ephesus was also shortened even

Corinth, and after being instructed in a vision that there were yet "many people in this city," Paul stayed "a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (18:11). Later Paul reminded the elders of the Ephesian Church "that for three years" he "did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears" (20:31). There can be no doubt that Paul was very much involved and concerned with the personal growth of his new disciples and made it an object of his ministry.

One of the reasons for this pastoral concern was that various factors could undermine the faith of a new disciple. Luke records a few of these. The example of Peter's dealings with Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11) emphasized the importance of personal integrity. Performance was never to become a substitute for a deep abiding relationship with Christ. The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira served as a reminder that discipleship is a serious undertaking and should always be viewed from God's perspective. The blindness that came upon Elymas for attempting to turn the proconsul away from the faith (13:4-11) underscored another pastoral concern. Intentional deception was a danger facing all would-be disciples. This is born out by the unbelieving Jews who "stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren" (14:2) and "fierce wolves" who came "to draw away the disciples after them" (20:29, 30). The apostles were constantly on guard to protect their disciples and to give them every opportunity to grow in the faith.

when they were asked to stay longer because they were anxious to get back to Jerusalem in time for one of the Jewish festivals (18:18-21; see also F. F. Bruce, pp. 378, 379).

The apostles by their very practice of ministry gave evidence that they saw nurture as part of their responsibility for building up a growing church.

Discipleship as a continuous response of faith

The apostles preached boldly about the good news of the risen and exalted Christ. Each activity, whether it be teaching in the synagogue (9:20-22; 11:25-26), healing those brought to them (4:13, 14), or in facing persecution (20:17-31), reveals a striking similarity to the example of Jesus. Luke leaves no doubt that the apostles were indeed disciples of Christ.

As the Church grew, certain qualities of discipleship became more evident in the new believers. These qualities can be expressed in a discipleship which reveals a three-fold commitment or response.

These early believers reveal first of all an earnest commitment to Christ. This would only seem natural with the emphasis given to Him in the apostolic preaching and teaching. While Luke is not explicit in his description of their response, we do have indications that they "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching," were "praising God" (2:42, 47), were baptized in "the name of the Lord Jesus" (19:5), and were even willing to die for their faith (7:60). We also find that "a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith" (6:7). Obedience, in fact, was a characteristic of these early believers. They were not only expected to obey the word of God as taught in Scripture (7:38, 39) but also the decisions "reached by the apostles and elders" (16:4). As a result the "churches were strengthened in the faith" (16:5).

A second area of commitment was to the body or church of Christ. This is very clear in the early chapters of Acts. We find them selling their goods and possessions in order to help those in need (2:45; 4:34-37). They are described as being of "one heart and soul"--remnescent of Christ's prayer in John 17. As mentioned previously, these "Christians" used their homes not only for evangelism, as such, but also for communion and fellowship (2:46, 47), as well as for a place of lodging for guests (21:8). Even the actual worship experience seems to reflect this commitment to each other, since Luke mentions that they attended the temple "together" (2:46).

Third, these disciples were committed to the work of Christ. They, themselves, were committed to evangelism. We find Stephen serving not only the needs of the widows but also testifying to the gospel before the Jewish council and then dying for it (6:12; 7:60). When the persecution struck the Church in Jerusalem because of Stephen's testimony, we find the scattered disciples "preaching the Lord Jesus" wherever they were (8:4; 11:19), with the result that "multitudes gave heed" (8:6). Apparently Paul gave some of the disciples an opportunity to work along side him. Those mentioned in this ministry included Timothy (16:3), Sopater of Beroea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus (20:4).

The response of faith brought about a radically different perspective of life. These disciples were committed not to the mere propogation of some philosophy, but to a whole new way of life. Green summarizes it well when he says:

Baptism, in short, set the seal on conversion in every way, individual, corporate, ethical, educational, and theological. Conversion, baptism and the new life at least as far as adults were concerned, were inseparable.¹

Organizational Growth

As the gospel was proclaimed and disciples were made, so the Church grew organizationally. The organizational growth of the primitive Church in Acts is never, however, presented as an objective to be pursued. Organization is consistently referred to in a functional role. It served as it supported the mission of the Church. The use of the Greek word for church, ἐκκλησία, reveals that it is not a synonym for church organization, church leadership, or even church buildings. It certainly included these, but it had a much wider scope. Ἐκκλησία in Acts essentially means those

who follow the call of God, come together . . . and yet when their meeting is over still retain their quality of ekklesia. It is one throughout the whole world and yet is at the same time fully present in every individual assembly² (8:3; 9:31).

K. L. Schmidt further explains the nature of the ἐκκλησία.

In contrast to secular ἐκκλησία this is not a quantitative term; it is a qualitative. A national assembly is just what it is and is meant to be, and the bigger the more so. For the assembly of God's people, however, size is of no account. It is in being when God gathers His own. How many there are depends first on the One who calls and gathers it, and only then on those who answer the call and gather together.³

¹Green, p. 156.

²L. Coenen, "ἐκκλησία," in The Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vols. ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:303.

³K. L. Schmidt, "ἐκκλησία," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:505.

It is from this spiritual perspective that church organization developed. It is a result of mission and it is for the purpose of mission that it exists. Church organization must be directive by nature so as to best preserve the universal characteristic of the Church, yet it must be responsive to the ongoing work of the One who calls and gathers the Church. This was the challenge of the Church in Acts.

Luke introduces Theophilus to his second volume by recounting the Lord's command "to the apostles whom he had chosen" (1:2) to wait in Jerusalem until they had received the promised power. These "chosen" apostles were soon to form the leadership core for a rapidly growing Church. Their leadership centered around the opportunity that they had to witness the resurrected Jesus (1:22).¹ The vacancy left by Judas was filled by Matthias who also had been a witness to the resurrected Christ. This decision was important because it im-

¹There is no consensus among theologians as to whether Paul was considered by Luke to be an apostle or not. D. Müller believes that for Luke

"apostolos becomes the equivalent of membership of the Twelve. Except in 14:14, which he may have taken from another source, Luke never calls Paul an apostle. He clearly did not fulfill the preconditions for the office of an apostle which were fulfilled by the Twelve. According to Luke's account, the gap left in the circle of the Twelve by Judas' betrayal was closed by the election of Matthias (1:16-28)."

D. Müller, "Apostle," in The Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vols., ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), p. 129. The fact that the number of apostles was not renumbered so as to include Paul is not necessarily proof that Luke does not consider him an apostle. Luke has Barnabas introducing Paul to the apostles stating that (1) Paul had seen the Lord, (2) Christ had spoken to Paul, and (3) Paul "preached boldly in the name of Jesus" (9:27). It is after his ministry showed characteristics of the apostolic commission (1:8) that Luke refers to both Barnabas and Paul as apostles (14:14). If Acts demonstrates anything it reveals that Luke broadened his definition of apostle.

plies that very early the mission of the Church had been determined and a conscious effort was made to preserve that mission.

Aside from the apostles, the first formal leadership chosen came as a result of internal problems within the Church. The problem arose when the Hellenists began to complain that their widows were being neglected. The apostles realized that if they were to fulfill their commission someone else would need to undertake this responsibility. After calling the "body of disciples together" (6:2) they suggested the number needed as well as described the personal qualifications for those to be chosen to oversee this project. The "whole multitude" was pleased with the organizational idea and the mission Church continued to advance (6:7). While those who were selected are not called deacons here this may have served as the basis for the election of deacons later (1 Tim 3:8-13).

As the Church began to extend its mission to areas beyond Jerusalem we find another group of leaders emerging. We are not told when, how, or why elders were chosen--only that they were given the responsibility of distributing the famine-relief offering (11:29, 30). Since in both Jewish and Gentile communities the concept of elder (πρεσβύτερος) was a common designation for a community leader it is no surprise that the basic concept is carried over by the early Christian Church.¹ The need for these ruling elders became more evident as the apostles traveled outside of Jerusalem. By the time of the Jerusalem Council the elders were sharing leadership responsibil-

¹See George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 353, and The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1957), 6:267.

ities with the apostles (15:2, 22; 16:4). It became Paul's practice to have elders appointed in every church that he planted (14:23). These elders, sometimes referred to as "overseers" or "guardians" (ἐπίσκοπος),¹ were to guard the Church from the "fierce wolves" (20:29) that would come when he was gone. They were instructed "to feed the church of the Lord" (20:28).

While there is no specific organizational structure mentioned in Acts the Jerusalem Council served an important organizational role.² It served as an official voice for doctrine (15:1, 2, 30, 31) and for the general practice of ministry as it related to doctrine (15:5). They were the ones designated by Jesus to be sent out with authority (Mark 3:14, 15), they were the ones who traveled with Christ as He ministered, and they were all witnesses to the resurrected Lord (1:22; 2:32). As a result new converts "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship" (2:42). Thus, as the Church grew, the teaching of the apostles rather than the apostles themselves served as the organizational glue. It should also be noted, however, that when it came to appointing the seven (6:2, 5) and making the decision at the Jerusalem Council (15:12, 22), believers in addition to the apostles became involved.

¹In apostolic times the two terms, πρεσβύτερος and ἐπίσκοπος, were used interchangeably. Compare 1 Tim. 3:2-7 with Titus 1:5-9.

²F. F. Bruce concurs.

"The Council of Jerusalem is an event to which Luke plainly attaches the highest importance; it is as epoch-making, in his eyes, as the conversion of Paul or the preaching of the gospel to Cornelius and his household. . . .

In the province of Asia we find the general terms of the apostolic decision upheld at the end of the 1st century in Rev. 2:14, 20."

Bruce, pp. 298, 316.

The oneness of the Church despite the lack of a rigid formal organizational structure can be seen in the use of the word . In Acts, the singular is used for local congregations (11:26; 13:1; 14:23), while the plural is used for all the churches (15:41; 16:5). The singular can be used to designate many believers in a city (5:11; 8:1), but it can also be used to describe the church at large (9:31).¹ Ladd explains the significance of this unity among the churches:

These uses of ekklēsia suggest that the church is not merely the total number of all local churches or the totality of all believers; rather, the local congregation is the church in local expression. . . . This is a reflection of the fact that all churches felt they belonged to one another because they jointly belonged to Christ.²

Thus we find evidence of church organization in the book of Acts. The appointment of the seven and of the elders, and the appeal to a church council for settlement of doctrinal matters, all indicate that a form of organization existed. The remarkable characteristic of the account in Acts is the low profile that organization took. It is referred to in such a way as to indicate that the early Church was absorbed in its mission, not its organization. Organization did play a very significant role in maintaining the general thrust and momentum of the early Church. It freed the apostles to devote their time to prayer and to the teaching of the word. It allowed the new disciples to participate in the church mission, and it served as a tool to preserve the unity of the Church and the purity of the gospel message. The organization was flexible and adapt-

¹Ladd, p. 353.

²Ibid.

able to current needs and present circumstances, yet it never became an objective in itself. Organization then was supportive rather than demanding.

An Important Type of Growth¹

Up to this point church growth has been seen primarily as a divinely guided process by which the early Church reached out to those who had not yet received Christ and added them to churches of Judea and Samaria. This growth has been characterized as numerical, qualitative, and organizational. Luke devotes twelve chapters to the emergence of the early Church. With this foundation he then devotes the final sixteen chapters to its missionary outreach to regions beyond Judea and Samaria, which results in extension growth.

Extension Growth

As early as Acts 1:8 Luke reveals a concern for the geographic extension of the Christian faith. In later chapters this extension became closely associated with church planting. According to this passage (1:8) the work of the apostles was to begin in Jerusalem, then extend to Judea and Samaria, and then eventually reach to the ends of the earth. In the context of Acts "the end of the earth" was Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire.

The preparation for the extension growth is seen in chap. 2 where devout Jews from "every nation under heaven" heard the one hun-

¹McGavran and Arn recognize four "types" of growth--internal, expansion, extension and bridging. McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, p. 127. For the purposes of this chapter extension and bridging are discussed as one. Internal and expansion will not be dealt with in this chapter. See Chap. I for a definition of these terms.

dred and twenty speak to them in their own language. The significance of this miracle is revealed by Peter. "For the promise is to you and your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him" (2:39, emphasis supplied).

The more localized extension growth began as a result of the persecution following the stoning of Stephen. The persecution caused the Jerusalem church which had expanded to several thousand believers by this time to scatter "throughout the region of Judea and Samaria" (8:1). The ministry of Philip firmly established the reality of extension growth. Soon it could be said that "the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Sama'ria had peace and was built up" (9:31).

Soon after Gentile Christianity was ushered in, Antioch in Syria became the center for extending the Church even deeper into Gentile territory (13:1-3). The impression is given by Luke that Rome became another center from which Paul was able to preach and teach "about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered" (28:31).

It is not crucial to our discussion here to determine how specific the apostles' strategy was for extending the Church.¹ What

¹Writers such as Roland A. Allen (Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? pp. 10-11), Michael Green (Evangelism in the Early Church, pp. 256-265), F. F. Bruce (The Book of Acts, p. 263), and Donald McGavran and Win Arn (How to Grow a Church, pp. 31, 32) all believe that Paul had some kind of general plan or strategy for extension growth. All agree that the Jewish synagogues were a principal target for Paul's missionary endeavors. Both Allen and Green state specifically, however, that Paul did not deliberately plan his journeys beforehand. Green gives the broadest explanation of Paul's strategy.

"The strategy of a man like St. Paul was basically simple: he had one life, and he was determined to use it to the greatest

is helpful is the observation that certain patterns do emerge from the account in Acts. Roland Allen suggests two significant patterns that are observable in Paul's extension evangelism.¹

First, Paul viewed the task of mission from the perspective of provinces or regions rather than from that of cities. The Holy Spirit in his guidance of Paul forbade him from going to Asia (16:6) and called him to Macedonia rather than Philippi or Thessalonica (16:9; 10; 18:5; 19:22).

Second, Paul's

theory of evangelizing a province was not to preach in every place in it himself, but to establish centres of Christian life in two or three important places from which the knowledge might spread into the country round. . . . he intended his congregation to become at once a centre of light.²

When Paul had established the Church in strategic points he was able to claim that he had evangelized the whole province. Ten years after he had established the center at Antioch in Syria he could say, "from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyr'icum I have fully preached the gospel" (Rom 15:19). Paul did view his ministry as being unique in that he did not wish to "build upon another man's foundation" (Rom 15:20). He saw his responsibility as establishing strategic centers. Allen points out, however, that

It is not enough for the church to be established in a place where many are coming and going unless the people who come

extent and at the best advantage possible in the service of Jesus Christ. His vision was at once personal, urban, provincial and global."
Green, p. 261.

¹Allen, p. 12.

²Ibid.

and go not only learn the Gospel, but learn it in such a way that they can propagate it.¹

It is only when a church has been established in this way that Paul could say that he had actually evangelized the whole province.

It should be noted that it was also Paul's pattern wherever he was to go to the Jews first (13:46; 17:2ff; 18:5ff; 19:8ff).

Donald A. McGavran suggests that one of the main reasons that he did this is because, "He followed up groups of people who had living relations in the People Movement to Christ."² The example of Paul at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14f) is seen as typical of Paul's approach where there were no organized Christian groups.

Paul, according to McGavran, would direct his first messages to the Jews in the synagogue and try to convince them through Jewish reasoning that Jesus was the Messiah. Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism became eager to learn more (v. 42) and took Paul and Barnabas presumably to a home where the dialogue continued. Since Paul also intended to reach the Gentiles he then taught about the universality of the Messiah and the fact that He was available by faith to men of all races (vv. 47, 48). Since the synagogue community was composed of Jews of both the Hebrew and Greek races, plus additional believing but uncircumcised Greeks, Paul was utilizing natural bridges to cross into the Gentile community. These bridges were not only racial and religious but they also consisted of social and kinship bridges. This could very easily explain why Paul wanted

¹Ibid., p. 13.

²Donald Anderson McGavran, The Bridges of God (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), p. 31.

Timothy to accompany him. Since Timothy's mother was a Jewish believer and his father a Greek, Timothy would be invaluable as a bridge to both Jews and Greeks in Paul's ministry (16:1-5). The rapid extension of the apostolic Church was no doubt accentuated when social and kinship bridges were crossed throughout the Roman Empire. These bridges would be crossed by the apostles carrying the good news of a universal message--a message that was bigger than any nationality, yet small enough to give a sense of contextualized meaning. "The bridges of God," as McGavran calls them, seem to be implied and utilized in the book of Acts.

Extension growth was a necessary part of the total evangelistic work of the apostolic Church. It incorporated all other forms of growth and demanded a leadership that not only wanted to see the work firmly established but also a work that was pushing onto new frontiers. The apostle Paul became especially sensitive to the local and national contextual settings which included the selection of key strategic centers as well as natural people bridges. The Jerusalem church also gave its support to this work as it sent out mission teams to various regions. The objective was always to preach and teach in such a way so as to make disciples who would so identify with the resurrected Christ that they would in turn extend the Church even further.

Conclusion

The church growth phenomenon described by Luke in Acts is a many-faceted process. Each part is linked to another and together--

not separately--they describe the Spirit-filled Church following Christ's resurrection.

Certain pre-conditions provided the framework for the growth phenomenon. The "climate" for growth was healthy. The apostles' not only knew their message but they also knew their role as instruments in the hands of a loving God. Pentecost left no question that the needed power for their gigantic task was indeed available. Evangelism was a way of life. In every aspect of the Church's growth, God was the Center, the Initiator as well as the Fulfiller.

The Church did grow. It grew numerically, and Luke is not hesitant to report it. Numerical growth, however, is always reported as the result of the ministry of Christ. The cooperation of God and man resulted in a Church that was multiplying in numbers as its members were praising the resurrected Christ.

The Church not only grew in numbers; it grew in disciples. Those added to the Church were fully committed to Christ, to his Body--the Church, and to the work of Christ. The dicotomy between qualitative and quantitative growth was not known. Both aspects of growth were seen in the total process of making disciples.

The Church has all the vital characteristics of a living organism and as such had a form of organization. This organization, however, never existed for itself, but always for the life of the Church. The early forms of organization revealed by Luke were called into existence to preserve the thrust of a Church with a divine mission. As such the organization was adaptable and flexible in order to meet the needs and the opportunities of a rapidly expanding Church.

The organization was programmed for evan elistic growth, not organiza-tional growth.

All aspects of growth were involved in extension growth. The planting of churches drew heavily upon the resources of the Church. Jerusalem, the mother church, took special delight to see daughter churches planted throughout the Roman Empire. These daughter churches always felt a sense of loyalty to their mother as revealed by the famine-relief offering and the Jerusalem Council. Extension growth is not presented as an option but rather as the very heart of evangelism. Qualitative and quantitative growths were channeled organizationally in such a way that extension growth became a vibrant reality.

Church growth as described in the book of Acts has many forms but they all blend together as an organic whole. Church growth is made possible because of the risen Christ and is equally dependent upon Him for its sustained growth. As a result, church growth is a process that does not end.

This process did not cease with the apostolic church. George W. Peters describes the setting for modern church growth.

Church growth takes place in local situations. It is here that membership increases and decreases. Here the members live, learn, serve, fellowship, thrive, suffer, and die. Here they make their contribution, share their joys, and celebrate their victories, or become a burden and liability to their congrega-tion and to the Lord. In all reality the local congregation becomes the manifestation of the church universal.¹

¹Peters, p. 57.

The following chapter is an analysis of one local church that did experience church growth but not without its struggles. The movement from theology to the practice of ministry is both needful and instructive. The planting of the South Hill Church ushered it into the never-ending growth process of God's universal Church.

CHAPTER IV

A CASE STUDY OF THE PLANTING OF THE SPOKANE SOUTH HILL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Introduction

The church growth phenomenon recorded in the book of Acts was not meant to be an isolated historical event. God's mission should involve every local church of every age. Participation in God's mission should be the very reason for existence of any church. This mission, however, operates best when certain basic principles are followed. For Seventh-day Adventists to proclaim the "everlasting gospel" (Rev 14:6, 7) to every man, woman, and child in the time when "the fields are already white for harvest" (John 4:35) suggests not only a sense of urgency but also a need for understanding the basic principles of harvesting. The agrarian principles of "harvesting," on the other hand, assume an understanding of "growth." Growth and harvesting are part of the same process.

The following is a case study of this process. While the study covers only a three year period it does provide an opportunity for describing a church planting and the church's subsequent growth. During the three year period the writer was under the direction of Elder Clarence Gruesbeck who was working towards a D. Min. in "church growth" at Fuller Theological Seminary. The analysis and evaluation of the church planting was done after attending a course in "church

growth" taught by C. Peter Wagner of Fuller. The principles gained from the guided in-field experience and the course in "church growth" helped provide an early foundation for the candidate's doctoral program.

A Demographic Study of the South Hill Area
of Spokane, Washington

The County and City of Spokane

Spokane, Washington is recognized as the center for cultural, financial, and economic developments in a vast 36-county Inland Empire. In 1970 the Inland Empire had a population of 1,248,000 with 380,000 families in an area that includes a portion of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon.¹ In this area, which is bounded on all four sides by mountains, are some of the richest and most productive agricultural, forest products, and mining areas in the nation. "Manufacturing, lumber, mining, diversified farming, retailing and wholesale, transportation, medical and professional services all contribute to a balanced and stable economy in the Inland Empire."²

As would be expected, Spokane is the county seat. In 1979 it had a population of 179,200,³ and a national metropolitan ranking of

¹United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, cited in "Spokane and the Inland Empire Economic Highlights," Spokane: Spokane Area Development Council, June 1979. (Mimeographed.)

²Ibid.

³Office of Fiscal Management Population Trends, 1978 cited in "Spokane's Growth," Spokane: Spokane Area Developmental Council, March 1980. (Mimeographed.)

112 in 1978.¹ The county encompasses 1,758.3 square miles, while the city of Spokane has 52.12 square miles.² The population of the county in 1979 was 328,100, which gave it a national ranking of .118 among three hundred Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of population.³ As illustrated in figs. 14 and 15 (app. E), there was a 3.3 percent increase between 1960 and 1970 for Spokane County compared with a 19.5 percent increase for the state.⁴ In 1960 the city of Spokane saw a decennial population zenith of 181,608 but with a steady decline of its birth rate and the out-migration from the city, Spokane experienced its first decennial population loss in 1970--a loss of 11,092.⁵ The population forecast shown in fig. 16 (app. E), however, anticipated a 5-8.5 percent growth rate for the city and a 8.9-12.40 percent increase for the county by 1980.⁶

The rather stable economy seen in the county is largely due to the wide diversity of service industries and wholesale and retail trade enterprises. As of June 1979 there were 462 manufacturing establishments, 2,544 retail, 717 wholesale, and 2,563 establishments

¹Information Please Almanac, 35th ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), p. 787.

²Spokane Area Development Council, "Spokane Facts," Spokane Area Development Council, n.d. (Mimeographed.)

³Data Service--Sales Management Magazine, cited in "Spokane Facts," Spokane: Spokane Area Development Council, n.d. (Mimeographed.)

⁴State of Washington, 1970 Census Data Book, Office of Program Planning and Fiscal Management, cited in "Population 1880 to 2000" (Spokane: City Plan Commission, 1975), p. 9. (Mimeographed.)

⁵Ibid., Summary.

⁶Ibid., p. 9.

dealing with services.¹ While agriculture is an important economic factor in the county, the greatest employment comes from non-agricultural enterprises. Based on figures from Bonneville Power Administration, I arrived at the following percentages. Of the total projected employment for 1980, 1.45 percent is agriculture, 9.43 percent is non-agricultural self-employment, and 89.10 percent is the total non-agricultural employment. Of this total non-agricultural employment (128,400), .20 percent is mining, 6.23 percent construction, 13.47 percent manufacturing, 6.19 percent transportation and public utilities, 28.2 percent wholesale and retail trade, 6.31 percent finance, insurance, and real estate, 22.2 percent services, and 17.21 percent government-related employment.²

The 1960 and 1970 census figures (table 8, app. E) reveal that the percentage of families in the lower income brackets is higher in Spokane County than the average in the state, but all categories had improved by 1970.³ According to Cole's Cross Reference Directory of Greater Spokane, 42.7 percent of Spokane County is geographically listed in the "medium low" to "low" wealth zones.⁴

¹Spokane Area Development Council, "Spokane and the Inland Empire Economic Highlights," Spokane: Spokane Area Development Council, June 1979. (Mimeographed.)

²Bonneville Power Administration, cited in "Employment by Industry Projections, 1975-2000," Spokane: Spokane Area Development Council, September, 1979. (Mimeographed.)

³1960 and 1970 United States Census of Population, cited in "Families Per Income Category in Spokane County and Washington State," Spokane: Spokane Area Development Council, n.d. (Mimeographed.)

⁴Cole's Cross Reference Directory, Greater Spokane (Seattle: Cole's Publications, 1980), pp. 8a, 9a.

While the economy is generally stable in Spokane County, due to the diversified industries, the family stability is not what it should be. In checking with the county clerk and auditor, it was found that there is an alarming trend in divorce. According to table 9 (app. E), for every divorce filed there were 1.08 marriage applications filed.¹ The trauma of this trend is magnified by the fact that 44 percent of the city of Spokane and 46 percent of the county is under the age of 25.²

According to the 1970 Federal Census only 1.3 percent of the population of the city is Negro, while all other minorities total 3 percent.³ Nineteen percent responded to the census as being from "foreign stock" while 3.8 percent said they were foreign born. The greatest percentage of these stated that their country of origin was Europe/USSR.⁴ Table 10 (app. E) gives a breakdown according to the various world sectors as well as a racial breakdown.

The South Side of Spokane

The south side area of Spokane is often referred to as South Hill. It is bounded on the north by I-90, on the east by Havana

¹These figures were obtained by phone from the office of the Spokane County Clerk and Auditor.

²Population Characteristics: 1970 Federal Census cited in "Age and Sex Breakdowns, City/County 1970 Census," Spokane: Spokane Area Development Council, n.d. (Mimeographed.)

³U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1970, vol. 1, Race by Sex, for Areas and Places: 1970, pt. 49, table 23.

⁴U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1970, vol. 1, Country of Origin of the Foreign Stock by Nativity and Race: 1970, pt. 49, table 141.

Street, on the west by the Colfax Highway and on the south by a jagged city limit line. In this report the southern boundary includes the southern housing developments which go beyond the city limits. The assigned territory for ministry includes all of the population on the south side.

According to the population density report of 1976 this area has a population of 55,108. The two major sections have a population density of 4,001 per square mile with a .85 percent average annual growth rate, while the third outlying section has a density of 101-1,000 per square mile, but an annual growth rate of 9.6 percent.¹ Furthermore, the report by the Glenmary Research Center that 60.8 percent of the population of Washington state is unchurched suggests that 33,506 individuals are unchurched in this area.² The need for an Adventist church in the area becomes apparent.

The South Hill S.D.A. Church began by renting the Heritage Congregational Church, located on 29th Avenue--the main thoroughfare on South Hill. Of the two churches available for rental this church was more centrally located, provided greater visibility, and was easier to find. According to Cole's Directory, it is located in the highest wealth zone. This directory divides South Hill into 15 different tracts or parcels of territory. Of these, 33.3 percent are in the highest wealth zones, 20 percent in the medium high, 6.6 per-

¹Spokane County and City Planning Commission, Population Forecast 1970-2000 (Spokane: Spokane County & City Planning Commission, August 1974), map.

²Glenmary Research Center, cited by Fuller Evangelistic Association, Community Analysis (Pasadena: Fuller Evangelistic Association, March 1977), p. 9.

cent in the medium, 20 percent in the medium low, and 20 percent in the low wealth zone. In studying the various tracts in comparison with the wealth zones it becomes very obvious that the church is situated in an area of higher income, with the lower income levels being the farthest away. Fig. 10 (app. E) gives this comparison as well as pinpointing the prime target area of the South Hill Church. Further study reveals that the average number of years in school completed, county wide, is 12.2 years, while the average for South Hill is 12.8. In the prime target area for the church's outreach, however, it is 13.45 years.¹ To accentuate the picture, table 11 (app. E) gives the breakdown for occupations of those in the prime target area. Especially noteworthy is the fact that 40.1 percent of those in the target area are classified as "professional, technical, and kindred workers" or "managers and administrators, except farm."² The percentages of the other occupations make it clear that the church's primary thrust, at least geographically, is for the "white collar" worker.

Spokane is noted state-wide as a medical center. For example,

Spokane's medical and related health services employ more people than any other industry. Approximately 20 per cent of the patients served by Spokane's medical facilities are from outside Spokane County.

¹Cole's Directory, p. 8a, 9a.

²U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census Tracts, Spokane, Washington, Standard Metropolitan Area, Labor Force Characteristics of the Population, table P-3.

. . . There is one doctor for every 563 persons in the county, compared to a national average of one to every 710 persons.¹

Since three of the six major hospitals, including the two largest, are on South Hill, it is fair to conclude that a good percentage of the 547 doctors that practice in Spokane, as well as a large number of the paramedical staff, live in the south side area.

Summary

The trends that this demographic study reveal were in motion long before the church appeared in 1977. To continue its rapid growth, the church will need to take into consideration several factors that were in process before its arrival. Some of these are:

1. Spokane is a center for cultural, financial, and economic developments. The church needs to realize that those living in its prime target area are concerned and influenced by at least one of these three developing and ever changing forces.

2. Spokane is proud of its image. The World's Fair in 1974 gave the city a boost. Civic concerns and projects are important to her self image.

3. The city of Spokane is showing a rather slow growth rate while the county is growing much faster by comparison.

4. Racial issues are not a major concern as in some segments of the country. There are several, however, who are not fully assimilated.

¹Spokane Area Development Council, "Spokane Facts," Spokane: Spokane Area Development Council, n.d. (Mimeographed.)

5. The income level surrounding the South Hill Church is in contrast to much of the surrounding areas.

6. The income level, educational level, and type of occupations in the prime target area tend to be white collar by nature.

7. "The family" is in trouble. The divorce rate in Spokane speaks of some real needs.

8. An estimated 33,506 unchurched individuals is not only a challenge but also potential for growth.

9. The high ratio of doctors to the population could indicate a greater interest in health and health habits.

10. There is a very good chance, with 44 percent of the city's population under the age of 25, that a major concern is with youth.

With this demographic understanding the need and challenge of planting a new Adventist church on South Hill becomes more clear. Oosterwal observes, however, that among the most difficult people for Adventists to reach are those in the upper and very low income brackets, as well as those in the under-40 age group.¹ Since these groups are predominant, the South Hill church is demographically located in an evangelistically resistant area. A key to the long-range evangelistic work of the Adventist church on South Hill may rest in the personal associations that individual Adventists have with those living in the area.² The decision to plant a church in this area did provide ample opportunities for these kinds of associations.

¹Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of SDA Church Growth in America (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976) pp. 45, 46.

²Oosterwal also observed from his study that

A Historical Review of the Beginning and the
Development of the South Hill SDA Church

Pre-Organizational

The decision by the Upper Columbia Conference administration to start a new work on South Hill was preceded by an expressed interest of the laity living in the area. When I began my new assignment in July 1977 there were three Adventist churches in Spokane--all with memberships over four hundred.

In preparation for this church planting Elder Richard Fearing, then conference president, gave support to the planting by acting in three significant ways. First he met with the area pastors and gained their support for what would amount to a "church swarming." Second, he made arrangements for me to place three bulletin announcements in the local churches informing the area membership of pre-organizational meetings. Finally, Elder Fearing sent a letter to all Spokane members two months before our family arrived informing them of an approximate date for the actual organization (see app. B for a copy of the letter). These actions helped create a sense of certainty as to the future organization of the South Hill church. Soon after the announcement was made a group of laity formed a home Bible study group. This group not only provided an opportunity for Bible study and fellowship but also a sounding board for later pre-organizational decisions.

"No less than 67% of the members who joined the church from a non-SDA background have first become acquainted with the SDA message through neighbors, friends, relatives and acquaintances. These latter were also the most important influence on persons to become a member of the church (57%)."

Ibid., p. 40.

One of the first responsibilities that I faced was to find a suitable home for the yet unborn congregation. The plan that I followed was to contact the non-Adventist churches on South Hill to see if they would be willing to rent their church facilities to us and if so for how much. These alternatives would then be presented for discussion at the coming pre-organizational meeting. The response from these non-Adventist pastors varied. Some openly referred to Adventists as a sect while others responded warmly. Many of the laity of these churches were gone on summer vacations and it was impossible to get any definite responses until the end of the summer.

While the search for a church home was under way an announcement was placed in the church bulletins of the local Adventist churches. This announcement stated that the first pre-organizational meeting would be held on August 11 and the first church service on August 27. These announcements were made before any church agreed to rent to us so as to preserve the momentum and interest.

Twenty-five attended the pre-organizational meeting. This was the first opportunity that I had to meet with a group of laymen outside of the Bible study group. These individuals were very positive and enthusiastic about planting a church on South Hill. Their names and addresses were taken for future visitation. This list also provided names of individuals who could lead out in the first Sabbath School and church services.

The first Sabbath School and church service were conducted on August 27 as announced. Sixty-eight were present for Sabbath School and 75 for the church service. This first meeting was held in the basement of the conference office. One of the predominant concerns

was where the new church would be located. By this time two Congregational churches had reported that they would be willing to rent their church facilities to us. These offers were announced between the Sabbath School and church services. After some discussion a vote was taken to see which facility would receive the most support from this group. The vote clearly indicated that the majority wanted the larger and more expensive church. One of the key factors in this discussion was the available facilities for the Sabbath School divisions.

The ideally located Heritage Congregational Church which seated 330 was rented for \$325.00 per month. The church also had a gym which could be rented for monthly fellowship dinners. The pastor of the church reported that one of the reasons the trustees had decided to rent to us was because they had received favorable reports about Adventists. One of these came from the daughter of one of the trustees who had written him telling of how the Adventists had provided a church home for her congregation when their church home had burned. Another trustee had an Adventist dentist whom he admired.

Funds for the rental expense came in quickly, enabling us to pay the first month's rent in two weeks. The conference allowed all the offerings which came in during the first several weeks to be used for rent and the purchase of Sabbath School supplies. The tithe was sent to the conference as usual. Other than my salary no financial assistance was received from the conference during this pre-organizational phase.

During this first phase the evangelistic territorial lines were discussed by the local Adventist pastors. Of special interest

during this discussion was the future distribution of the names of prospective members. These names were normally gathered from the responses made to the church's outreach programs and then distributed to the pastors according to their geographic location. The intention for these "territorial lines" was not to restrict any pastor or lay person from following up a specific interest but, rather, to assist the churches in their evangelistic endeavors. This, however, was not always the interpretation. One pastor, for example, was concerned with preserving his Ingathering¹ territory on South Hill. I assured him that he could continue his solicitation on South Hill as long as we received the write-in responses. When this was not acceptable to him, Elder Clarence Gruesbeck, Conference Executive Secretary, sensing an impasse, conducted a population density study of Spokane to help determine where these boundary lines would be drawn if population density were the criteria (table 7, app. E). This act of arbitration did much to help objectify the issue and provided a more healthy basis for the prolonged working relationships among the area churches.

Post Organizational

The South Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially organized on September 17, 1977 with 78 members. It became the fourth Adventist church in Spokane. The Spokane Central church was the mother church for both the Linwood and the South Hill churches (app. C). The Central church, however, was not fully behind the

¹This is an annual "World Service Appeal" conducted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church by which it gives its own members as well as non-members an opportunity to give financial aid to both local and world-wide humanitarian needs. These funds help cover a small portion of this phase of the church's mission.

planting of the South Hill church. It was struggling with its own growth and had plans for building a new Sabbath School wing. As a result, when a few key leaders joined the South Hill church as charter members a strained relationship developed. This awkward relationship lasted for at least one year. When the Central pastor retired the church seemed to be more willing to forget the loss of members it suffered in the swarming.

Not all members, however, came from the Central church. All Spokane and area Adventist churches were represented. With 78 charter members coming from so many different churches one of the most important tasks for the new church was to help integrate these "strangers" into a bond of fellowship. This was a real challenge, since the church consistently had many visitors. Monthly fellowship "potlucks" did much to acquaint the members with each other. A monthly newsletter also helped keep church news items before all the members. Included in the newsletter were the financial report and the weekly attendance figures for both Sabbath School and church. The mid-week service, which began as soon as the church was organized, was small in attendance, but it provided an opportunity where close relationships were formed. Small groups were later organized throughout the city to take the place of the mid-week service with the result of tripling the attendance. It also became the practice of the church to sponsor a church retreat, subsidized in part by funds from the social committee. The retreat was held at the conference youth camp and non-Adventist friends were encouraged to come. Their way was paid from the "Lay Activities Fund." The retreat helped create a

closeness among the members which no doubt was partly responsible for the large transfer growth of the South Hill church.

The Adventist members that transferred to the church were often the leaders of other Adventist churches. Some of these were older members, but from the very beginning the South Hill church had a large percentage of its membership in two categories--young couples, often with young children, and professionals. These components proved to be a drawing factor to others in the same categories.

One of the priorities of the new church was its evangelistic thrust. On November 2, 1977, 2,800 packets were sent out by mail to residents in selected areas on South Hill. Included in this packet was a letter explaining what we were doing, a book entitled Steps to Christ, which explained the plan of salvation, and a response card that could be mailed for more information. A similar mailing was made in May, 1978, to 2,150 homes. The book included this time was Three Hours to Live, also on the plan of salvation. The mail response was disappointingly low. Bible study interests which produced baptisms were primarily personal referrals from other Adventists but some did come from responses to Adventist radio and television programs. This was also the case in the Daniel Seminar and evangelistic series which were conducted in 1979.

In recognition of its long term ministry the newly organized church searched for land on which to build a church home. The church organized a search committee and several parcels of land were selected for study. In conducting this study the committee looked into other factors besides the cost of land. City and county growth projections were studied with the premise that the church would grow

best in an area where the population was growing and where the church would have good visibility. This preliminary study revealed that two hundred homes were to be built near one possible building site.

Traffic surveys were then analyzed so as to determine what areas were traveled most and therefore which parcels of land provided the highest visibility. These studies were reported at the church business meeting, and after several on-site discussions it was decided to purchase 4.79 acres near the intersection of 57th and Palouse Highway. There were sites with more visibility as indicated in the traffic survey but the cost was prohibitive. This site, however, was near the large housing development mentioned above and offered reasonably good visibility. The cost of the land, \$24,000, was paid for in a year with the help of the conference.

Soon after the arrangements were made to purchase the land, the church formed a building committee to help formulate the kind of structure that would be suitable for the land purchased. In an attempt to involve the whole membership in the discussion of the building plans a "Church Building Committee Questionnaire" was mailed to the members, along with a letter from the pastor (app. D). Responses were tabulated and assisted the architect in drawing a preliminary plan which was eventually used as a bulletin cover (app. D).

One of the most exciting dimensions of the emergence of the South Hill church was the development of a dynamic relationship between the church's growing self-image and its sense of mission. Church members felt that they were on the cutting edge of pioneer evangelism and as a result they considered the church as "special". "South Hill quality" became an adage which expressed the attitude by

which the church undertook various projects. In an attempt to keep abreast of the attitudes that were developing within the church in regards to the various aspects of "church life," a survey with the corresponding results was taken and published in the church newsletter (app. D). This approach helped not only to provide advance information so that needed changes could be made but also to create an atmosphere of openness among all levels of the church.

The South Hill church came a long way rapidly. In just under three years, from September 1977 to June 1980, the church grew from seventy-eight to 175 members. This growth is described in greater detail in the following section.

A Description and Diagnosis of the Growth
Patterns of the South Hill Church from
September 1977 to December 1979

Description of Growth

The South Hill church is showing "incredible growth"¹ with a composite decadal growth rate of 964 percent² (fig. 18, app. F). The church was planted with seventy-eight charter members. The graphs and charts, however, show only sixty-nine because by the end

¹C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, Creative Leadership Series (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), p. 48.

A popular scale for measuring a church's growth is:

"25% per decade--poor growth
50% per decade--fair growth
100% per decade--good growth
200% per decade--excellent growth
300% per decade--outstanding growth
500% per decade--incredible growth"

Ibid.

²See appendix G for the formulation and mathematical rationale for decadal growth rates.

of 1977 only sixty-nine membership transfers were finalized. This figure is used to enable this study to be consistent with the North Pacific Union Conference's membership records.

The church communicant membership (fig. 19, app. F) grew from sixty-nine members in December of 1977 to 157 in December of 1979. Projecting these two years over ten years gives the church a communicant membership decadal growth rate of 5,999 percent. This extremely high percentage is brought into perspective with a comparatively low Sabbath School attendance decadal growth rate of 258 percent (fig. 20, app. F), and a Sabbath morning worship attendance decadal growth rate of 492 percent (fig. 21, app. F).

Further analysis reveals that the annual composite membership in 1978 was 25.6 percent and slightly higher in 1979 with an annual growth rate of 27.8 percent (fig. 22, app. F). Fig. 23 (app. F) compares the annual communicant growth rate of the South Hill church with that of Upper Columbia Conference as a whole. Here it is illustrated that the annual communicant growth rate of the conference in 1978 was 2.07 percent while South Hill's was 72.5 percent, and in 1979 the annual rate of the conference was 3.5 percent while the church's was 24.2 percent. Of course, this was largely transfer growth, yet the percent of baptisms in relation to the total membership was higher than that of the conference. In 1978, for example, 4 percent of South Hill's membership came in through conversion growth compared with the conference's 3.2 percent. In 1979 the church jumped to 10.8 percent while the conference raised to 4 percent. These facts demonstrate that the church is holding its own, even without the transfer growth. Fig. 24 (app. F) shows an analysis of the various kinds of

of growth, as well as the reasons for the loss of some members in the church. The significant point here is that while the initial growth was transfer, the percentage of conversion growth is increasing as the young church becomes more established.

The chart depicting the average monthly church attendance (fig. 25, app. F) reveals that the summer months, especially July and August, are the low months for attendance, while October through January are the months with the greatest church attendance.

Diagnosis of Growth

The South Hill church has been a rapidly growing church. The newly planted church has the high transfer growth rate that would be expected from a new church in a metropolitan area with other sister churches. With age, the church is slowing down in transfer accessions and gaining momentum in conversion growth.

The sharp difference between the decadal growth rates among the following needs to be evaluated: communicant membership (5,999 percent), composite membership (964 percent), Sabbath morning worship attendance (492 percent), and Sabbath School attendance (258 percent). The evaluation will be made in the next section, but it should be noted that the attendance is not keeping up with the increasing membership, even though it is in the "excellent growth"¹ or better ratings. The worship attendance graph reveals that Sabbaths with a high visibility program tend to raise the average of the composite membership. This fact demonstrates that there are certain elements within the church that need to be pinpointed and evaluated before the growth

¹Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, p. 48. See footnote #1 on page 81.

rate can be praised or lamented. The graph depicting the annual growth rates reveals that 1979 was higher than 1978. This is an indicator of a healthy church and reveals the "first love" experience. According to the growth and loss comparisons revealed in fig. 24 (app. F), the church is not losing its members to death, apostasy, or transfers out. The obvious question raised by this analysis is Why such a large differential between the communicant decadal growth rate and monthly attendance?

The greatest concern from the diagnostic data is with the discrepancy between communicant membership and actual attendance. This discrepancy is even greater when one realizes that the attendance records include visitors as well as members. If this trend continues, the growth of the church may be adversely affected. This will be discussed more fully in the next section.

A Critique of the Growth of the South Hill
Church According to "Church Growth"
Literature

Vergil Gerber has identified the scriptural strategy for growth in the following way:

"Making disciples" involves people. Responsible, reproducing Christians are people who are committed to Christ and to His command to make other people disciples too, and to relate them to communities of Christian people called churches.

Churches are people. Responsible reproducing churches are communities of people who are committed to Christ and to His command to establish other communities of Christian people.

People are both the object of the evangelistic goal and the agent of evangelistic strategy in the Scriptures.¹

¹Vergil Gerber, God's Way to Keep a Church Going and Growing (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973), p. 23.

The obvious emphasis is on people--people as the object of evangelism and people as the means that the Lord uses to carry out evangelism. Whatever method of evaluation is used, it must be remembered that graphs and charts, demographics and the appropriate analyses are all people centered. The health of a church is measured by the people of the church. They are the object of this evaluation.

The Four Axioms of Church Growth

Peter Wagner has identified four axioms of church growth which he feels cannot be compromised if a church is to grow. They are:

1. The pastor must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price. . . .
- . . . 2. The people must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price. . . .
- . . . 3. The church must agree that the goal of evangelism is to make disciples. . . .
- . . . 4. The church must not have a terminal illness.¹

A closer look at these four axioms is imperative in order to understand the basic philosophy of the South Hill Church and its relationship to the church's growth patterns.

The first axiom relates to the pastor's philosophy of ministry. According to Wagner, the pastor must be willing to work hard, to take church growth training, to share leadership, and to have members he cannot pastor personally due to the size of the church.²

This axiom brings to light one of the weaknesses of the pastoral leadership during the time period being studied. The willingness to share leadership was lacking primarily in the area of dele-

¹Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, pp. 24-28.

²Ibid., pp. 26, 27.

gation. This weakness was not so much an unwillingness as much as not making this a priority.

The second axiom is that the people must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price. The three supporting pillars of this axiom, according to Wagner, are: (A) "The people must accept the pastor's leadership," (B) "The church members must be willing to provide the funds for growth," and (C) "They must be willing to sacrifice fellowship for growth."¹

The South Hill church, first of all did look to the pastor for leadership. As a new church the members weren't looking for some kind of "ecclesiastical housekeeper" for a pastor. They were excited about the plans for outreach and growth. Second, they were willing to financially support their church's mission. In addition to the monthly church rental expense funding for evangelistic projects, including land for a new church, came in rapidly without much promotion. Third, the members of the newly organized church were willing to sacrifice fellowship offered by their home churches and in some instances drive several miles to help start a new church.

The third axiom of church growth is that the church must agree that the goal of evangelism is to make disciples. When the church was first organized, evangelism had a priority. The evangelistic mailings and special witnessing training programs represented several hours and dollars. The goals of South Hill's evangelistic thrust harmonized with the historic position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As McGavran and Arn have pointed out, the goal of

¹Ibid.

evangelism is to make disciples and not merely to call for decisions.¹ The ultimate goal is to lead these new disciples beyond +2 on the Engel Scale.² In 1979, nine weeks of public evangelism were conducted in harmony with this goal of evangelism. Later in this section, it will be pointed out that the church was so intense in its evangelistic fervor that it fell in the trap designated by some as the "Strachan theorem."³

Fourth, the church does not have a terminal "church disease". As the newness wore off certain tendencies revealed the need of immediate attention. One of the greatest dangers which the church faced is what Wagner calls "St. John's Syndrome". This is a disease which generally develops in four stages: rapid growth, plateau, decline, and stagnation.⁴ Some signs suggested that the church may have encountered the phase designated as "plateau." This was seen more

¹Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, Ten Steps For Church Growth (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 52, 53.

²James F. Engel and H. Wilbert Norton, What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest? (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p. 45. See Chapter I under "definitions."

³The "Strachan theorem" is the designation for the teaching of Kenneth Strachan, which suggested that "the expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing its total membership in continuous propagation of its beliefs." Wagner is not opposed to the mobilization of the laity but sees a problem "when everyone is expected to be 'a continuous propagator.' . . . If everybody in the church is expected to be an evangelist, where are those with all the other spiritual gifts that are needed to make those with the gift of evangelist most effective?" C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, with a Foreword by Raymond C. Ortland (Glendale: Regal Books, 1976), p. 72.

⁴Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, pp. 112-120. According to Wagner St. John's Syndrome is the loss of one's "first love." The underlying problem is Christian nominality.

clearly in attitudes expressed by some members and may show up in later statistical reports.

From this brief analysis of the axioms of church growth, it can be seen that there are reasons for the remarkable growth of the South Hill church. With this general evaluation it is now appropriate to evaluate some specific areas of concern--some good and some not so good.

Specific Areas Evaluated

The discrepancy between decadal communicant membership and decadal composite membership

As was noted earlier, the decadal communicant membership for the South Hill church is 5,999 percent, and the decadal composite membership is 964 percent. To help explain this discrepancy, certain information is helpful.

First, the communicant membership is based on the memberships that were officially finalized by December 31, 1977. There were seventy-eight members that signed the charter, whereas only sixty-nine were officially transferred by the end of the year. This adjustment lowers the discrepancy considerably. If the figure of seventy-eight is used, the decadal communicant membership would be 3,203 percent.

Second, it should be pointed out that the weakest link in the accuracy of week by week attendance figures is in Sabbath School. Records did not normally include anyone who may have come late or adults that may have been visiting in the children's divisions. This factor needs to be taken into consideration when using this figure.

This would raise the decadal composite membership upwards since Sabbath School attendance counts as one third.

Third, Spokane is the home of the regional headquarters of Seventh-day Adventists. A large number of the employees had their membership at the South Hill church but attended irregularly because of weekend appointments elsewhere. Several key leaders for the Adventist branch of Marriage Encounter were also members and were gone from church and Sabbath School on various weekends.

Fourth, 57 percent of the membership was between ages thirty-four and eight. Add to this the fact that the largest Sabbath School divisions in the church were the Cradle Roll and Kindergarten (ages birth to seven). The picture that emerges is a membership that was young and many of those that did have children had preschoolers. This is significant in light of the research done by Dean Hoge and David Roozen. In their study they reveal that "Married persons increase church participation if and when they have children of school age."¹ This "child-rearing theory" is brought in at this point because it may very well be a factor in understanding the low attendance averages in comparison with communicant membership figures.

Finally, it needs to be understood that combined with the "child-rearing theory" is the fact that the South Hill church is now one of five Adventist churches in the metropolitan area of Spokane. If the "child-rearing theory" were indeed operative it could partially explain why certain members visited the near-by Adventist

¹Dean R. Hoge and David A. Roozen, eds., "Research on Factors Influencing Church Commitment," in Understanding Church Growth and Decline, 1950-1978, with a Foreword by Martin Marty (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), p. 67.

churches--especially those who had relatives at these churches.

The "people group"¹ principle at work
on South Hill

Donald McGavran has observed that "Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers."² From the beginning of the South Hill church, certain groups of people have been attracted to and have ultimately joined with the church. The group was rather nebulous at first, but soon after the organization the characteristics of the membership became apparent. According to Wagner's modified "Ethclass Model"³ the most persuasive factor in attracting both Adventists and non-Adventists was the "Social Class" component. Religion as a component of the "Ethclass Model" could have played a more negative factor for growth had it not been for the

¹One of the most debated issues raised by the school of "Church Growth" is the homogeneous unit principle. In the early development of the concept it was defined as "a section of society in which all members have some characteristic in common." Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 85. Many feared that the principle would lead to exclusion and racism. While it is the position of this paper that the basic tenets of the homogeneous principle are valid I have chosen to use the term "people group" as suggested by Dayton and Fraser in Planning Strategies for World Evangelization (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), pp. 129-145. The subjectivity of "the people group principle" over against the objectivity of "the homogeneous unit principle" seems to be more restricted to the actual awareness of the particular group and thus not as likely to be imposed upon a group after the fact.

²Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 198.

³The ethclass model proposed by Wagner has four major divisions, two of which have subdivisions. The components of this model are as follows: Ethnic Group (race, religion, national origin and language, assimilation factors), Social Class (economic status, vocation, formal schooling), Regional Identity, and Rural-Urban Orientation. For a more complete discussion of this helpful demographic tool see C. Peter Wagner, Our Kind of People (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 61-64.

recent renewal of the Catholic church, with its corresponding emphasis on Bible study. As a result, six Catholics found the "social component" more persuasive than the religious restrictive factors and consequently received personal Bible studies. These studies resulted in baptism and church membership. The interplay of economic status, vocation, and formal schooling also contributed to the eventual assimilation of these new members into the fellowship of the church.

As noted earlier Spokane is the recognized medical center for the Inland Empire. As would be expected a number of Adventist health professionals have been attracted to the area. Approximately 21 percent of South Hill's membership were employed in the medical related industry. The membership included six physicians--two of which were specialists and one who was in residency in a specialty area. The three working in specialities were all thirty-five years old or younger.

The South Hill church could generally be classified as a young professional church. There was a good mix of others, however, so that economic status was not seen as a barrier to those in the medium to medium high income brackets. A survey of sixty-five church members revealed that eleven had an income of \$8,000 or under, twenty-one had an income between \$8,000 and \$16,000, twenty-one between \$16,001 and \$25,000, ten between \$25,001 and \$50,000 and one reported an income above \$50,000. Those in the church who fell within the low income brackets were generally found to be socially, intellectually, and philosophically compatible with the others regardless of the difference in income. The make up of the church seemed to suggest that if the South Hill church is to reach those professionals living

in the prime target area, the church would do well to focus on the young professionals--especially those who are just getting established in a new business.

Economic status and vocation were treated as a unit because it seemed that on South Hill they were very closely intertwined. It should be mentioned that another group was also emerging as representing a growing percentage of the membership--the young, aggressive, and independent blue collar workers. This group, however, seemed to mix with the other group of young white collar professionals. It is this combination that has given the church under study its unique "evangelistic mix."¹

Wagner suggests that the 12.6 percent of Americans who are college graduates are an ethclass in themselves.² This significant observation has proven true in the kind of transfers that took place. This component became more obvious in the transfer growth than in the conversion growth. No doubt it affected both. Approximately 21 percent had a four year college degree, while still others had associate degrees. The mentality of the church was influenced by this group. Business meetings and various group procedures were influenced by this particular ethclass.

To summarize: The people group principle was at work on South Hill. The church was characterized by a large percentage of young couples--divided fairly equally into blue and white collar workers. These couples tended to be aggressive and independent towards life in

¹McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 87, 88.

²Wagner, Our Kind of People, pp. 73, 74.

general. There were enough members from age thirty-five on up, however, to give stability to the church. The greatest percentage of the church's transfer growth consisted of young couples--many of whom were recruited by the young couples within the church. This is one factor that should be effectively capitalized upon for future growth.

Worker analysis

One of the greatest challenges facing the South Hill church is the growing disproportion of Class II workers in relationship to Class I workers and consumers.¹ According to the Fuller Evangelistic Association² a growing church has about 50 percent unpaid workers that work mainly for the church, about 10 percent who are working for the unchurched, and about 36.5 percent who are consumers. South Hill's trend was more typical of an active but surviving church. There were about 42 percent Class I workers, 4 percent Class II workers, and about 54 percent consumers (fig. 26, app. G). There are, no doubt several reasons for this condition, but two are especially significant.

The first one McGavran calls the "choke law." Simply stated, it is when "Maintenance chokes off evangelistic outreach, and growth stops."³ There were many organizational concerns at the beginning. Sabbath School divisions needed help from anyone who was willing.

¹McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 109, 110.

²Fuller Evangelistic Association, Worker Analysis (Pasadena: Fuller Evangelistic Association, 1977), p. 7.

³McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, p. 84.

With essentially seventy-eight members joining all at once, very few knew each other. It took time to develop working relationships and to discover who was willing to do what job in the church. While aggressive missionary plans were launched, there were few who felt confident in following up the interests that were developed. The new church became entangled with maintenance procedures. The vision had not become totally lost, but the "fog"¹ had obscured some of the principles of growth. Class I workers and consumers grew in number at the expense of providing a sufficient base of Class II workers.

The second reason for a shortage of Class II workers can be summarized with what Wagner has called the "Strachan theorem."² This theorem was proposed in the 1960's and has dominated many evangelistic strategies. According to this theorem, the total mobilization of the laity meant that essentially everyone should be continuously a Class II worker. The basic tenets of the Strachan theorem were generally assumed by the pastoral and church leadership with the result that organized witnessing became generally unpopular. A drop in much of the spontaneous witnessing was detected. It would have been far wiser had an attempt been made to discern the spiritual gifts of the various members and then build a mission approach around these resources. Wagner's suggestion that generally 10 percent of a given church body has the gift of evangelism³ would have been a more reasonable objective. Had the lay training programs been geared for this

¹McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, pp. 67-82.

²Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 72.

³C. Peter Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow (Glendale: Regal Books, 1979), p. 177.

objective, there would have been more enthusiasm among the Class II workers. With a solid core of enthusiastic Class II workers, much more would have been accomplished and more would have voluntarily joined the ranks of these workers.

Assimilation factors

E-0 and E-1 evangelism occupied the primary evangelistic thrust of the church. One of the great challenges was effectively to assimilate these individuals. Making use of the principles of assimilation helped maintain the momentum of growth. Lyle Schaller suggests that new members "who do not become part of a group, accept a leadership role, or become involved in a task during their first year tend to become inactive."¹ He also suggests that it is possible for individuals to become assimilated even before they are baptized or transfer their membership. Some of the ways in which this was done in the South Hill church varied. First, monthly fellowship dinners provided opportunities for new and old members to become acquainted. Several members seemed to have the gift of hospitality and made it a point of welcoming guests and members alike to these social occasions. A strong spirit of cordiality was present. Second, each week at least two couples were assigned to invite guests home for dinner. This practice did much to develop face-to-face relationships. The pastor often pointed out special key prospects to those who were prepared for guests. If the guests were already spoken for then members were invited. Third, as referred to earlier, the church invited

¹Lyle E. Schaller, Assimilating New Members, Creative Leadership Series (Nashville: Abingdon), p. 77.

non-Adventists who had a special interest in the church to an expense-paid outing at the conference youth camp. This not only proved to be an effective evangelistic method but also contributed to the assimilation of new members. Non-members were able to observe Adventists in both worship and recreation.

Closely associated with the assimilation factors and the general morale of the church is what Wagner calls the "vital signs" of a healthy church.

The seven vital signs of a healthy church

Wagner lists these signs as:

1. A pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyze the entire church into action for growth.
2. A well-mobilized laity which has discovered, has developed and is using all the spiritual gifts for growth.
3. A church big enough to provide the range of services that meet the needs and expectations of its members.
4. The proper balance of the dynamic relationship between celebration, congregation and cell.
5. A membership drawn primarily from one homogeneous unit.¹
6. Evangelistic methods that have been proved to make disciples.
7. Priorities arranged in biblical order.²

Numbers one, two, and five have been discussed previously. The remaining numbers are significant for an understanding of the church and will be discussed in this section.

The third vital sign--"Is the church big enough to provide an adequate range of services?"--is a key point. When the church was first organized several families with older children chose not to join, even though they lived close to the church. The main reason

¹See footnote #1 on page 90.

²Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 159.

for this was that it did not have a large enough junior Sabbath School division. On the other hand, several joined the South Hill church because they wanted to get out of the bigger churches. The immediate size of the church membership turned some away but attracted others.

The importance of the fourth vital sign--the proper balance of celebration, congregation, and cell--developed as the church grew in size. The worship service was characterized by celebration--especially at first. As the church grew larger, the need for close fellowship became critical and, as mentioned earlier, small cell groups were formed for prayer meeting. Congregational groups were in the planning stage but did not materialize before this study was made. As the church neared the two hundred mark the dynamic relationship among these elements became even more crucial. It became apparent that if the church were to maintain its rate of growth, a proper balance between celebration and congregational and cell groups would need to be fostered.

The sixth vital sign--effective evangelistic methods--needs to be given further consideration by the church's leadership. The demographic study has revealed specific factors that should be taken into consideration for future evangelistic thrusts. Evangelistic methods needed to be shaped by a more informed understanding of the community--as revealed in the demographic study.

Arranging priorities, the seventh sign, is never easy. The review of the worker analysis and the growing need for discerning the spiritual gifts of the membership both pointed towards important areas of need. Priorities needed to be evaluated and reworked regularly.

In summary, the church scored above average in the evaluation of its vital signs. All vitals showed room for improvement, but the most urgent were signs two and four. The mobilization of the laity and the development of a dynamic relationship between celebration, congregation, and cell were crucial to the future growth of the church.

Another key factor dealt with in the "church growth" literature is whether or not a particular church is "conservative."

A conservative church

The historic philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is conservative by definition. Dean Kelley makes two major points that in many respects touch the foundation of the church under study. Kelley points out "that the 'business' of religion is to explain the ultimate meaning of life" and "that the quality which makes one system of ultimate meaning more convincing than another is not its content but its seriousness/strictness/costliness/bindingness."¹ While the content of its message is given much emphasis, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general, and the South Hill church in particular, assumes or expects a certain "seriousness/strictness/costliness/bindingness" among its members. The motto of the church newsletter was stated boldly on every page. It simply read, "The Church With a Sense of Urgency." The intent of this motto was to express the seriousness of the Adventist message and way of life. While there were

¹Dean M. Kelley, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing, new and updated ed., (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. xii.

some exceptions, most of the membership reflected this "ultimate meaning" in their personal lives.

Kelley places Seventh-day Adventists towards the middle of the exclusivist side of the "Exclusivist-Ecumenical Gradient."¹ This is also a fair placement for the South Hill church. The church believes it has a unique message that must be clearly and effectively taught to those living in its general proximity. This is a factor, according to Kelley, that partially explains the growth of this church.

Conclusion

An analysis of the diagnostic data according to "church growth" insights reveals that the church's growth is not only attributable to its newness but to other factors as well. One of the chief factors for growth was that early in the history of the church a definite people group was easily recognizable. This group was also characterized by the willingness to sacrifice for growth. All four axioms of church growth were present. The church growth principles that were at work were embedded in a matrix that was designed to give ultimate meaning to its members and converts.

There were, however, some indications that the growth of the church may not continue at the same pace. Signs of a weakening evan-

¹Ibid., p. 89. This gradient is an effort to place denominations in order of their attitude towards ecumenicity. These attitudes are determined by such questions as:

"Are there any groups on this list . . . With whom you do not share communion, or other comparable selective rite or sacrament? With whom you do not encourage intermarriage? . . . With whom you would not exchange clergy or pulpits?"

Ibid., pp. 87, 88).

gelistic fervor were present. The small percentage of Class II workers was not indicative of a growing church. The attendance averages did not correlate well with the communicant membership. The growing attitude of nominality reflected by a lack of commitment to the local church needed to be watched carefully, and plans should be made to reverse this trend. Unless these trends were checked with wise planning, the decadal composite growth rate could drop drastically. The threatening plateau mark of two hundred was approaching but with the insights gained from this study could be surpassed.

Insights From the Case Study Which Have Implications for Future Church Plantings

Church planting is a process. It begins long before the organizational Sabbath and it does not end until the church is firmly established. While there are no precise time tables for this process we are suggesting that it begins from the moment that the idea is taken seriously by the empowered body and lasts until at least one year after the church is organized. This is a critical time period for both the mother church and the proposed daughter church. The attitudes generated and the plans made during this time affect the well being of both churches. The case study has implied some concepts which can be summarized as follows:

1. There is a need for a supportive mother church. The support goes beyond financial needs. During the critical time period described above, the mother church needs to prepare the new church for a developing independence. An attitude of support is crucial, for that attitude will long be remembered after the organiza-

tional Sabbath. If there is no church capable of acting as a mother then the conference should become the mother church. There may be times when a third party is needed to help in the transition period.

2. Generally, six to nine months are needed before the mother church is adequately prepared to spawn a new church. During this time Sabbath School supplies are ordered, an estimate of the number of prospective members is made, a preliminary demographic study is completed, and the search for a new church home is begun.

3. Ideally, the mother church should be in good health. Starting a church prematurely can be traumatic for both the mother and the daughter church. There are some situations, however, when the total picture needs to be evaluated by a third party--the needs of both the mother church and the opportunities for church planting. Drawing from several churches, when possible, helps reduce the strain on any one church. If this should be the case, however, then one church needs to be designated as the mother church. It would be most helpful if these churches which are involved in the swarming had a discipleship training program whereby prospective members would be prepared for the needs in the new church.

4. The four axioms of a growing church, along with the seven vital signs of a healthy church need to be studied before any strategy for church planting is determined.

5. Financial assistance for rental of church facilities and the provision for necessary church supplies should be considered by both the conference and the mother church. This assistance should not be indefinite and every effort should be made to bring about a healthy independence.

6. Information for a diagnostic evaluation should be kept to enable the young church objective information by which she can detect trends that need to be corrected before they become embedded in the regular practice of the church.

7. A conference liaison team needs to be developed to search for church planting opportunities, to work with the pastor and membership of the mother church in preparation for organization, and to act as a mediator between the two churches when the need arises.

These insights help form a basis for the proposed strategy found in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER V

THE LOCAL CHURCH AS A STRATEGIC TRAINING CENTER FOR CHURCH PLANTING

Introduction

Church planting may become a major priority for the North American Division, but unless there is a theological base for this kind of ministry coupled with a well trained clergy and laity there is no reason to believe that the full potential of church planting will ever be realized. Church planting is a local phenomenon and must be planned by the local church. The purpose of this chapter is to take the principles gained from earlier chapters and incorporate them into a comprehensive approach to ministry. The goal of this strategy is to prepare the pastor and the local congregation for an eventual church planting.

Perceiving the Local Church as a Strategic Center

The Need for a "Going Church"

The expression "church planting" is the placement and development of congregations in communities where there is an ineffective or inadequate gospel witness by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are essentially two approaches to church planting, each with many variations. The first is the sending of a single evangelistic worker or family into an assigned territory. The job description is essen-

tially to raise up a church. There are many situations in North America where this approach is the only one that is feasible if some counties, cities, suburbs, or people groups are to be reached. The second approach to church planting is the sending of an entire "mission community" into the chosen field. The impact of a consecrated and trained community of workers on a given city or suburb is much greater than that of a single worker and his or her family. It is for this reason that Dayton and Fraser conclude that "We must change the idea of sending an individual missionary to that of a going church."¹ They develop this concept further by adding, "By this we mean a community of missionaries who have established themselves as a community before they move into a new culture to proclaim Christ."² If this expanded approach is to be carried out, then the sending organization must plan for extension growth. The raising up of a new church is not the completion of the goal but rather is part of an on-going process. The idea of a process is important, for if it is overlooked and the practice of church planting is not adopted as a way of life for each new church then institutionalism can easily set in. The local church must be seen both as an object of mission and an agent of mission. Roland Allen stresses this point when he says that "It is not enough for the church to be established in a place

¹Edward Dayton and David A. Fraser, Planning Strategies For World Evangelization (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 221.

²Ibid. Later in this chapter it will be shown that "a going community" is built upon three different commitments. In addition to these commitments the "going community" is identified by: a gifted community, a self-understanding community, a hermeneutical community, a caring community, a witnessing community, and a researching and understanding community. (See Dayton and Fraser, pp. 221-224 for a more complete description).

where many are coming and going unless the people who come and go not only learn the Gospel, but learn it in such a way that they can propagate it."¹ And how shall the Gospel be propagated? Oosterwal reminds us:

No program, institution, or communications-satellite will do much good unless the world sees the gospel of Christ exemplified through His own people in their daily lives--in the way they have solved the daily problems of self and society, in their service to their fellowman, and in genuine Christian fellowship of the community of faith.²

This "incarnational ministry" of the "community of faith" is clearly expressed by Ellen White in these words: "Salt must be mingled with the substance to which it is added; it must penetrate and infuse in order to preserve. So it is through personal contact and association that men are reached by the saving power of the Gospel."³

The establishment of an immediate evangelistic base, however, is not the only advantage of starting a church with a group of families. Beginning with a community of believers also provides a much needed sense of belonging. The role of a caring community is not antithetical to the evangelizing community. The community must be seen as a whole with complimentary roles. This need is well expressed by the fact that while 33,945 were added to the membership roles of the North American Division in 1979 by baptism and profession of faith, another 11,629 were dropped either because of apostasy or be-

¹Roland Allen, Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 13.

²Gottfried Oosterwal, Mission: Possible (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), p. 73.

³Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1900), p. 59.

cause they were missing.¹ Stated in another way, for every three members gained by evangelism in 1979 the church lost one through apostasy/missing. This point is made because there is developing an unfortunate impression of the church--namely, that it is directing its emphasis towards institutional objectives rather than the people it is serving. The church must be the center both for evangelism and nurture. To express the mission of the church is simultaneously to express both aspects of a community. The implication, of course, is not that the institution is not concerned about both aspects of mission, but rather that a more intentional ministry needs to be emphasized which reflects both concerns. R. Edward Turner has accurately expressed the dynamic relationship between these concerns.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church must become a "caring center" in every community--a symbol of nurture and growth. It must continually offer a variety of "growth experiences" (spiritual, physical, emotional, social) in the community it serves.²

It can be seen, therefore, that there are tremendous advantages if a church is begun with a group which has been referred to as a "going church or community." It is a "going community" in the sense that it begins with an adequate community for both numerical growth and spiritual growth. The question that remains is, "Where do we find these going communities?"

¹Office of Archives and Statistics, compiler F. Donald Yost, "117th Annual Statistical Report--1979" (Washington D. C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1980).

²R. Edward Turner, "Pastoral Care As a Factor of Church Growth," in Servants for Christ, ed. Robert E. Firth (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1980), p. 155.

The Local Church as a Strategic Support Base
for the "Going Community"

In 1979 there were 3,932 churches in the North American Division; 13.8 percent (537) had a membership of 250 or more.¹ These simple figures indicate that the division must consider the vast resources and potential of the existing churches as support bases for extension growth.² This is not to say that larger churches, as such, should not exist. What is implied, however, is that they should serve as potential mission centers from which whole cities can be worked--worked not from a single congregation, but from multiple caring communities. The need for the actual practice of this concept can be seen in the Potomac Conference. In June of 1979 it had eighty churches and a membership of 14,278. Thirty-two percent of the conference's membership, or 4,672 members, however, held their membership in two of the eighty churches which are no more than two miles apart. In addition to these two churches, there is a third with a membership of 356 one block from one of these "super churches."³

¹See table 6, app. A.

²Montgomery and McGavran also see the local church as the "backbone" of their strategy to disciple the Philippines. They write that

"it is at the local church level that there is the best information on what barangays and homogeneous units of society within a radius of ten kilometers are still unchurched. Only at the local church level can there be understanding of how best to approach an unchurched community; only local believers day in and day out can demonstrate the power and joy of the Gospel."
James H. Montgomery and Donald A. McGavran, The Discipling of a Nation (n. p.: Global Church Growth Bulletin, 1980), p. 158.

³Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Potomac Conference Directory of Workers and Church Officers, 1979-1980 (Staunton, VA: Potomac Conference of SDA, 1980).

The plurality of the American culture underscores the need for multiple congregations with a somewhat more even distribution of members within the same city. A few large churches will not meet the felt needs of the many people groups in any given city. Ellen White clearly supports this concept when she counsels

Those who are the chosen of God are required to multiply churches wherever they may be successful in bringing souls to the knowledge of the truth. But the people of God are never to collect together into a large community as they have done in Battle Creek. Those who know what it is to have travail of soul will never do this, for they will feel the burden that Christ carried for the salvation of men.¹ (Emphasis supplied.)

Rather than bemoan the fact that centralization has taken place in some situations a more constructive approach should be pursued. The local church, regardless of its size, must be considered as occupying a strategic point from which possible future church plantings could be launched. Each local church must be considered a training center--a center that capitalizes on its own resources and prepares its members to become a "going community" for an extended ministry to a specific community or people group.² If the church is oriented in this direction from the beginning, it will be as natural for a congregation to multiply itself as it is for a "born again" Christian to reach out and use his influence to lead another person to Christ.

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923), p. 199.

²Oosterwal, in his church growth study of the Lake Union Conference, discovered that "many of the centrally devised plans and programs were not at all based on the vast number of talents and resources and gifts present in each local church, which therefore remained untapped. In fact, it became obvious that many of these uniform church programs were alien and foreign to the knowledge

Churches with memberships of 250 or more generally have a sufficient base from which to plant a church.¹ If a church with a membership base of much less than this attempts to send a significant portion of its membership as a "going community" there is the danger that the mother church will suffer a set back in her own ministry. If after spawning a new church the mother church still has a membership of between 150-200 members she remains a viable evangelistic force in the community; and if the newly planted church can begin with 50-75 members, it will become a significant evangelistic force much sooner.² George Patterson has expressed this concept as the

and understanding and interest and gifts of the local constituency."

Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of SDA Church Growth in North America (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976), p. 65.

¹Oosterwal reports that in some areas church leaders have made a policy that as soon as a congregation reaches 150-300 members it should spawn a new church. He reports that "in the city of Sao Paulo alone, the number of Adventist congregations multiplied in this manner in just a few years from 30 to over 200!" Gottfried Oosterwal, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the World Today," Servants for Christ, ed. Robert E. Firth (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1980), p. 26.

²Roger Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr. have reported that "Churches do not grow at a faster rate if they are smaller or if they are larger. . . . It cannot be said that either small or large churches have an advantage" (tables 12, 13 and 14, app. A). Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., "A Study of Factors Relating to Church Growth in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists," Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, April 1981, p. 29. (Mimeographed.) They point out, however, that churches which range from 101-150 in membership size do well in both actual and kingdom growth. "Nearly 81 percent are having some kingdom growth and their rate of 10.8 percent is the highest of any class just as it was for actual growth." Ibid., pp. 32, 33.

Clarence Gruesbeck, Executive Secretary of the Upper Columbia Conference, reports that in his conference the 151-200 size range was doing significantly better than other groups (table 15, app. A). He reports that one hundred percent of the churches in this group had some growth while the average percent of actual growth was 21.5.

establishment of "extension links." He explains why the local church is key to the whole evangelistic process.

The links are not individual witnesses; they are congregations. The most effective unit for spiritual reproduction is the local church. An individual should witness for Christ as an arm of his own congregation. Making obedient disciples as demanded by the Great Commission requires a team effort. Persons with different spiritual gifts work together. The body reproduces itself. The daughter church inherits the seed of reproduction from the mother church to produce granddaughter churches.¹

The existing local church, therefore, offers a strategic center from which still other churches can be planted. It is the resource center for the entire North American Division. The potential can be outlined as follows:

1. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit the placement of 585,000 potential indigenous workers has already taken place by the establishment of nearly four thousand churches in North America--13.8 percent of which are immediate candidates for considering a church spawning.

2. The local church can provide the ideal setting for training individuals for the work of extension evangelism--both cultural (E-1) and cross-cultural (E-2, E-3).

Clarence Gruesbeck, "Applying Church Growth Principles for Effective Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Case Study: Upper Columbia" (D. Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, May 1980).

These studies indicate that a mother church could reduce her own membership to 150-200 by spawning a new church without significantly reducing her own growth potential. The current financial situation of the mother church, however, could alter the timing of the spawning.

¹George Patterson, "Let's Multiply Churches through TEE" in Discipling Through Theological Education by Extension, ed. Vergil Gerber (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1980), p. 166.

3. The local church is ideally located for identifying unreached people groups and determining the most appropriate means for reaching them.

4. The local church is best able to evaluate the gifts and other resources of its congregations and plan for its own extension thrust accordingly.

5. The already established local church offers, in many situations, the opening wedge for entering the vast unreached metropolitan areas of North America.

In conclusion, therefore, the local church has the potential not only for acting as a strategically located support base from which unreached, yet responsive people groups, can be identified, but it also has the potential for becoming a training center for sending the "going community." This act of self-sacrifice on the part of the mother church when she sends her own members to plant another church is not weakening her influence, but is building a linkage symbolic of the very nature of the "Body of Christ." A key factor in this whole process, however, is the basic philosophy of the pastor, for he largely shapes the general orientation of the church. An important beginning point for a well balanced extension evangelism approach begins with the pastor's philosophy of ministry.

A Pastoral Philosophy for Ministry in Strategic
Centers--A Ministry of Reconciliation¹

A Ministry with Limitations

A key foundational passage for a ministry of reconciliation is found in 2 Corinthians 5:17-20:²

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; . . . and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (Emphasis supplied.)

The irony of pastoring is that the pastor cannot reconcile. The notion of reconciliation conveys the idea of restoring a broken relationship between God and mankind. The apostles revealed this in their preaching as they emphasized two aspects of reconciliation, namely, forgiveness and the reception of the Holy Spirit.³ A broken relationship with God ultimately means that when God is not the focus of life then life in general is out of focus. The pastor, therefore, is faced with an immediate limitation to his ministry. He cannot restore anyone to a right relationship with God. He can, however,

¹The purpose of the following section is to give a general outline of a pastoral philosophy which provides a basic rationale for a ministry that is "extension" oriented. While it is based on key principles that were developed more fully in chapter two, this section is only a brief outline from which an actual strategy will be developed.

²See also Romans 5:8-11.

³See Chapter III, p. 30. Hans K. LaRondelle draws essentially the same conclusion from the teachings of Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son. "Here we see what God means by forgiveness: it means reconciliation, restoration into full sonship and fellowship with the Father." Hans K. LaRondelle, Christ Our Salvation (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1980), p. 52.

preach and teach "the message of reconciliation"¹ as the apostles did according to Luke's account in the book of Acts. Reconciliation is a theme of ministry because Christ has appointed every believer to an ambassadorship. While the pastor finds his ministry limited in one sense because of his fallen humanity, he finds, on the other hand, a ministry far more sufficient in Christ's continuous ministry of reconciliation.

The implications for this limitation are significant for the pastor. All talents, all spiritual gifts have been given for the express purpose of pointing fallen man to the uplifted Christ. The limitations of each pastor should force him into preaching more clearly the exalted ministry of Christ, which leads him ultimately to a ministry without limitations.

A Ministry without Limitations

If a particular church's ministry were to be viewed as that of the pastor's work then ministry would be limited by what he can accomplish with his spiritual gifts in a given day. If the ministry of a church were limited to what the collective body of believers

¹"Arising out of all of this is what Paul calls 'the word of reconciliation', the message to men that they must 'be reconciled to God'. This stresses the need for men to respond to the divine grace. Reconciliation is not something which is carried through independently of man's reaction. While it is true that, in some sense, reconciliation can be thought of as offered to men on the basis of Christ's work, yet it cannot be thought of as availing in the case of any individual man until he himself has become reconciled to God. But if there is anything in what we have been saying, the need for this action on the part of the sinners should not blind us to the fact that the really important part of reconciliation is in the actions of God and not in the sinner's response."

Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross, third ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 231, 232.

could do, then effective ministry could be judged by the size of a church's budget or the sum total of the talents of its members. When ministry, on the other hand, is seen first of all as the activity of God, then the limitations of size, man power, and spiritual gifts take on significance of secondary importance. We need only to remind ourselves of the accusations leveled at the small beginnings of the apostolic church: "These men who have turned the world upside down. . . ." (Acts 17:6). Their ministry was neither limited by popular support nor number of workers. They had no gold or silver, but they offered that which could not be limited by supply or exhausted by need. They offered the living Christ (Acts 3:6), and they were accused of turning the world upside down.

The pastor of the local church should then view his role as that of a chosen messenger who, being imperfect, directs others to the unlimited ministry of Christ.¹ He therefore serves from the perspective of victory, and that is both comforting and challenging. Ministry, however, should not and can not be limited to the pastor's alone.

A Ministry of Shared Commitment

The ministry of reconciliation must begin with the recognition that all have been called to minister, for all have been the

¹"As there is only one Christ and only one Body, so there is only one ministry, that of Christ in his Body. But Christ shares in it in his utterly unique way, as vicarious Redeemer, and Lord; the Church shares in it in an utterly different way as the redeemed people who as servants and heralds point away from themselves to Christ alone."

Thomas F. Torrance, "Foundation of the Church" in Theological Foundations for Ministry, Ray S. Anderson, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 215.

object of Christ's ministry.¹ The provision for reconciliation offered by God through Christ is not meekly offered to the pastor and his congregation as the mere content for their ministry. The provision is not only the ultimate focus of all ministry, but it is the motivating and driving force behind ministry.² Ministry, then, is primarily distinguished by service--service not of the pastor alone but of the entire congregation. The congregation and pastor find their example par excellence in the ministry of Jesus. In contrast to some, His ministry was not based on a leadership which "lorded" over others. Rather He came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). In light of this the pastor participates with his members in ministry, and functions more as a coordinator³ or equipper of ministry than a foreman bent on production. The concept of an equipping ministry presupposes that

¹Cf. Acts 8:4; 1 Peter 2:9, 10; Rev. 1:5, 6.

²"There is no service to mankind more crucial and urgent than the exercise of this ministry. . . . this ministry with its message of reconciliation is, in the ultimate issue, the one thing needful for our world in all circumstances and in every generation."

F. F. Bruce, gen. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, p. 206.

³E. K. Simpson broadens the King James Version's translation of καταρτισμός (perfecting) in Eph 4:12.

"This term indicates 'equipment' or 'coadjustment.' The verb καταρτίζειν is used in Heb. 10:5 of the body prepared for Christ's incarnation; but it can also be employed of the setting of a fractured limb, the repairing of a dislocation or rent, as in Matt. 4:21. Perhaps 'coordination' would best represent its scope here."

E. K. Simpson, Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, ed. F. F. Bruce, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 93.

each believer receives from the Lord particular spiritual gifts which assist the Body of Christ in its total ministry. When ministry, therefore, is characterized as the privilege and responsibility of both the pastor and the congregation, a three-fold commitment is the result.

Commitment to God and Christ

As pointed out earlier, each converted Christian is an ambassador for Christ. His life is to be a reflection of Christ's; yet each Christian stands in need of continued growth.¹ The first common point of ministry among the believers is their realization that they, themselves, stand in need of continuous personal commitment to God and Christ. There is no substitute. A collective ministry is dependent upon individual commitment. It is when this commitment is realized and the efficacy of Christ's ministry is appropriated on the personal level that the true meaning of the message of reconciliation is understood as it applies to both the Body of Christ and the world.

A ministry of reconciliation is not based on personal insight and experience alone. Reconciliation presupposes a conceptual understanding of God's will and plan for oneself and for others. God is

¹"What Paul calls 'the message of reconciliation' (2 Cor. 5:19) is the gospel itself. And the proclamation of the gospel is laid on the whole church. At the same time, it may be noted that the appeal to 'be reconciled to God' (2 Cor. 5:20b) is addressed to the church. The church, no less than the world (v. 19), needs to enter into this reconciliation and live it out."

H. Vorländer, "καταλλάσσω." in The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vols., ed. and trans. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:169.

the initiator of His own salvific activity.¹ He is the One who has invited men and women of all ages to enter into a dynamic relationship with Himself. He is the One who has given the church its ministry. As the Reconciler He has also provided the written Word for our "training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Obedience to God's Word, the Scriptures, therefore, is not an arbitrary command but the fruitage of the reconciling activity of Christ. This Word is normative and authoritative in the believer's discipleship (Acts 17:2; 11; 8:30-38).

Commitment to the Body of Christ

The early Church was characterized by Luke as a body of believers who were deeply committed to Christ as a group. This fellowship² expressed by the local church today, as it was then, demonstrates that when Christ is the head of the body all ministries are

¹George W. Peters expands this initiative of God.

"God Himself is the initiator of the conversion of man by: (a) commanding man to be converted; (b) calling man to return unto Him; (c) calling man to forsake sin; (d) upholding before man the promise of the forgiveness of sins, restoration and a life of rich blessings; and (e) warning man of judgment if he fails to heed God's call and command.

"In order to save the Biblical concept of conversion from all religious humanism, it is well to realize that the Word of God is not only self-authoritative, it is also dynamic, quickening, motivating, and causative. The command, call, promise, and warning of God carry in them the power of God to motivate and to enable man to respond positively to the Word of God. In faith man opens himself to the power of God in the Word and is thereby enabled to follow the command of God and to respond to the call for conversion (cf. Ps. 19:7, 8; John 6:63; Heb. 4:12)."

George W. Peters, "The Meaning of Conversion," in The New Life, ed. Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 63.

²The nature of this fellowship is described by Edmund Clowney.

"Union with Christ determines the life of the church in $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\omega\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ (koinōnia). 'Fellowship' is too weak a translation

part of His ministry (1 Cor. 12:12-26). As a result no single ministry is complete in itself. The commitment to a shared ministry is a commitment to the support of the total ministry of Christ as expressed in the many gifted individuals of the body. This means that each local church should be cognizant of the spiritual gifts of individual members. When ministry is seen as the interrelation of all its parts ministry becomes a holistic process which is dependent upon Christ for nurture and growth. The local church, therefore, is characterized by individuals who are committed both to Christ and His Body--the Church. Acts 2:42 suggests four activities which are in harmony with this commitment to the Body of Christ: 1) Devotion to the apostles' teaching, 2) Fellowship, 3) Breaking of bread, and 4) Prayer. These practices helped provide a strong and stable basis for a shared ministry of reconciliation in the apostolic church. This same kind of interaction among the members is basic for an effective ministry by the church.

for this word, although it is the best term available to render one aspect of koinōnia. The root koin means 'common' and the noun koinōnia designates a having in common. 'But the primary idea expressed by koinōnos and its cognates is not that of association with another person or persons, but that of participation in something in which others also participate.' [J. Y. Campbell, "KOINONIA and Its Cognates in the N. T.," Journal of Biblical Literature, 51 (1932), 353.] Often the verb koinōnein is used as a synonym for μετέχειν (metechein), to partake of, share in, with the emphasis on the partaking rather than association.

This point needs to be made so that "the 'fellowship' of the church will not be regarded as the camaraderie of a religious club. The core of koinōnia is not social or associative, but theological and constitutive."

Edmund Clowney, "Toward a Biblical Doctrine of the Church" in The New Life, Readings in Christian Theology, ed. Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 285.

Commitment to the work of Christ

The work of Christ flows out of both a personal commitment to Christ and a commitment to the body of Christ. Reconciliation is the work of Christ, but he has designated his church as a channel for this work. The church is a community of believers to which others are added for nurture and care and mission. As the local church accepts the task of taking the gospel to all the people within its reach, it must also bear in mind the responsibility of caring for one another. The church must realize that the work of Christ is more interested in reaching people than in planting churches. The primary objective is to reach out and make responsible disciples. Discipleship then becomes an objective of every major activity of the church. One of the best means for modeling of and the training for discipleship is within a community of faith. It is for this reason that church planting is actively pursued. It is an effective means for allowing reconciliation to take place.

The work of Christ is also a work based upon the promise of Christ that the ministry of reconciliation will eventually climax in full reconciliation.

A Ministry Based on Promise

A shared ministry of reconciliation is not only initiated and sustained by Christ's ministry; it is also climaxed and fulfilled by the ministry of Christ. This ministry of Christ is seen as the grand climax of reconciliation in the parousia of Christ (John 14:1-3).¹

¹G. C. Berkouwer demonstrates that this aspect of ministry must be kept alive and in focus.

Reconciliation is thus perceived from a linear (in contrast to a cyclical) historical perspective. The ministry of the church--individual and corporate--is, therefore, characterized by a sense of certainty and urgency which flows from the promised restoration of Christ's kingdom.

In conclusion, a pastoral philosophy of a shared ministry of reconciliation begins with the realization that any pastor is limited in what he can accomplish alone. The pastor must also realize, however, that the ministry of Christ is the all sufficient basis for ministry and that He has called all believers to participate in a ministry which anticipates the soon and ultimate fulfillment of reconciliation. As Christ ministers to the whole person, so his church is to be characterized by laboring in a holistic manner. The following strategy is an attempt to plan for such a holistic ministry which in turn will prepare the church for church planting.

A Strategy for Preparing the Local Church for Church Planting

The Limitations of the Proposed Strategy

The mission of a single church is complex. The complexity of the mission of a local conference is multiplied by the number of

"A church may even--in times of spiritual inertia--be well-nigh exclusively oriented toward the present and have no eye for either the historical or the eschatological. That is the condition when she is secularized, when she thinks that she has here an abiding city, notwithstanding the emphatic apostolic teaching to the contrary (Heb. 13:14; cf. 11:10, 14-16). She has then lost sight of the motivating principles by which alone she can live. . . . She loses her orientation toward the parousia as well as the sessio, and grieves the Holy Spirit. Because the message concerning Christ in heaven no longer penetrates its heart, the true 'Maranatha' is no longer heard."

G. C. Berkouwer, The Work of Christ, trans. Cornelius Lambregtse (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 246.

churches within its mission field. Should the local church or conference suddenly be able to comprehend the vast host of unreached people groups within its reach the complexity of the mission would undoubtedly be astounding. Yet even when this is said, a standard approach to mission is often followed. Dayton and Fraser summarize this common philosophy:

Western society is oriented toward technological solutions. It tacitly assumes that there is not only a solution to each problem, but that the solution can become a standard approach to the problem the next time it appears.¹

Gottfried Oosterwal agrees:

Gone are the days when one and the same publication, the same program, the same approach could reach all people. The world is a mosaic of cultures and communities, of tribes and tongues, of castes and classes, of races and religions.²

With this in mind it would seem almost presumptuous to outline a strategy for any kind of mission. Imperative, therefore, is an understanding of what a strategy is. Dayton and Fraser define "strategy" as

an overall approach, plan, or way of describing how we will go about reaching our goal or solving our problem. It is not concerned with details. . . It has a great deal to say about what will not be done.

Strategy is a way to reach an objective, a time and place when things will be different than they are now. . . .

Strategy gives us an overall sense of direction and cohesiveness.³

A strategy that focuses on preparing the local church for church planting is essentially no different than a strategy for pre-

¹Dayton and Fraser, p. 39.

²Gottfried Oosterwal, Servants for Christ, p. 14.

³Dayton and Fraser, pp. 16, 17.

paring a church for a comprehensive evangelistic thrust. It assumes that

1. God wants his church to grow--quantitatively and qualitatively.
2. The multiplication of congregations is one of the best means of effectively reaching individuals with the gospel for the purpose of making responsible disciples for Christ.
3. "A characteristic of a growing church is that it plans to develop leaders."¹ This leadership development includes Class Workers I, II, III, and IV.
4. The local church is in a strategic position and has the key resources for effective church planting.
5. The local church is best prepared for church planting when it is in generally good health and has anticipated the role of spawning a church.

The following strategy attempts to integrate these key principles into a cohesive plan which seeks to prepare a local church for church planting. To help designate major steps or objectives the strategy has been divided into phases.

Phase I: Towards a Theological Understanding of a Shared Ministry of Reconciliation

The first step towards a strategy is for the pastor or leader of the church to have thought through a biblical philosophy of ministry.² In this strategy the basic biblical philosophy is "a

¹Donald McGavran and Win Arn, How to Grow a Church (Glendale Regal, 1973), p. 135.

²See fig. 1, a flow chart, at the end of this chapter.

shared ministry of reconciliation." Essentially, a shared ministry includes a ministry which builds on the spiritual gifts of all the members in a local church. Reconciliation connotes the restoration of the relationship between God and man as well as between man and man. Thus the goal is to develop a ministry of all believers which is directed towards the reconciliation of God and man.

In order for this goal to be reached four different areas of commitment need to be made by those who choose to participate in this ministry. These areas of commitment include: 1) Commitment to God and Christ, 2) Commitment to the Word of God, 3) Commitment to the Body, the Church, and 4) Commitment to the Work of Christ.

Once the pastoral philosophy is developed it is shared with the church--most likely through a series of sermons which can be summarized in a series of letters mailed to the members. The purpose of this first phase is to give a biblical basis for what will become an overall philosophy of ministry by the church. When this phase is completed the congregation should understand the basic theological implications for "a shared ministry of reconciliation."

Phase II: Preliminary Preparation for the Actual Shared Ministry of Reconciliation

Phase II is the extension and development of Phase I (see fig. 2 at the end of this chapter). This phase has five main parts: receiving the support of the pastoral staff, assessing the needs of the church and community, educating the members of the church as to the implication of the biblical idea of a shared ministry of reconciliation, the development of a theological-missional statement, and the final plans for implementing a shared ministry of reconciliation.

It should be pointed out, however, that the church should not stop its present ministry in anticipation of a new one. The process will take time, and only after specific plans are developed will there be any alteration in the actual ministry of the church. The chart portrays these events as an even flow of events, but the test of reality will undoubtedly reveal that the development and implementation of the strategy may be staggered. The strategy and flow chart, nevertheless, give a sense of direction and cohesiveness to the church's mission. The following is a step by step description of Phase II and is illustrated in fig. 2.

Receiving the pastoral staff's support (#9)¹

In many cases there may be only one pastor, but in others there may be two or more. In a multiple staff the overall strategy should be studied and critiqued in view of the local setting. Many technical difficulties could be avoided in this process. This is also an excellent opportunity for a senior pastor to help train an intern in the process of organizing a local church for its specific mission. If church planting is ever to become a never-ending-cycle, then young pastors need first hand instruction and guidance in an actual field situation.

Needs assessment (10-12)

Spiritual and fellowship needs of the church assessed (10, 11)

Of special interest to the church's ministry is the personal spiritual experience of its members. These needs can be partially

¹Numbers in parenthesis such as this are designations for specific steps found in the flow chart at the end of the chapter.

determined by using a questionnaire which would allow each participant the privilege of anonymity. This questionnaire would attempt to discover if the members were having a meaningful devotional life and if not why? The various programs of the church would need to be evaluated as to their effectiveness.

In assessing the fellowship needs of the church the primary interest is centered in what ways the church body can strengthen the individual's relationship to Christ and to the work of Christ. At issue in this assessment is the members' commitment to the church body. Are there actions, attitudes or traditions that keep some members from being fully assimilated? How are the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion working in the church and who and how many are not being assimilated? Of special interest in this assessment is the information from the diagnostic evaluation, an example of which is found in Chapter IV. These and many other questions would help to discern the fellowship needs of the local church as members interrelate with one another.¹

Community needs assessed (#12)

Whether or not the church plans to spawn a new church in the immediate future, this assessment is vital for any aspect of mission to the community. The thrust of this assessment is primarily evangelistic, but it also includes the assessment of humanitarian needs. This will determine to a large extent the kind of methods that will be used and each method that will be reconciliatory by nature.

Lyle Schaller has written an excellent book which describes some of the assimilation factors that would be helpful in designing a questionnaire. Lyle E. Schaller, Assimilating New Members, in Creative Leadership Series, ed. Lyle Schaller (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978).

A demographic study of both the community and the church needs to be taken to help determine what needs exist and what resources are available. The demographic analysis of Chapter IV illustrates what kind of information is available for a given community.

Education of members (#14)

The implications of the idea of reconciliation as applied to the four areas of commitment will take time to understand. In addition to this understanding is the concept of ministry as a function of each believer. The implications of the theological-missional statement developed by the church will need to be understood before the actual ministry is begun in earnest. This educational process could easily be emphasized in midweek services as well as the worship services on Sabbath.

Theological-missional statement developed (#15)

Once the needs of the church and community are understood (#13) then the church is ready to formulate its theological-missional statement. This process will be instrumental in defining the priorities and thrust of its ministry. Lindgren and Shawchuck have stated that "Maintaining a current mission statement is an ongoing, never-ending theological activity of the local church."¹ App. H illustrates how they suggest this statement be developed.

The roles of the pastoral staff and people defined (#16, 17)

Once the needs of the church and community have been evaluated and the theological-missional statement with its plans for ministry

¹Alvin J. Lindgren and Norman Shawchuck, Management for Your Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), p. 52.

have been developed, the roles of the pastoral staff and the people need to be defined.

Phase I stressed the concept that all believers have a ministry and that a chief responsibility of the pastoral staff is that of equipping the membership for their ministry. At this point the pastoral staff determines how they will go about preparing the church for its chosen ministry. The role of the people is also defined. The proposed strategy assumes that each person is to be a witness, but the nature of that witness will vary according to the individuals particular gift mix.

The final plans for ministry (#18)

This step differs from the previous in that the recently defined roles of the pastoral staff and the membership are now coordinated. Plans are now laid for the development of leaders within the church. The three areas of commitment, numbers two, three, four, now become three broad areas of ministry. These areas of ministry flow from a theological understanding of the church to the actual mission of the church. Since the training program is not a one time event but a continual process there is no attempt to train the entire membership at once. The chosen leaders will, it is hoped, be part of the training team the next time around.

Phase III: Actual Training and Organization for a Shared Ministry of Reconciliation

The objective of this phase (see fig. 3) is to develop leaders who will be instrumental in participating in actual ministry. This will include serving both the church and community. The church

board will be consulted often and will provide the general coordination of all plans.

Gathering of material (#19)

The gathering of helpful material either for the discipling program of the actual ministry itself needs to begin early. This need not be original but should be useful and relevant for those engaged in specific ministries. Those acting as overseers from the pastoral staff would be responsible for gathering the appropriate material for the particular training program.

The staff's specialized training (#20)

Once the staff's role is defined and the actual plans for ministry are formulated the staff begins an intensive specialized training program for themselves. The role of each staff member is determined according to his/her own spiritual gift mix and in light of the stated mission objectives. In the case of a multiple pastoral staff, different staff members could be chosen to be coordinators for specific parts of the overall strategy. In cases where there is only one pastor or perhaps the pastor of a district, qualified members may be given this responsibility. If this should be the case, then the pastor would need to meet with these individuals as if they were indeed part of his pastoral staff.

The specialized training of the pastoral staff is conducted to enable the staff to become better equippers. This training may include self-study and/or special seminars. The available resources in the local conference and community, however, should not be overlooked. The staff may very likely not have all the resources needful

to prepare the congregation for their specific ministry. In this case they may act more like coordinators of resource personnel than equippers themselves, but always with the purpose of preparing the believers for their ministry.

Organization and funding (#21)

The most natural group to oversee the total strategy would be the church board. The incorporation of the church board as the coordinating agency will also help change the dynamics of the board. The emphasis will be more on planning for growth than solving the problems of maintenance. In addition to the coordination of all the activities of the church, the board will also assure a sense of accountability.

Formation of committees for training and ministry (#22-24)

Three broad committees are now created which oversee the comprehensive development of the church and its members. In some of the larger churches each committee could be divided into two subdivisions and designated as adult and youth. This would allow a more specialized training program so as not to overlook the potential these members have for reaching others in their same category. A constant interaction among the committees is necessary so that the church will act as a coordinated whole. The church may decide to staff each committee with existing chairmen of functioning committees or they may choose to nominate an entirely different group of officers. Whatever method is chosen, the comprehensive approach is to be supportive and not threatening in nature.

The spiritual development committee (#22)

The purpose of this committee is to review the report completed during Phase II when the spiritual needs were assessed. The thrust of this committee is to strengthen the commitment of the church as individual members to God and Christ. Key areas of the church life will be evaluated, such as: the Sabbath School program, the church worship service, and the midweek service. The devotional experience of each member is a major concern of this committee. The formation of a worship committee and the training of spiritual counselors are two possible suggestions for special study from this committee. Those trained to minister in this capacity are generally called Class I Workers because they are unpaid workers who work primarily for the existing membership. These workers also play a very significant role in helping new believers develop an ability to maintain the first love experience through a daily consecration to Christ.

The fellowship committee (#23)

The scope of this committee is much larger than the regular "social committee" found in most churches. The principle idea behind this committee is to have some appointed group who has the responsibility of overseeing the harmonious development of the church body as individuals interrelate with one another. There is continually the need of assimilating old and new members into the church body. A great concern would be the coordinated effort between the Spiritual Development Committee and their designated spiritual counselors and this committee to help incorporate members with specific spiritual needs into fellowship groups where this person would be helped the most.

One important subdivision of this committee would be the development of small group leaders and the formation of small groups. These groups can be one of two kinds--nurture or evangelistic cell groups. Since these groups can be either kind the Fellowship Committee develops some leaders who are Class I Workers, while others may be Class II, III, and IV Workers. This committee is sensitive to the formation not only of "cell" groups, but also the organization of larger groups which are often called "congregational groups."

Fellowship includes recreational activities, but always within the perspective of building a dynamic relationship between the individuals and groups of the church.

The evangelism committee (#24)

Public evangelism would come under the supervision of this committee, but the committee would not limit itself only to this form of evangelism. Bible studies, health evangelism, literature distribution--to name a few methods--would all be coordinated by this committee. The needs of the community should continually be assessed. Since some of these needs may be materialistic yet offer evangelistic and discipling opportunities, the church's Community Service Center would come under the general supervision of this committee. The advantage of grouping all the evangelistic resources under one committee is that there is a more coordinated outreach of the church. This means that the evangelistic resources of the church can more easily be directed to meet the specific needs of the community as revealed by the demographic study.

Good communication between this committee and the others needs to exist. New interests and new members would need to be referred to the other two committees at the appropriate time. This would help provide a more solid background which would in turn help reduce discouragement and possible apostasy.

The chief workers in this committee are called "lay evangelists" and are primarily involved in personal evangelistic work. In some situations they may conduct public meetings. The training of lay evangelists, therefore, is a key responsibility of this committee and will play a significant role in the future church planting.

Discipleship training programs¹ (#25, 26)

The purpose for this program is to involve selected lay members in actual preparation for their chosen area of ministry for the church. The three major committees are responsible for the actual training program. The pastor acts as an advisor to each committee and possibly as an instructor for one or more of the discipleship training programs. Those who go through this training program will hopefully be equipped not only to minister but also to assist other laymen in their ministry. In order for this to happen, more than a sharing of techniques is necessary. Actual field-testing of the principles taught is an integral part of this discipleship training program. Discipleship connotes the idea of a modeling process by

¹Two excellent resource books which give helpful educational principles for conducting any training programs are: James D. Williams, Guiding Adults (Nashville: Convention Press, 1969) and Les Donaldson and Edward E. Scannell, Human Resource Development, The New Trainer's Guide (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978).

those who are leading out. In addition to field testing is the need of regular meetings other than training sessions. These would be helpful for maintaining the interest and enthusiasm.

Phase IV: Three Year Evaluation

At the end of three years an evaluation is made as to the progress made toward the defined goals or objectives. There are three major aspects to this evaluation: 1) were the goals reached? 2) were the methods appropriate? and 3) were the resources adequate? This process is necessary because it must not be assumed that what worked in the past or what was relevant in the past still holds for the future.

This evaluation is crucial because it helps determine what will and will not be done next year. The three year period provides enough time for long range plans; yet they need to be evaluated every year. A planned reporting session is necessary because a scheduled session is more likely to cause each committee to stop and evaluate its goals next to its performance.

Conclusion

Church planting must be viewed as being comprehensive by nature in the sense that it utilizes all available resources. It must also be understood as a never ending process in that once a church is planted its objective is to grow--quantitatively and qualitatively--and reproduce itself in yet another community.

Before church planting can become a vibrant process, however, the local church must be perceived as the key resource of the division. An indispensable form of evangelism is the dynamic relation-

ship of the local church within her immediate community. Every form of evangelism, including public evangelism, must be seen as supportive of the local church rather than the local church adapting to "standard-solution" forms of evangelism. Evangelism and nurture must become a way of life for the entire church--not appendages designed as a life support system for a dying church.

In order for this to happen certain changes must take place. Paul Benjamin also discovered this, noting that four out of five American congregations are not growing.

As I began to delve more deeply into this problem of nongrowth. . . I decided that most congregational leaders have to change the way they think about the church before they can grow. For example, they have the idea the preacher is the only one who can evangelize. Furthermore, preachers have not taken hold of the equipping ministry concept, or they are so involved in pastoral responsibilities they do not have time to evangelize.¹

Whatever strategy for ministry a pastor or congregation may adopt, if it is to reflect the general experience of the apostolic church and the admonition for ministry found in the New Testament, the entire membership must be given an adequate opportunity for ministry. For "when people in the pews fail to participate more fully in congregational life, it is not always because they are uncommitted--it may be because they are uncalled and untrained."² The "going church" concept is built upon the premise that each member has a vital role in the church and in the community. When this is the case by-and-large, then the mother church has provided an adequate support

¹Paul Benjamin interviewed by Jim Reapsome, "Previewing the American Festival of Evangelism," Christianity Today, May 8, 1981, p. 23.

²Paul Benjamin, The Equipping Ministry (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1978), p. 21.

base for church planting. The following chapter will illustrate how church planting is a natural sequence to a church that has adopted the general idea of the strategy which has been proposed in this chapter.

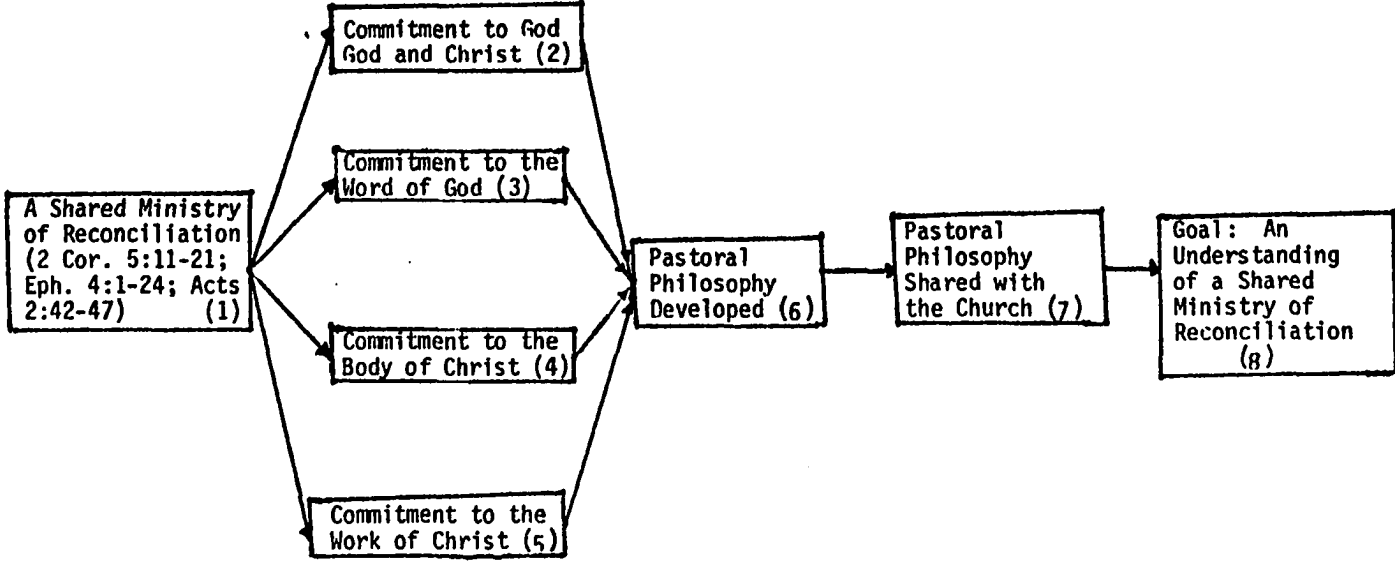


Fig. 1. Phase I: Towards a Theological Understanding of a Shared Ministry of Reconciliation

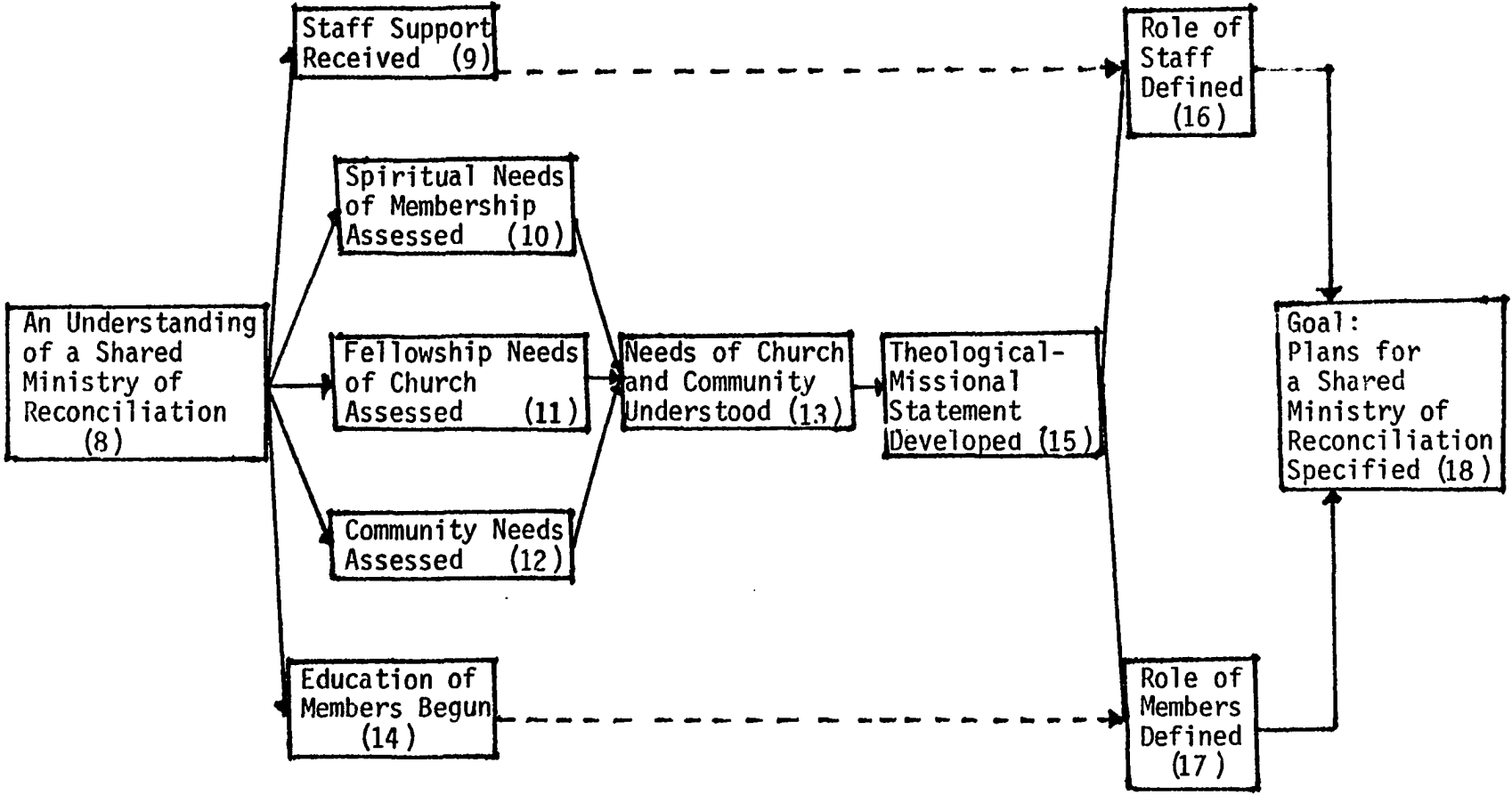


Fig. 2. Phase II: Preliminary Preparation for the Actual Shared Ministry of Reconciliation

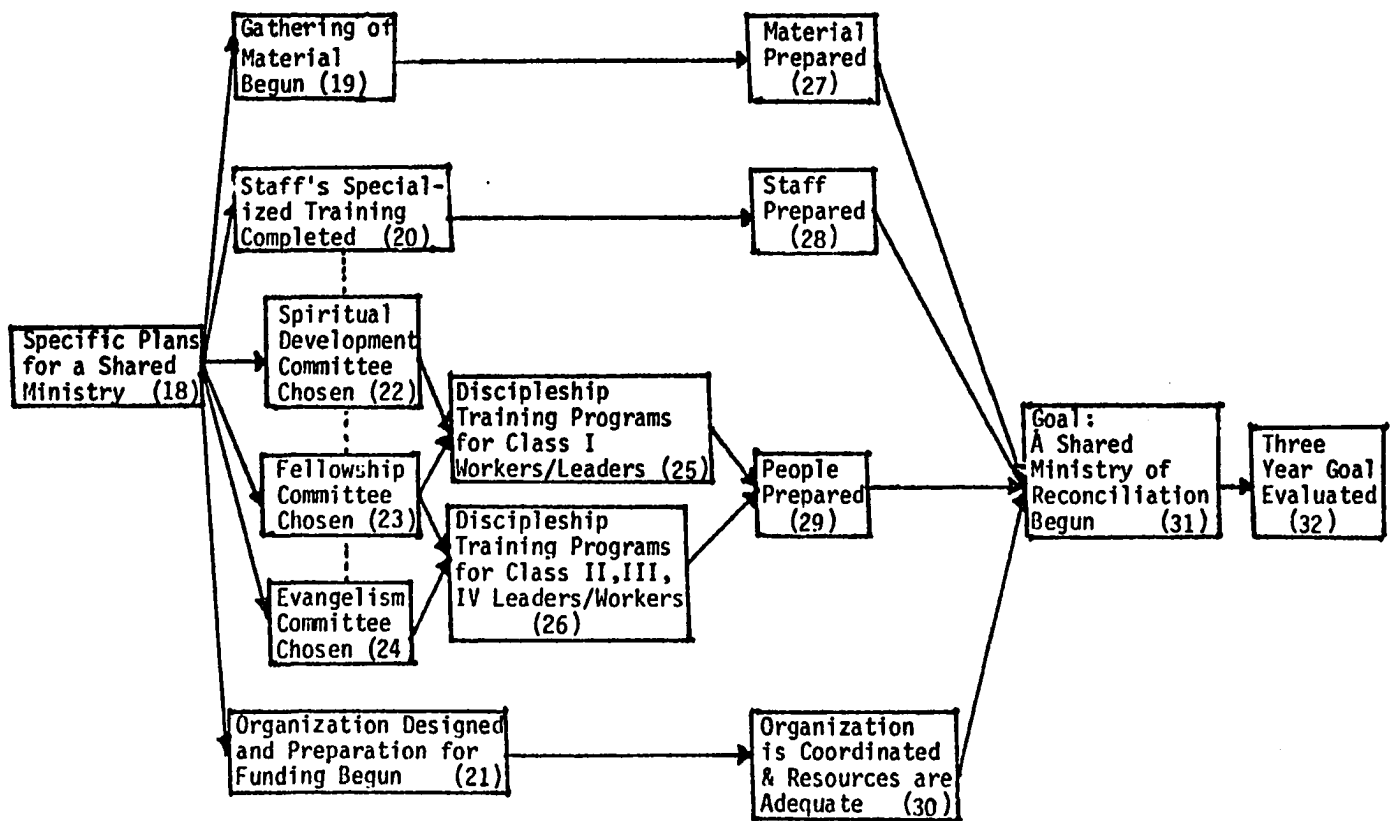


Fig. 3. Phase III: Actual Training and Organization for a Shared Ministry of Reconciliation

Phase IV: Three Year Goal Evaluated

CHAPTER VI

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN PLANNING FOR CHURCH PLANTING

Introduction

A strategy for preparing the local church has already been presented. The foundation for this strategy is the premise that the local church is a strategic center for both nurture and evangelism. Each church has a specific localized mission which encompasses the mission of the larger church. While the church has been called out of the world, it nevertheless exists for the world. It is sent forth with a specific ministry--a ministry of reconciliation which should be shared by each member of the congregation. This chapter is not an appendage to that program, but rather a description of its continuation. Church planting as described in this chapter is the incarnational ministry of the local church. The overriding thesis of church planting presented here is that a shared ministry of reconciliation can not be confined to one locality or to one people. The "everlasting gospel" is to be proclaimed, taught, and lived in the context of the world.

In order for this goal to be reached, the local church will need to be led through an intentional pre-organizational program. The purpose of this program is to prepare the church theologically, missiologically, organizationally and financially for extending its

shared ministry of reconciliation by means of planting a new church. It can be outlined as follows:

Phase V¹: To prepare the church theologically for church planting

Phase VI: To prepare the church missiologically for church planting

Phase VII: To prepare the church organizationally and financially for church planting

Phase VIII: To make final plans and to officially organize the new church

Phase IX: To evaluate the ministry and the needs of the new church

The beginning point for launching this program is the development of a basic theological understanding of church planting as a natural extension of the church's ministry of reconciliation.

Phase V: The Development of a Theological
Understanding of Church Planting as an
Extension of a Shared Ministry of
Reconciliation (Fig. 5)

Phase V initiates the church planting stage in the overall strategy of a local church. The purpose for this phase is two-fold. First, is the desire to keep before the congregation the nature of mission, and second, to help minimize the danger of creating an institutional attitude towards the church's role in mission. This

¹To accentuate the concept of an "on-going" process the various phases of both Chapter IV and this chapter are numbered consecutively. The flow charts at the end of this chapter illustrate how the different activities of each phase, Phases V-IX, interrelate with each other.

emphasis is necessary for both the congregation and the pastor. George Sweazy, for example, estimates that a protestant church in the United States with five hundred members would need fourteen hundred hours of work per month for its

religious education, worship services, organizations for youth and adults, building maintenance, finance, office and government. Of this, in a fairly prosperous church, about 350 hours will be volunteered by members of the church, most of whom are employed full time in other occupations.¹

The categories of work listed include nothing outside the internal life of the local church. The congregation needs to be reminded that the danger always lingers for a church to become satisfied with a ministry which is maintenance oriented.

The North American Adventist pastor, on the otherhand, needs to be aware that the typical Adventist pastor spends 46 percent of his time in church administration and ministry to his own members, while 23 percent of his time is used for ministry to non-members and 11 percent for family recreation.² From another perspective, the Adventist pastor spends 135.8 days per year virtually away from his mission field. This time is spent as follows:

Travel time	58.8 days
Campmeeting, Workers Meeting, Vacation and Other	43.0 days
Days Off	<u>34.0</u> days
	135.8 (37.2%) ³

¹George Sweazey, Evangelism in the United States (London: Published for the World Council of Churches by the United Society for Christian Literature, Lutterworth Press, 1958), p. 16.

²Institute of Church Ministry, "Pastor on the Go," report presented at the Twelfth Regular Session of the Southern Session, Biloxi, MS, 9-12 February 1981.

³Ibid., "Pastor's Time." These figures could give the im-

The many demands upon the pastor's time can lead to a ministry which lacks definition, cohesiveness, and direction. Church planting could easily be viewed as a threat to the already over-taxed pastor if it were not for its theological perspective. The practice of ministry gains its consistency and directives from the reality of Christ's efficacious atonement. Earlier the theological framework for a shared ministry of reconciliation was presented.¹ The position is taken in this chapter that church planting is an extension of the same ministry. The unique opportunity found in church planting, however, is that it provides the occasion for the church to demonstrate even more clearly its willingness to participate in an incarnational ministry.

The Incarnational Ministry of the Church

The foundation for this ministry is seen in Christ's own incarnation--"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). His willingness to identify with us to the extent that He was willing to be "tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb 4:16) describes more than a sense of mission; it, first of all, describes His total identification with sinful man. Identification obviously did not mean sinning, but it did mean becoming part of humanity--which included living in Nazareth (John 1:46).

pression that the pastor is infringing upon his "mission" if he takes one day off a week and a two to four week vacation (depending on his tenure). This is not the conclusion that is drawn here. These figures merely indicate that the pastor's time is pulled in many directions.

¹See Chapter V.

This identification necessarily involved genuine participation in real-life situations.

Deep participation in the concerns of others was the very warp and woof of Jesus' life, both of his words and deeds. His definition of love and of the identity of the "neighbor" to be loved could be re-stated: "Thou shalt participate deeply in the concerns of God and of all you meet." His life was lived in deep communion with God; his relationship with the Father was a participation in the Father. He felt a deep compassion for all men, even for those who abused Him, and his acts of mercy and words which spoke to their condition sprang from a sharing with the deep anguish of the bereaved, the downtrodden, the ostracized --even the most sinful. The cry over Jerusalem was a participation in the fate of that city.¹

Ellen White explains that the world's iniquity illicited Christ's deep compassion and therefore His "deep participation."

When Jesus came to this world, he found it in a deplorable state of sin and rebellion. He did not move far away from this rebellious multitude, but he came and dwelt among them. Because iniquity abounded, he came close to man in sympathy and tender, pitying love. In Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; yet he came to earth to be one with the oppressed, the poor, the needy; he came to demonstrate how much a God can love, a Saviour suffer, in order to save men from perdition, and bring eternal life within their reach.²

Second, the incarnation was not a mere demonstration of Christ's willingness to lower Himself in order to be like man--as important as that is. The incarnation was a radical effort to save man. Jesus himself said that he came "to serve, and to give his life

¹Reginald Keith Smart, "The Local Protestant Church as an Instrument of Mission: An Analysis of Reasons and Remedies for Its 'Ineffectiveness' According to American and Selected European Thought--1945-1963" (Th. D. dissertation, Boston University School of Theology, 1964), pp. 46-64. Cf. with the attitude of the early church in Acts 4:32; 6:1-6; 7:59, 60.

²Ellen G. White, "Missionary Work," The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, September 29, 1891, p. 594. This statement was made in the context of an appeal for laymen to actively engage in missionary work which included settling in cities and villages in order "to bring the light before those who have no knowledge of it?" (Ibid., p. 593).

as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Service was characteristic of his life. He could say at the close of his ministry on earth, therefore, that he had glorified the Father "having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

A third characteristic of the incarnational ministry of Jesus was the culmination of both participation and service. The objectives of the ministry of Jesus were so "radical" (Matt. 28:18, 19; Acts 1:8) that nothing short of his actual participation and service could bring about their fulfillment. From the beginning of his ministry he sought to disciple men. Twelve men were given a special opportunity to spend considerable time with him. They were disciplined in the context of real-life situations. They saw the values of their own culture turned upside down (Matt. 18:1-4; Luke 15:1, 2), developed a new appreciation for the Scriptures (Matt. 13:10-17), and began to perceive the needs and heartaches of their own neighbors (Matt. 9:35-38). True, the disciples did not always reflect perfectly their Teacher's values, but they had begun a way of life which earned them the accusation "These men who have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). It is precisely this "way of life"--a life of genuine discipleship--which is to characterize the incarnational ministry of Christ's church. As in Christ's own ministry so the local church will reflect these three characteristics of ministry.¹

¹For a brief description of these three aspects of ministry see: Smart, pp. 46-64.

The church in participation (#33)¹

The underlying principle of participation is a deep heartfelt compassion for the concerns of men. The kind of participation (koinōnia) that is needed is not a mere act of association with another person per se, but rather a sharing and identification with the concerns of that person.² J. Verkuyl suggests that "We must stimulate new ways of creating fellowship, and this search for fellowship must take institutional shape as we engage in the work of communicating the gospel."³ There is, of course, a natural relationship between participation and service but genuine service needs to be characterized by participation. Persistent ministry from "outposts" is not indicative of an incarnational ministry.⁴ Demographic studies are not conducted so drop shipments of needed supplies can be left at designated street corners. Demographic studies assist in discerning needs in order that the church's resources can be personally organized to meet them. These fellowship needs might be met by becoming a member of a Kiwanis or Rotary Club, serving on a public school board, or providing English classes for ethnic groups. The

¹Numbers in parentheses refer to specific steps in the flow chart at the end of this chapter.

²See Clowney's treatment of koinōnia in footnote #2 on page 117.

³J. Verkuyl, Contemporary Missiology, trans. and ed. Dale Cooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 221.

⁴The on-going debate among Adventists as to whether cities should be worked "from without" or "from within" the cities themselves cannot avoid this crucial issue. See Ted Wilson, "How Shall We Work the Cities--from Without?" Ministry, June 1980, p. 18f and Gottfried Oosterwal, "How Shall We Work the Cities--from Within?" Ministry, June 1980, p. 18f.

"presence" of consecrated Adventists in the community is an invaluable asset for the evangelization of that community. Church planting when understood in this context provides the needed resources for this kind of ministry. This also underscores the need for a positive relationship between the new daughter church and the mother church. Genuine incarnational ministry exhausts more than a church's financial resources; it taxes the very vitality of the members. Spiritual encouragement is needed from the mother church.

The church in service (#34)

Seventh-day Adventists have long been noted for their services, especially in medical related areas. Nutrition classes, 5-day plans to stop smoking, and physical fitness classes have all demonstrated the willingness to serve. While service is a natural consequence of a genuine participation in the concerns of others, it is also possible to serve without entering into participation.¹ There are times when participation within a community on a long term basis may not be possible. Church planting, however, provides this opportunity. Long term and meaningful identification can then take place

¹W. D. Blehm shares this same concern.

"With the high density of Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Pacific Union, the planting of churches is being given very careful scrutiny and consideration. With so many churches in the Pacific Union an Adventist can sit in his car for 5 or 10 minutes and have a choice of 10 or 12 churches. We believe that planting churches in areas where SDA's simply exit from a center to attend church in a small community is not a real community church but becomes an artificial church where SDA's simply attend Sabbath School and church."

W. D. Blehm, President of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, to Larry R. Evans, Berrien Springs, MI, 21 April 1981, Personal Files of Larry R. Evans, Berrien Springs, MI.

in specific communities and among people groups. Diakoneō "becomes a term denoting loving action for brother and neighbor, which in turn is derived from divine love, and also describes the outworking of koinōnia, fellowship"¹ (emphasis supplied). Koinōnia and diakoneō provide a much needed "climate" for making disciples (mathētai).

The church in discipling (#35)

Discipleship has at least two significant connotations: an object to be pursued (discipling) as well as a quality to be attained (discipleship). The first is the primary task of proclamation and teaching, while the second is the result. To end the discussion of discipling at this point would both be misleading and perpetuating a common error. Discipleship involves much more than the accumulation of intellectual data.

For learning is no mere intellectual process by which one acquires teaching about Christ. It implies acceptance of Christ himself, rejection of the old existence and beginning the new life of discipleship in him (cf. Phil. 4:9; 1 Cor. 4:6).²

Lawrence Richards takes this one step farther. The implications for planting a caring church in an unreached community become obvious.

To communicate faith-as-life means we must reach and nurture persons in their wholeness. To communicate faith-as-life means that faith's life style as well as faith's content needs to be learned, and that these need to be linked as they are being taught.

¹K. Hess, "Serve, Deacon, Worship," in The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vol., ed. and trans. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:547. See Acts 6:1-6.

²D. Müller, "μαθητής" in The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, 3 vols., ed. and trans. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:486.

. . . Seeing reality in another person and striving to be like him permits the testing and then the adoption of his traits, values, and character.¹

This "modeling" process is a major contribution of church planting. The church is not merely a society of Christians proclaiming and teaching valuable truths to foreigners. The church is a living organism whose incarnational ministry breathes new life into the meaning of "Christian witness." The authenticity of the local church's witness not only produces responsible disciples but it declares to the world that the ministry of reconciliation is genuine and operative--even in the face of hostility. This mission is expressed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The space of the Church is not there in order to try to deprive the world of a piece of its territory, but precisely in order to prove to the world that it is still the world, the world which is loved by God and reconciled with Him. The Church has neither the wish nor the obligation to extend her space to cover the space of the world. She asks for no more space than she needs for the purpose of serving the world by bearing witness to Jesus Christ and to the reconciliation of the world with God through Him. The only way in which the Church can defend her own territory is by fighting not for it but for the salvation of the world.²

The fight "for the salvation of the world" is best done in the context of the world.³ To be in the world yet not of the world

¹Lawrence O. Richards, A Theology of Christian Education (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), pp. 80, 83.

²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Christ, the Church, and the World," in Theological Foundations for Ministry, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 545.

³Ellen White incorporates this perspective in her philosophy of mission.

"We see the great need of missionary work to carry the truth not only to foreign countries, but to those who are near us. Close around us are cities and towns in which no efforts are made to save souls. Why should not families who know the present truth settle in these cities and villages, to set up there

(John 17:13-18) is an ever-present tension. The dynamic relationship found in participating, serving, and discipling in a community is essential to the church's mission of making responsible disciples who in turn become ministers of reconciliation. The practice of church planting, therefore, finds a primary theological motivating principle in the incarnational ministry of Jesus which he also gave to the church.

Pastoral Philosophy Developed (#36) and
Shared with the Church (#37)

The formation of a theological foundation for ministry is crucial for the pastor. Engstrom explains that "Christian leaders serve better when they are convinced that they are in the will of God, for then they know they will be equipped for their tasks by God's power."¹ An incarnational ministry which demonstrates a ministry of reconciliation is the paramount incentive for church planting, not the mere occupation of a dark county. Once the pastor has developed his own biblical approach to ministry--in this case specifically church planting--he is then prepared to interact with his congregation. A shared ministry of reconciliation presupposes a shared objective of ministry.

When this personal philosophy for church planting has been developed (#36), the pastor is prepared to lead the congregation in

the standard of Christ, working in humility, not in their own way, but in God's way, to bring the light before those who have no knowledge of it?" (emphasis supplied.)
Ellen G. White, Christian Service (Takoma Park, Wash. D. C.: General Conference of SDA, 1947), p. 180.

¹Ted W. Engstrom, The Making of a Christian Leader (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 31.

its own assessment of the theological principles that he has studied (#37). There are a number of approaches which can be taken.

A series of sermons can be given which highlight the theological principles behind this form of ministry. Key to the success of this sharing, however, is the actual participation of the members themselves in the development of their own understanding. Opportunities for this involvement can be given by providing feedback sessions after each sermon for those who wish to discuss the implications of this ministry. Interaction in small groups is one effective way of involving each willing member.¹ These small groups can be utilized during prayer meeting services and weekend church retreats. The goal of these approaches is to help each member understand the role and purpose of church planting and to relate church planting to the overall theme of a shared ministry of reconciliation. When this has been accomplished the church is prepared to move on to Phase VI (Fig. 5).

Phase VI: The Mission of the Church Defined and Plans Made (Fig. 5)

This phase is designed to lead the local church in an investigation of its community and of its own resources in order (1) to determine its unique mission and (2) to specify plans for accomplishing its mission. The specific thrust of the church's ministry is largely determined in this phase. The local church must not only determine the "what" of its mission but also its "why." J. H.

¹See chapter four "Choosing Methods for Group Learning" (pp. 68-107) by James D. Williams, Guiding Adults (Nashville: Convention Press, 1969).

Bavinck presents "the twofold basis of missions" by asking two significant questions:

Are we sent into the world solely by the Scriptures, by God himself, or can we say that the world also longs for our coming? Does the work of missions rest solely upon the pillar of God's command, or is there a second pillar: the homesickness of the nations for the gospel of Christ?¹

The answers to these questions will to a large extent determine not only the motivation of the laity but the kind of response the church will find in its mission. An incarnational ministry of reconciliation presupposes God calling the church to mission so that it can minister to a world that is hungering for the "everlasting gospel." The church in mission, therefore, is seen when the church participates in the restoration of God's kingdom.

Once the "why" of mission is determined then the "task in every age" is to

investigate scientifically and critically the presuppositions, motives, structures, methods, patterns of cooperation, and leadership which the churches bring to their mandate. In addition missiology must examine every other type of human activity which combats the various evils to see if it fits the criteria and goals of God's kingdom which has both already come and is yet coming.²

Ministry, then, is not confined to proclamation or the making of disciples. It also includes the discernment of the community. This phase is an attempt to organize an investigation of a community and/or people group for the purpose of planning a shared ministry of reconciliation. This missional process includes both the education

¹J. H. Bavinck, An Introduction to the Science of Missions, trans. David H. Freeman (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960), p. 4.

²Verkuy1, p. 5.

of the members as to their role in this ministry and an analysis of the community by the Church Extension Committee.

Education of Members Continued--A Shared
Ministry of Reconciliation (#39)

Whether or not the church decides to plant a church, the basic theme of a shared ministry of reconciliation and its many implications (see Phase I) needs to be upheld and modeled by the leaders of the local church. Church planting may be delayed for various reasons, but the church's ministry cannot. Education is an on-going process and is not held in abeyance while the church determines if it will launch into a church planting program. "Only if Scripture finds a central place in every activity of believers, and is searched as a reliable and relevant guide, will growth in Christlikeness come."¹

The Church Extension Committee (#40)

This committee is nominated by the church board and is voted on by the church members. It is the chief coordinating and administrative body throughout the whole process. The committee is responsible to the church board to which it reports regularly. It also works very closely with the conference's Church Extension Committee.² If more than one church is involved in the church planting then each church should have its own Church Extension Committee and appoint delegates to meet with a joint Extension Committee, which would

¹Richards, p. 313.

²The local conference's role will be dealt with more fully in a later section.

coordinate the activities and resources of the churches involved. During this entire process the members are constantly being made aware of the richness found in "a shared ministry of reconciliation" (#39). The work of the Church Extension Committee is the administrative part of this shared ministry of reconciliation.

The Church Extension Committee's first responsibility is to analyze the community's and the church's potential for church planting. This analysis involves four steps.

The first step is to gain pastoral support (#41). Under most circumstances this step is not necessary since the pastor has been deeply involved in preparing the church "theologically" for church planting. There are at least three situations where gaining the pastoral support may be necessary: (1) when a change of pastors is made during the process, (2) when the laymen have taken the initiative and (3) when more than one pastor is involved--either in a single district or when several churches participate in the church planting. Whatever the situation may be, the support of the pastor is crucial to the success of the program.

The committee's second step is to conduct a demographic analysis of the strategic areas surrounding the existing church (#42). By "strategic" is meant potential areas for church planting. At this point, however, the possibilities should not be restricted too much. When all three studies have been conducted then the lines will be drawn more specifically (#45). The purpose of this demographic analysis is to provide a comprehensive view of the area. This is a recent study of what was basically done in Phase II. The two studies can be compared which should be helpful in determining trends in the

community. This study will not only provide basic information for identifying people groups, but should also uncover helpful details for the eventual site of the new church.¹

The third step in analyzing the church and community is the identification of specific people groups² and their needs (#43). This step aids in narrowing and refining the scope of the church's mission. It is not meant to exclude anyone from the mission of the church, but rather to assist the church in matching its resources with the needs of the community.³ Certain key principles for identifying the needs of a particular people group can be summarized as follows:

1. Needs are defined by the people themselves
2. Felt needs of a people are not irrelevant or unrelated to the basic fundamental spiritual dimensions of God's Kingdom
3. The ideals of a particular culture or segment of society can reveal needs--often in the form of the individual's discontentment with himself
4. Conflicts, disputes (legal), and disagreements can be clues to perceived or unperceived needs

¹Helpful information for conducting this study can be found in Ezra Earl Jones, Strategies for New Churches (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 58-76, and in App. E of this paper.

²See footnote #1 on page 90.

³For help in identifying people groups see Edward R. Dayton, That Everyone May Hear: Reaching the Unreached, second ed. (Monrovia, CA: Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center, 1980) and Fuller Evangelistic Association, Community Analysis (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Evangelistic Association, 1977). For a more thorough treatment see Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, Planning Strategies for World Evangelization (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 109-195.

5. The troublesome behavior and attitudes of Christians in the area can be an indication of unmet needs

6. Change is possible where there is discontent with the way things are¹

The final step in this analysis is to evaluate the church's potential for church planting (#44). Several factors are brought into consideration here, such as: How many churches will be involved in the church planting? What is the attendance or composite membership of the mother church (es)? Would a potential swarming of 50-75 members be feasible in the near future--if not when? Are the church's (es') resources matched for the mission outlined by the Committee? Is there an adequate number of trained leaders for the new church? Are there leaders prepared to take their place in the mother church? Has there been any response from among the people groups that are being considered? These and other similar questions would be helpful in this evaluation and are necessary for the next step.

When these four steps have been completed and the data have been meaningfully put together a special meeting is called (#45). This meeting is a joint meeting of the local (several churches may be involved) and conference church extension committees. The conference's role would include not only an analysis of the reports completed, but also recommendations concerning pastoral assignments, church facilities, financial resources, additional background reports of the targeted people group from other areas in the conference, the community as it fits into the conference as a whole, and suggestions

¹This is a summary of Dayton and Fraser, pp. 163-170, "Understanding the Needs of a People."

as to organizational procedures. A major purpose of this joint meeting is to assure support for the church planting program in order to give it as much momentum and success as possible. If this analysis is favorable then the next step after church board approval is to take it to the church at large for its approval and input.

The Theological-Missional Statement¹
Reviewed and Revised (#46)

This approval, however, is done in the context of the church's "theological-missional statement." Essentially the same process is involved here as was in Phase II (#14). This time, however, the church has been prepared theologically for extending its ministry by eventually planting a new church. The church may want to revise its theological statement in light of its new mission--if indeed it has voted to do so. This step, therefore, involves at least three activities: first, to review the original statement; second, to determine if the church is behind the principle of church planting (the actual time of the planting may not be known at this time); and third, to revise the older statement in light of the new mission of the church.

This statement will provide the Church Extension Committee with both a mandate and the necessary preparation for the pre-organizational meeting.

Pastoral role defined (#47)

In cases where there may be more than one pastor in the local church, responsibilities may need to be divided. When the committee discusses this issue with the pastor certain questions will need to

¹See app. H.

be answered. Who will pastor the new church¹--the current pastor, a layman, or will someone be called in by the conference? Is the pastor to be the chief educator and promoter or will the committee bear the responsibility? The pastor's influence should not be underestimated, nor should his time and energy be overestimated. This is the time to help divide the responsibilities and make this a project for the entire church.

The role of the seed families defined (#47)

This is a preliminary consideration since there are no official seed families at this time. There should be, however, several families who are at least considering becoming part of the new church. The basic purpose of this step by the Church Extension Committee is intentionally to plan for the development of a "new mission" community within the mother church. This is necessary to help avoid a sense of mistrust by either the potential seed families or by the mother church. By intentionally planning the "new missions" community the threat is removed and the action is seen as part of the church planting process. This step is therefore a preliminary step to see how many may be interested in joining the new church and to

¹Donald J. MacNair describes the qualifications for the organizing pastor as a person who is:

- "a) a qualified teaching elder;
- b) concerned for the lost;
- c) concerned for the growth of the Christian;
- d) concerned for the blessings that come only from the interaction of families under the influence of the Holy Spirit working in the visible church;
- e) willing to work with abounding energy and imagination;
- f) a living communication of his vision;
- g) and a man of decision and action."

Donald J. MacNair, The Birth, Care and Feeding of a Local Church (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 66.

define how the two groups will coexist during the interim.

The role of the mother church defined (#48)

The same basic concerns mentioned above for the seed families are also the concerns of the mother church. The main accomplishment, however, of this step is to underline the need for the mother church to be supportive towards the church planting. The background for this attitude was, of course, developed when the theological-missional statement was made.

Plans Made for "Extending" a Shared Ministry of
Reconciliation to a Specific People
Group/Community (#49)

Plans for the actual organization of the new church can now proceed. These plans are based on the deep conviction that the Lord is acting in such a way so as to open up opportunities for the church's mission and on the belief that the church desires to participate in that mission. Both aspects are crucial to the success of the mission. These plans help initiate Phase VII which deals primarily with the preparation of the mother church and the proposed daughter church for the eventual separation.

Phase VII: Preparation for the Pre-
Organizational Meeting--Resources
Evaluated and Determined (Fig. 6)

With tentative plans for church planting underway the purpose of this phase is to prepare for the pre-organizational meeting. There are two essential concerns in this preparation. The first is to identify and prepare the seed families for their new mission. The second is to prepare the mother church for her supportive role in the

church planting. When both of these concerns are intentionally planned, the pre-organizational meeting will become a meaningful event for which both the proposed daughter church and the mother church are prepared. The length of time for this phase is not as important as the actual process of preparation. The two main aspects are conducted simultaneously, but will be treated independently in this paper.

The Seed Families

The identification of the seed families (#50)

It is important at this point for the ground work to have been laid. The church, by now, has shared in the enthusiasm of extending its mission. The people group which will become the evangelistic target for the new church has been identified and the general acceptance of the whole church gained. It is now time seriously to begin searching for those who want to become part of the nucleus of the new church. Usually the number is small at first, but it will grow. To help identify those interested in forming this nucleus announcements could be made from the pulpit, in the church's newsletter, and in information meetings. The Church Extension Committee continues to carry the organizational responsibility. Once a group of interested families has been identified, the next step is to prepare them as a group for their new mission.

Mission fellowship begun (#51)

The reasons for this fellowship period have been pointed out by John H. Allen and are summarized by Jack Redford:

First, the new work needs time to solidify its base. Not everyone comes into the group with the same dedication, experience, and concepts. . . .

Second, a new work needs time to develop Christian fellowship. The love level and trust level (they are the same) of a group must be developed as a base for all future relationships. . . .

Third, the new work needs time to broaden its base. The fellowship period provides the nucleus time to build a financial base. . . .

Fourth, a new work needs time to discover its leaders. . . .

Fifth, a new work needs time to train and develop its leaders.¹

The mission fellowship is structured around the task of reinforcing within this group the four-fold commitment to a shared ministry of reconciliation explored in Phase I: a renewed commitment to God and Christ (#52), a renewed commitment to the Word of God (#53), a renewed commitment to the Body of Christ (#54), and a renewed commitment to the work of Christ (#55). This fellowship group may wish to begin on a Sabbath afternoon in the church, but as it grows it may wish to meet in a home or another building on Sabbath morning. This group may want to set aside funds for New Church Development, which would go towards the rental for a church facility. The group needs to gain its own identity as soon as possible, but should constantly recognize that it is not yet an independent church. The Mission Fellowship group will need to work closely with the Church Extension Committee so as to ensure an orderly and painless separation. The best time for the Mission Fellowship to begin holding its own Sabbath services is after enough time has elapsed for the group to show evidence that it is indeed a committed body of believers (#56) in all four areas mentioned above and specifically in the task of reaching the people that has been designated in the preliminary studies. When

¹Jack Redford, Planting New Churches (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), p. 66.

evidence of this commitment has been shown then the Mission Fellowship directs its attention towards the specific concerns of forming a new church.

Total organizational and evangelistic needs defined (#60)

One of the first needs experienced by the Mission Fellowship group is the location of a meeting place (#57). Up to this point they may have been meeting in the church or in a private home. A facility, however, will need to be found which is located in the close proximity to the people who are to be reached. In some cases this may be a vacant school, a banquet hall at a hotel, or another church.¹ Whatever facility is chosen, adequate room for the children's Sabbath School divisions should be taken into consideration. If the facility is too large it can be devastating to the morale. If, on the other hand, the facility is too small it can impede growth.² The choice of the temporary church facility, then, is an important decision.³

¹Ezra Earl Jones, a United Methodist executive, recommends the latter.

"The shared-facilities concept may work better with churches that are quite different; for example, a United Methodist church sharing space with a Seventh-Day [sic] Adventist church, or a Roman Catholic congregation with a Presbyterian church." Ezra Earl Jones, p. 132.

²Peter Wagner recognizes the danger of having too small a sanctuary.

"As a rule of thumb, when the sanctuary is 80 percent full and the church is growing, you can expect that sociological strangulation has already begun to set in. Growth rates will almost invariably begin to drop at that point. If the church is otherwise healthy, it might keep on growing as the 80 percent point is passed, but the annual rate will usually become slower and slower."

C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy in Creative Leadership Series, ed. Lyle E. Schaller (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), p. 93.

³See also Phase VIII, #75, p. 158.

In addition to a meeting place is the need for organizational supplies such as Sabbath School supplies. This shouldn't be much of a problem if there is only one mother church, but if there is more than one, then it becomes the responsibility of the Joint Church Extension Committee to coordinate the supplies. Consideration should be given to ordering Sabbath School supplies for the new church at this time since it can take up to three or more months due to printing schedules.

A second concern of the mission group is the definition of leadership needs. If Phase III has been successful then there should be an adequate number of trained leaders for both the mother church and the daughter church. The leadership needs should be anticipated, however, and some training may be necessary. The conference's Lay Ministries Department may be of special help by recommending specific methods for reaching the target area.¹ Special training programs may also be suggested to equip the members for beginning this form of "pioneer" work.

The job descriptions of these leaders will emerge as the group becomes more and more independent. Guidelines for these job descriptions, however, will come from the Church Extension Committee. What is necessary at this point is not so much the appointment of leaders as defining what leadership skills will become necessary.

¹Again it must be emphasized. A Standard solution approach which does not take into consideration the theological-missional statement of the local church as well as the unique characteristics of the people to be reached can actually cause the church to lose its special sense of mission. "Let every worker in the Master's vineyard, study, plan, devise methods, to reach the people where they are." Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), pp. 122, 123.

This evaluation leads to a better understanding of the various programs that these leaders will be supervising. This leads in turn to the question of finances.

The third concern of the seed families is the definition of future financial needs. Finances form an important part of any new church development. The Sabbath School supplies for all the divisions are significant. The rental of church facilities is another cost which will vary according to the facilities chosen. Normally the pastor's salary in the Adventist church is paid by the local conference, thus relieving the new church of that particular responsibility.¹ In addition to these internal financial needs is the need for evangelistic funding. The church must not become so absorbed in maintenance organization that it does not plan for evangelism. In order for these evangelistic needs to be anticipated, preliminary plans for outreach need to be considered. Thus there are three main areas of financial concern: rental of facilities, Sabbath School supplies, and evangelism.

When each of the three major areas of concern are defined-- facilities/supplies, leadership, and finances (#60)--they are then evaluated as a whole by the Church Extension Committee. The commit-

¹It is a standard practice for Adventist members to pay their tithes (10 percent of their income) to the local conference. The size of the congregation does not affect the salary of the full time Seventh-day Adventist pastor. Often the pastor will have more than one church, although in the case study (Chapter III) the only responsibility that the pastor had was the new church, which no doubt played a significant role in its early and rapid growth. In cases where the conference cannot afford to add a full salary for the church the possibility of employing a Class III worker should be considered. His salary could be divided among the conference, the mother church, and the new church. The conference needs to consider church planting as a means of long-term evangelism.

tee's chief work here is to examine the needs as a whole to see if the major needs have been realistically anticipated. The next step is to evaluate the resources of the seed families.

Resources of seed families evaluated (#61)

The evaluation of the resources of the seed families can cover a variety of areas. Perhaps the most obvious is their combined monthly financial ability. Will they be able to meet the anticipated financial needs? If not, approximately how much assistance will they need? Are these individuals prepared to assume leadership of a new church? Will they need temporary leadership help? Do these members have homes, office buildings, or any other places that could possibly accommodate the groups weekly services? Do they have property in or near the evangelistic target area that could be used for the eventual location of the new church? These need to be explored before going to the pre-organizational meeting (#72).

The Mother Church

Anticipated needs/concerns of the mother church determined (#62)

Amidst the celebration of entering a new evangelistic field is the solemn reality that the mother church will undergo a change. This change will include a sense of satisfaction for giving "birth" to a new church, but it will also cause concern to those who stay behind. These concerns can be categorized as internal (maintenance) and external (evangelistic).

The internal concerns are real and should be taken seriously. The church spawning will create leadership vacancies as well as re-

move some of the support for the church budget. Friends will no doubt be separated and there will be a form of grieving that is to be both expected and needed.

The external concerns are also real. Many of the most active evangelistic workers will leave to work with the new church--including many of the new and young members. This needs to be anticipated.

The independence of the new church may be painful, but it is as necessary as it is for a youth to establish his independence. This process is designed to allow the independence to develop gradually. In order for this to happen the mother church needs to be committed to the development of a new church.

Full commitment of mother church to church planting (#66)

This commitment includes the full cooperation of the pastors involved (#63). Commitment to the work of Christ flows out of a commitment to both the Body of Christ and to a personal relationship with him. Sometimes the commitment to a particular part of the Body of Christ can obscure certain aspects of his work. The pastor must be willing to allow the Body of Christ to separate and to extend its ministry. If the pastor has been the initiator of this church planting process and has been involved in each stage then the trauma of the separation should be minimal. If, on the other hand, another church and another pastor are initiating a church planting which may draw some members from a neighboring church, then the process can become very threatening. This is one reason why regular meetings of the Joint Church Extension Committee is so important. For the church planting to be healthy to the entire Body of Christ, careful prepara-

tion is needed. This preparation also includes preparing the church members who will stay and support the mother church.

The congregation must also be committed to church planting (#64). The same dynamics mentioned above for the pastor hold true for the congregation at large. "The people must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price."¹ This price can include the provision of funds for growth and in church planting that can mean a real sacrifice. The price can also include the willingness to sacrifice fellowship for growth.² Thus both the pastor and the congregation need to renew their commitment. Perhaps one of the best means of doing this is by reviewing Phases I and V, where the theological rationale was determined. In conjunction with this review would be a review of the theological-missional statements (Phases II and VI).

In addition to the pastor's and the congregation's general support is the need for the commitment of the needed resources (65). The financial aspect has been alluded to above, but a church's resources are not confined to dollars and cents. The commitment of leadership support may be a very necessary resource. It may become necessary for some of the church elders to offer their assistance until appropriate elders are chosen--depending of course on who joins the new church. A willingness to share Sabbath School supplies at least temporarily should be another consideration. Commitments in these areas lead to the ultimate commitment of the mother church to the principle of planting a new church as planned.

¹C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 29.

When the mother church has made these three commitments a major milestone has been passed in the process of church planting. Depending on the degree of commitment, the remainder of the process should be characterized by the mother church participating as a supportive force, as revealed in the next evaluative process.

Total supportive resources evaluated (#70)

The first of these resources to be evaluated is the organizational supplies (#67). The main purpose for this evaluation is to determine what supplies could be given or loaned to the new church. Certain Sabbath School supplies, such as the Sabbath School papers and quarterlies, could be given to the new church according to the number leaving without any loss to the mother church. Certain evangelistic supplies may also be offered to the new church to assist it in its evangelistic outreach, such as: Bible study guides, gift Bibles, missionary magazines and tracts.

Second, leadership abilities need to be considered (#68). The willingness of the leadership in the mother church to conduct training seminars for the new church as done in Phase III needs to be considered. While the conference will no doubt offer its services the mother church should be given many opportunities to assist the new church. Church planting must be seen as flowing from the local church and not as a directive from the conference. This is a key principle for the on-going process of developing new and indigenous churches. In addition to training seminars the mother church should consider the possibility of lending some of its leaders, if need be, for a period of time to assist the new church until its own leaders have been either chosen or trained.

In addition to supplies and leadership, the mother church needs to decide how much financial help it can give (#69). The church may decide to give a set amount each month from the evangelism fund, or give one lump sum. It may decide to help purchase land for the new church. Whatever the mother church may decide to do eventually, the important consideration at this point is approximately how much can it contribute.

Once all three areas have been evaluated independently of each other, they are then evaluated as a total package (#70). The Church Extension Committee, which has also been working closely with the seed families, is able to give input as to what the projected needs of the new church will be. This assists the mother church as its resources are evaluated, thus giving a more realistic picture of what the new church's real needs are before the pre-organizational meeting.¹ These assets are then tabulated in preparation for the pre-organizational meeting (#71).

Phase VIII: Final Preparation for the
Actual Organization (Fig. 7)

The Pre-Organizational Meeting

There are three basic objectives of this meeting. The first is the public coordination of the resources of the mother church with

¹Schaller, however, recommends restraint when it comes to long term subsidies (more than four years). He suggests that these subsidies can (1) create a sense of dependency, (2) lower the morale, (3) lower the self-esteem of the group, (4) create a sense of passivity, (5) create a sense of powerlessness, (6) give the impression that bigger subsidies will solve all problems, and (7) shift the focus to the congregation-denomination relationship rather than an evangelistic outreach. Lyle E. Schaller, Assimilating New Members, Creative Leadership Series (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), p. 56.

the expressed and researched needs of the proposed daughter church. The second is the formation of two committees--administrative and evangelism/nurture--for final preparation for the organization of the new church. The third objective of the pre-organizational meeting is the vote by the church to spawn a new church. This vote should be characterized by celebration and is second in joy only to the actual organization itself. The Church Extension Committee now has a new responsibility.

Church Extension Committee Makes Final Preparations for Organization (#73)

To facilitate the recommendation of the church's vote, the committee is divided into two subcommittees (#'s 74, 79). These committees are made up of members of both the mother church and the daughter church. Others may be added at the pre-organizational meeting. One of the purposes that this phase has is to provide an opportunity for members of both churches to work together in a final effort for the organization. The comradeship will help stabilize both churches when the official separation does come.

The Administrative Committee chosen (#74)

The role of this committee is to finalize the organizational details that were needing the church's authorization. The vote of the church in the pre-organizational meeting gives authorization to proceed officially with plans to form a new church. This gives the committee official status. Its role is to care for the remaining organizational details and needs that may arise.

One of these needs is the selection of church facilities (#75). When the demographic analysis was done in Phase VI the search for a suitable facility was begun. The issue could be brought to a vote in the pre-organizational meeting, or it could be deferred to this committee. Whatever course is pursued it is the Administrative Committee which finalizes the selection. It is important that a contract be signed by both parties involved. The matter of insurance coverage should not be overlooked. This committee also takes responsibility for the keys to the facility and is the responsible party for settling any difficulties that may develop between the owners of the facility and the new church.

A second organizational need cared for by the Administrative Committee is the coordination of the available resources of the mother church with the expressed needs of the proposed church (#76). In order to facilitate this responsibility it would be helpful if the treasurer of the mother church were a member of this committee.

During Phase VII the needs and resources of both the mother church and the proposed daughter church were evaluated. With this step of coordinating resources with specific need, a strong program for both churches is made possible. This committee will also check into the conference's and union's policies for assisting new churches¹ and make application at the appropriate time.

¹Some unions, for example, make special funds available for helping new churches get started. The North Pacific Union has the "Insta Church" program, which has two plans. Plan A permits a loan of \$15,000 towards a new church building to be paid back over a five-year period--interest free for the first year. Plan B is a direct \$5,000 grant to any new congregation launched in the North Pacific Union Conference. Richard D. Fearing, President of the North Pacific Union Conference, to Larry R. Evans, Berrien Springs,

As the organizational date approaches particular needs which are unique to the local situation may arise. The Administrative Committee must be sensitive to these unmet needs. It is also possible that additional resources may become available as the mother church realizes that the new church will be organized soon. It will be the committee's responsibility to coordinate these last minute needs and resources (#77). This committee's primary function, therefore, is to prepare the seed families organizationally for the official beginning of the new church (#78).

The Evangelism/Nurture Committee chosen (#79)

This committee is chosen at the same time as the Administrative Committee. The purpose for choosing this committee at this time is two-fold: first, to prepare the church for its mission, and second, to reinforce very early the concept that the organization of the new church is not a "dead-end street". The organization of this church is a means of extending a "shared ministry of reconciliation" to another community.

In order to accomplish these objectives this committee will first evaluate various methods of evangelism and nurture for reaching and maintaining the individuals of the targeted people group or community. (#80).

MI, 16 April 81, Personal Files of Larry R. Evans, Berrien Springs, MI.

"In some conferences, particularly the Southeastern Conference we have a lay group of individuals who call themselves the 'SDA Laymen Foundation' and it is an incorporated group which helps in the funding of new churches. In addition, throughout the union, we have an ASI-Pacific Union builders group that helps in the building of churches and schools."
W. D. Blehm to Larry R. Evans.

This step involves two parts in one process. Discerning methods¹ for evangelism and for nurture is not an either/or responsibility. Evangelism and nurture must be seen as an ongoing process which has as its aim the making of disciples.² These methods are studied from the perspective of reaching a defined segment of the community. The resources of the new church are evaluated in light of the possible methods and then recommendations are made. A second evaluation is made of the trained personnel for ministry (#81). A key resource for the implementation of any method or strategy for evangelism is the personnel. In this case certain members will need to be trained to carry out the chosen methods. These individuals may already be trained or they may not. The purpose for this step is to make a final evaluation in light of the now recommended methods. Included in this evaluation is the consideration of all class workers-- I, II, III, and IV. These two evaluations are then processed resulting in a master plan for the new church--a holistic plan which coordinates concerns for both evangelism and nurture.

¹Dayton and Fraser define methods in a comprehensive way which gives a broader dimension to the word than normally considered. "We define means or methods as humanly devised tools and procedures with an associated pattern of action and organization aimed at achieving some result or change in the world. In addition, we distinguish three levels of methods: philosophy of ministry, an ideal pattern or plan for action, and an actual practiced set of behaviors and relationships which have measurable results in a real world." Dayton and Fraser, p. 271.

²Schaller expresses this concept well when he begins the final paragraph of his book with these words: "The central thesis of this book is that it is un-Christian for a congregation to seek new members unless it is also willing and able to accept them into that called-out community." Schaller, Assimilating New Members, p. 128.

Church Organized and Evangelistic/Nurture Thrust
Initiated by New Church with the
Support of Mother Church (#84)

The organizational Sabbath is the highlight of the entire process. Most likely the facility of the new church will be too small to accommodate the entire mother church, but tokens of appreciation and best wishes could be sent by the mother church to the daughter church on the day of organization. Flowers and a statement by the church board of the mother church could help express a team spirit as well as an acknowledgement of official independence.

The organizational Sabbath is not, however, the end of the mother church's supportive role. Representatives from the mother church meet with the church board of the newly formed church on a quarterly basis as long as financial support from the mother church is needed. This serves two main purposes. First, it is a reminder to the new church that it needs to strive for full autonomy. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church this does not mean the kind of autonomy experienced by congregational churches. Rather it means to be able to assume financial and leadership responsibility thus allowing a more normal relationship with the local conference and to break ties of dependency with the founding church. Second, members from the mother church who serve on the new church's board are better able to discern the new church's needs and therefore recommend either more aid or a reduction in aid. The new church should now launch its own program by starting at Phase I with the intention of some day spawning its own church. The next step should hopefully sever any remaining signs of dependency upon the mother church.

Phase IX: 3 Year Goal Evaluated and
Needs Assessed (Fig. 7)

The main purpose of this step is to see that the new church is established in organization as well as in the evangelism and nurturing process. Recommendations are made primarily by the daughter church's board. It is hoped that by this time the mother church can end her support and possibly shift it to another group which is desiring to spawn and reach another segment of the population.

Conclusion

Church planting is the church in mission. A mission that is characterized by God's mission and which has been incarnated in the person Jesus Christ. This model for mission, therefore, clearly teaches that "First and supremely it is God who exists for the world. And since the community of Jesus Christ exists first and supremely for God, it has no option but in its own manner and place to exist for the world."¹ The church's mission, therefore, authenticates its place in the world. Through its participation with the world and its service for the world it can meaningfully enter into the process of discipling the world.

The theory of mission is pragmatically tested in church planting. Church swarming has been the approach suggested in this chapter although there are other valid approaches. This method, however, provides an immediate and significant "presence" by the church in an unentered area. The "incarnational ministry" which has been

¹Karl Barth, "The Community for the World," in Theological Foundations for Ministry, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 499.

the overriding theme of this chapter dove-tails perfectly with the theme of "a shared ministry of reconciliation" which was presented earlier.¹ While some are saying that there are already too many churches in North America,² church planting built on these principles of ministry cannot slacken its intensity. Ministry cannot be measured by the number of church structures on a city block. Ministry is not determined by the size of an institution. Ministry is our response to the self-sacrifice of Christ. His incarnational ministry is the primary motivation for us to leave the security of an established church and to enter "the land that I (God) will show you" (Gen 12:1). It is this spirit which captures the vision of the early apostolic church, the early Adventist church, and the Adventist church today. As long as there are communities and people groups who have not heard the "everlasting gospel" of the three angels of Rev. 14 in a meaningful way, then the need for church planting still exists.

¹See Chapter V.

²See Chapter II.

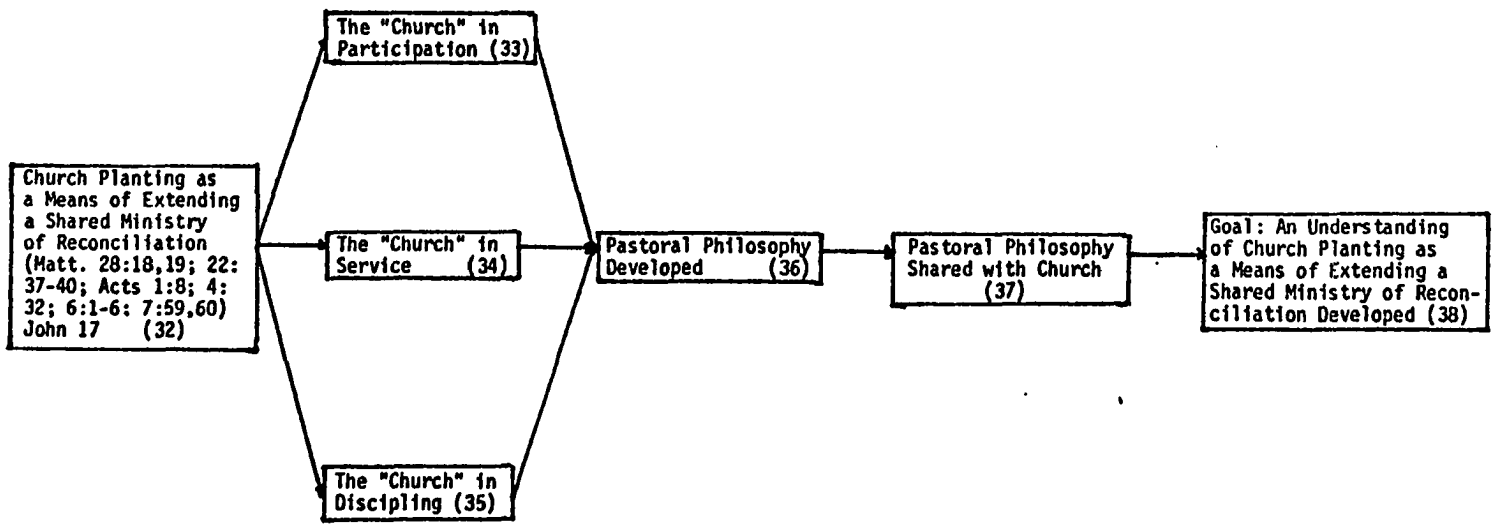


Fig. 4. Phase V: The Development of a Theological Understanding of Church Planting as an Extension of a Shared Ministry of Reconciliation

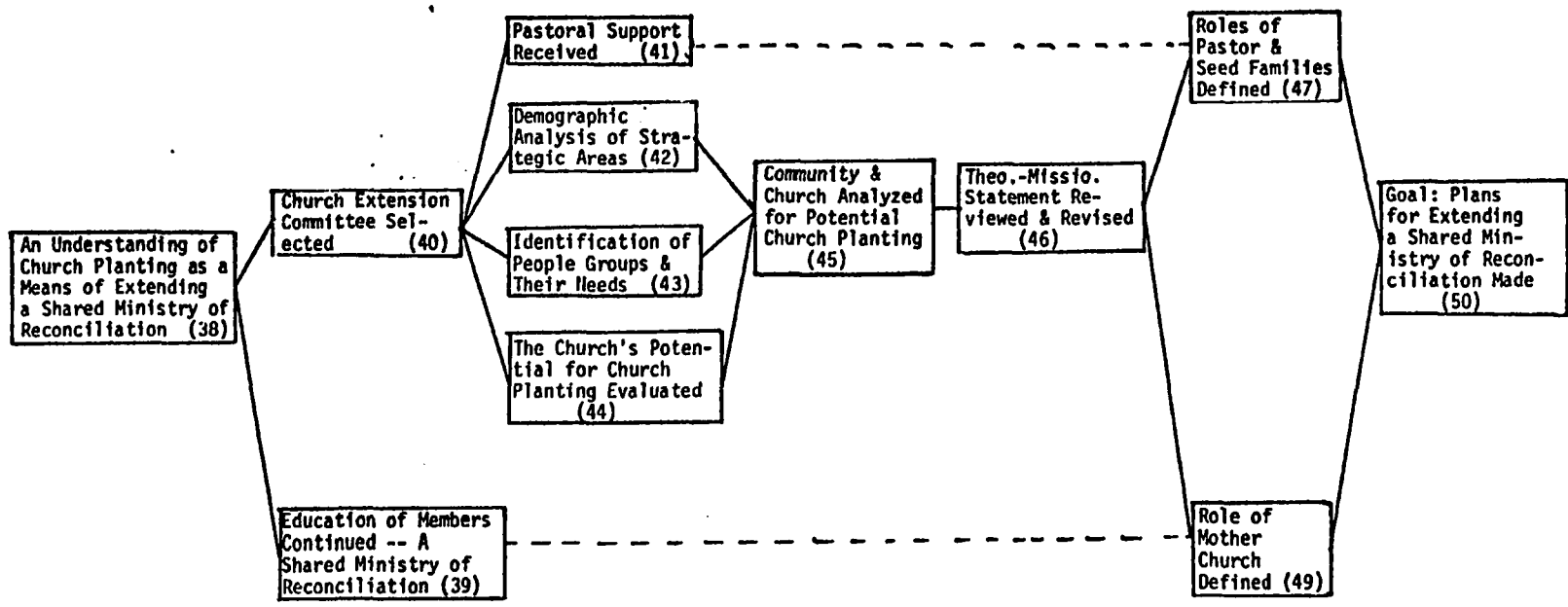


Fig. 5. Phase VI: The Mission of the Church Defined and Plans Made

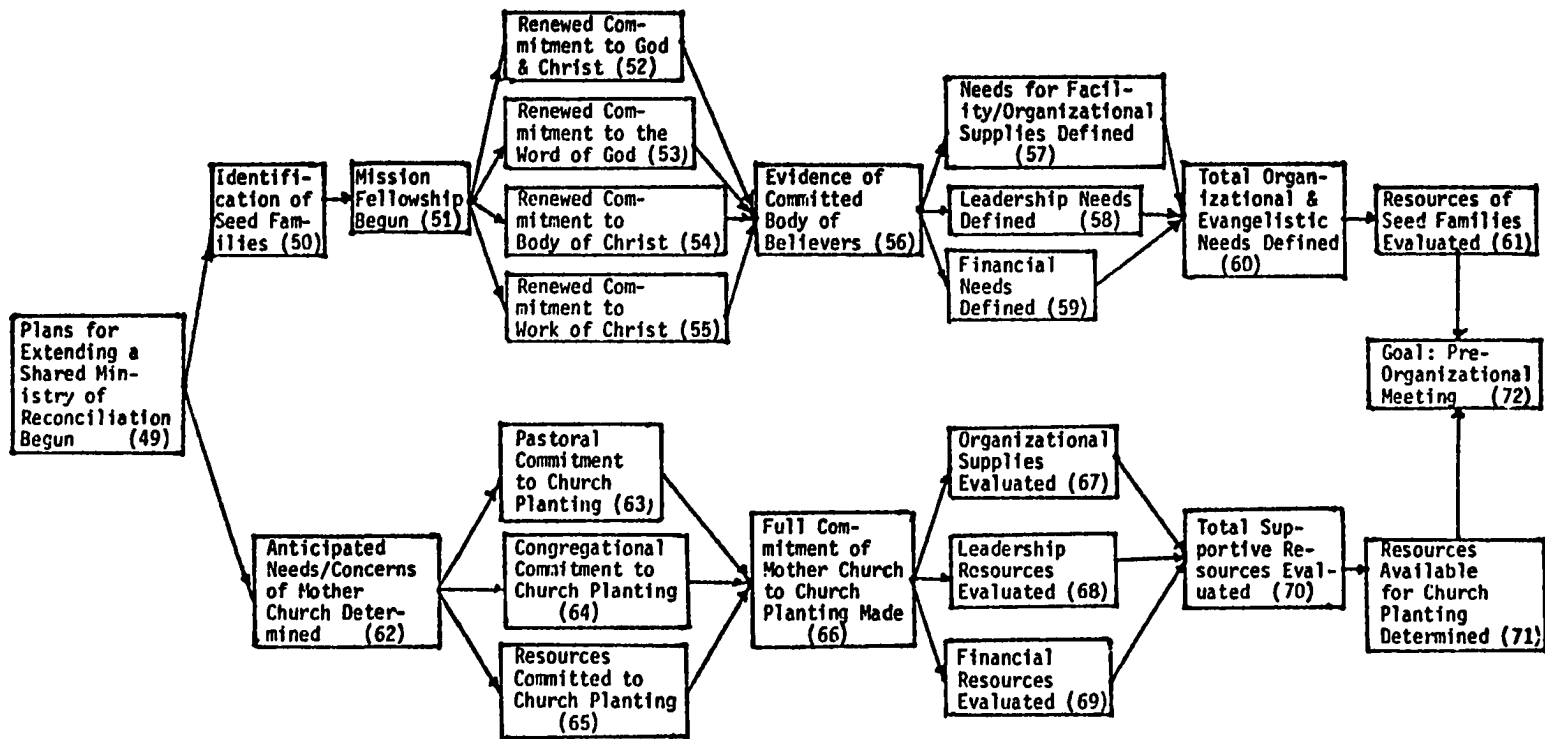


Fig. 6. Phase VII: Preparation for the Pre-Organizational Meeting--Resources Evaluated and Determined

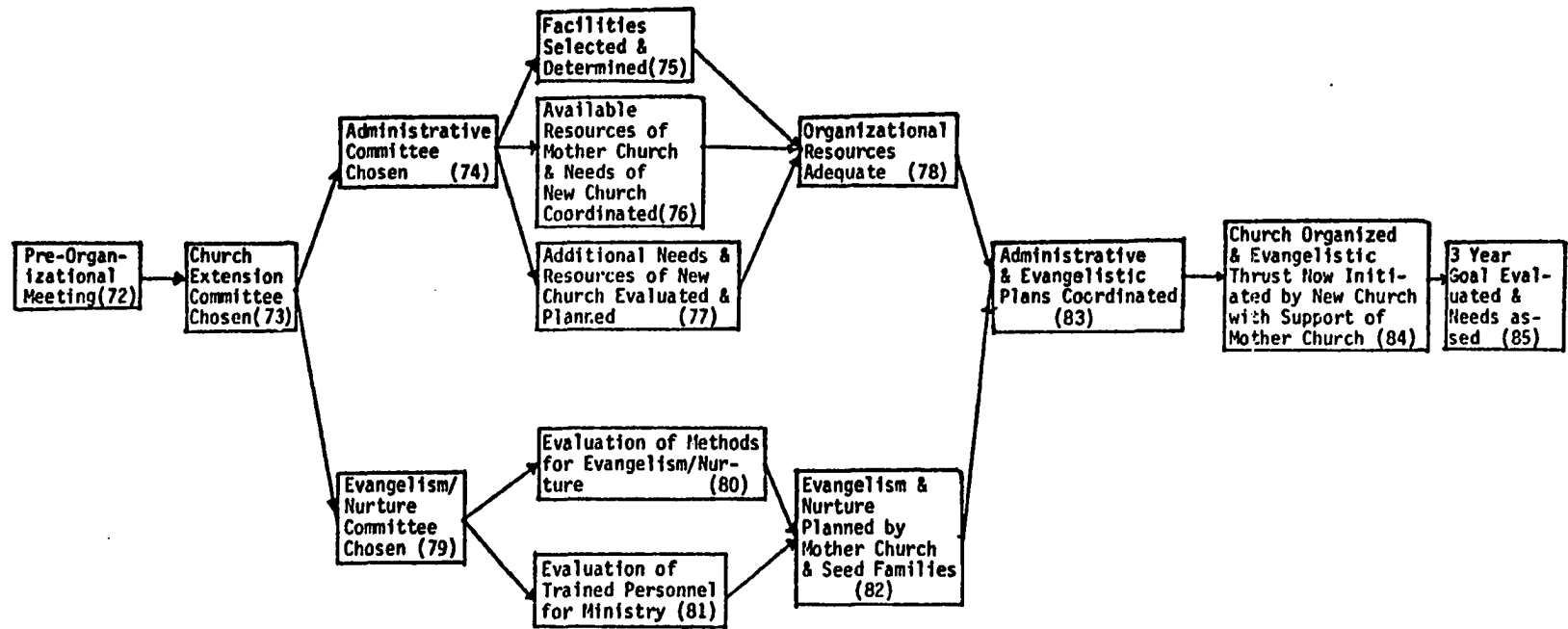


Fig. 7. Phase VIII: Final Preparation for the Actual Organization

Phase IX: 3 Year Goal Evaluated & Needs Assessed

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION

Summary

Church planting has been presented as an on-going process of a shared ministry of reconciliation. To help avoid inherent tendencies towards institutionalism, church planting has been approached from the perspective of an incarnational ministry. The development of new churches has been shown statistically to be associated with an effective evangelistic strategy for both non-Adventists and Adventists in North America. The need for the establishment of more consecrated church communities, however, not only finds a basis in evangelism but also in nurture.

The example of the early church in the book of Acts reveals that church growth is a comprehensive phenomenon. It is not the product of methods but rather the result of allowing the Spirit to be set free to work through the many resources within the church. The apostolic church's leadership and laity helped set a climate which allowed the Holy Spirit to work. When this climate was Christ-centered--both conceptually and experientially--then church growth was seen. The Holy Spirit led the Church in a multi-dimensional growth process. This process is characterized by numerical growth, qualitative growth, and a dynamic-flexible organizational growth. When these qualities were in process, extension growth resulted.

Church growth is a science¹ and as such follows certain principles which have been the objective of intense study and debate within recent years. The principles taught by the "church growth" advocates have been used to critique the growth of the Spokane South Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. The insights gained from this critique have helped not only explain why the church was growing rapidly, but it also pointed to some dangers that existed which could inhibit the future growth of the church. The inclusion of this case study--a newly planted church-- expresses a concern not only for church planting but also a concern that new churches might experience "holistic" church growth.

The insights that were gained from the statistical study (Chap. II), the biblical account of church growth in Acts (Chap. III), and the critique of an actual church planting experience (Chap. IV) have provided the framework for the strategy presented in Chapters V and VI. Strategy is used in the singular to accentuate a single on-going process. The strategy presented in Chapter V comes from the premise that the local Adventist church with 250 members or more is a candidate for church planting in the near future. The local church is in a strategic position to determine church swarming-planting potentials and should anticipate this possibility. With the recognition that the message of reconciliation involves a shared ministry between the pastor and his congregation and that this principle is a key to church planting, the proposed strategy has attempted to emphasize the role of the laity. The harmonious relationship of a well-

¹Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Wash. D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1936), p. 469.

trained clergy and laity is basic for the proposed strategy. When the mother church intentionally sends a group of her members to work for another segment of the population certain needs become evident. These needs are anticipated and planned for in Chapter V. The objective of this chapter, then, is to prepare the mother church theologically, missiologically, and organizationally for the eventual church planting.

The actual steps for church planting are developed in Chapter VI. These steps flow from the previous chapter. The same theme of a shared ministry of reconciliation is followed but this time with an emphasis upon Christ's incarnational ministry and the local church's response to it. Christ's ministry becomes the model par excellence for the church's activities. Church planting, therefore, avoids the criticism of institutional expansionism when it attempts genuinely to minister to unreached people in the context of their needs. It then becomes an extended ministry and not a temporary evangelistic "method."

Both Chapters V and VI have sought to reflect theological rationales for the proposed ministry. The organizational approach is an attempt to integrate theory and practice at the risk of being tedious. The practice of ministry--theologically, missionally, and organizationally--is a dynamic process which can not be confined to a "standard solution" approach. The proposed strategy will be a success if it leads the local pastor and congregation in conceptualizing its ministry first in the light of Christ's, then in terms of the needs of the unreached, and finally in terms of matching its resources with the perceived needs. Church planting is a consequence of this

process. The process is cyclical by nature in that once the church has been officially organized it starts at the beginning with the determination of its own "shared ministry of reconciliation." If it is organized with the fifty to seventy-five members that this strategy suggests, it has the immediate potential of being a viable force for both evangelism and nurture.

Recommendations

A study of this kind naturally will generate concerns and underscore specific needs that exist within the organized church structures. The following recommendations come from a conviction that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a significant role to perform in God's mission to redeem man. These recommendations are made from the desire to see the church planting potential within the Adventist church developed so that thousands of unreached individuals will be found and nurtured through the ministry of God's stewards.

1. The North American Division of SDAs needs to be more active in encouraging laymen in large Adventist centers to settle in "cities and villages" where church planting opportunities exist. Retired pastors could prove to be a valuable assistance in the support of this work. Church planting opportunities could be published by the division and distributed to the laity on an annual basis (app. I). Conference wide meetings such as campmeetings are opportune times to present these findings.

2. A greater sensitivity to unreached people groups is needed--"dark county" evangelism is often too broad. Evangelistic approaches to various people groups need to be compared, contrasted,

and then published. The inefficiency of standard solution approaches becomes apparent when people groups are considered. The need for a central data bank where the felt needs of specific people groups are identified and appropriate evangelistic methods are correlated exists today.

3. Each local conference needs to have a "Church Planting Committee" which is made up of laymen, pastors and key conference personnel. Some of its responsibilities would include:

- a) Oversee the compilation of demographic data from each district
- b) Make recommendations for church plantings--especially in areas of high receptivity to the church
- c) Review the church plantings that are under way collecting information/principles that will be helpful in future church plantings
- d) Provide in-service seminars for pastors designed to assist those who are anticipating some form of church planting: the resources from within the conference, as well as from colleges and the Seminary should be considered
- e) Serve as an advisory board for those churches involved in the process of church planting (at times this may include arbitration between mother church and daughter church, between pastor and congregation or congregation and the conference administration).
- f) Consult the Lay Advisory Council regularly in an effort to gain insights into the potential needs and problems encountered in a church planting offensive.

4. Seek alternatives to church structures. In some areas the best church planting procedure might be sending several families to live within an apartment complex and establish "home churches."¹ The need for church structures should not be allowed to hinder God's mission. The financial needs of the mother church and daughter church should be considered but should not predominate the planning stage.

5. Consult pastors and congregations before making definite plans for church spawnings (seldom should a church swarming be a decision made by a conference administration).

Conclusion

The local Seventh-day Adventist church is strategically located as a resource center for a church planting offensive. As "caring communities" they are both the result and the agent of evangelism. "Evangelization is a process which grows out of the nature of the Church as a redeemed community of people who have been made stewards of the grace of God."² The local church, therefore, should be considered as a center where these stewards are trained for extending the holistic mission of God. Church planting is a means of sending a community of disciples into an area to help extend the good news of the "everlasting gospel" to the center of a troubled world.

¹C. Raymond Holmes, "Evangelist-in-residence," Ministry, June 1981, p. 15.

²Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, Planning Strategies for World Evangelization (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 350.

APPENDIX A

GROWTH ANALYSES OF SIX DENOMINATIONS

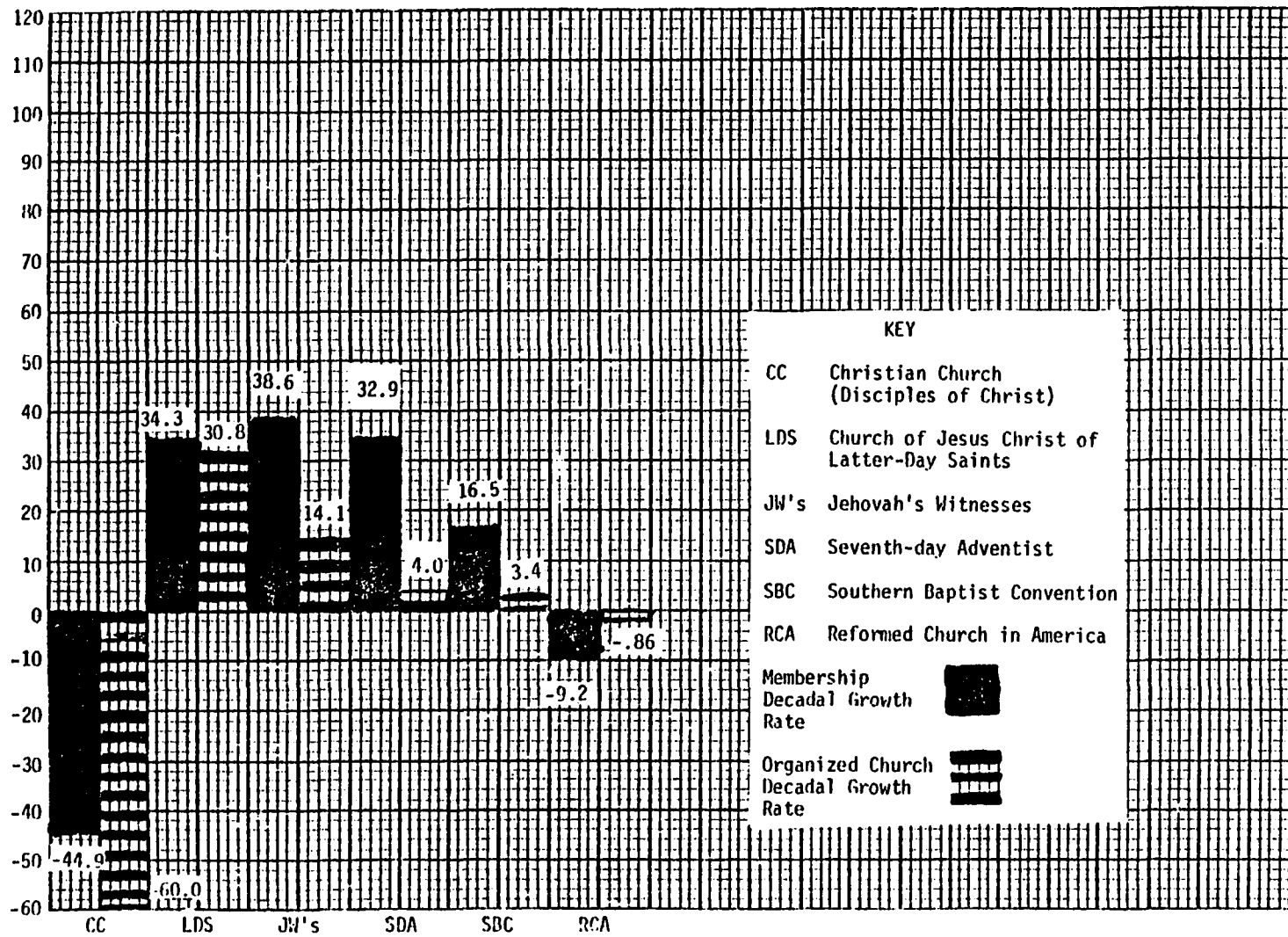


Fig. 8. Decadal Growth Rates of Membership & Number of Organized Churches for Six Denominations in North America: 1965-70

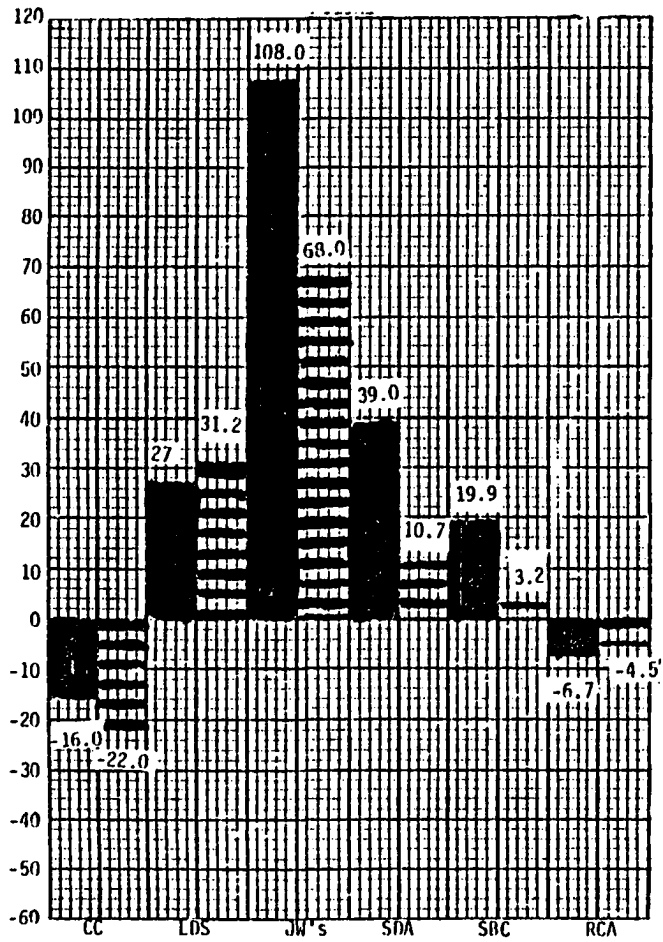


Fig. 9. Decadal Growth Rates of Membership & Number of Organized Churches for Six Denominations in North America: 1970-75

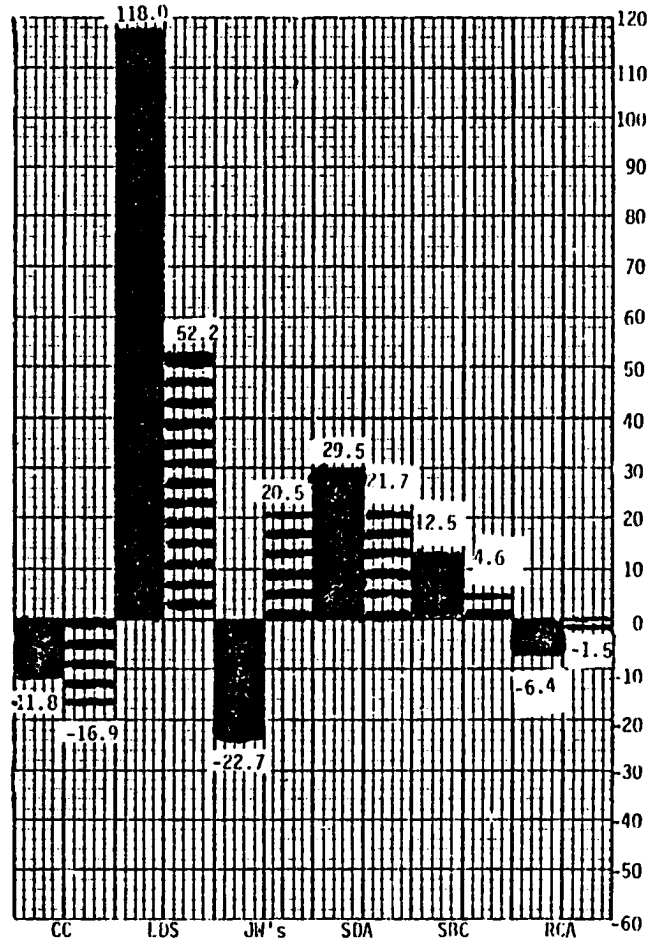


Fig. 10. Decadal Growth Rates of Membership & Number of Organized Churches for Six Denominations in North America: 1975-79

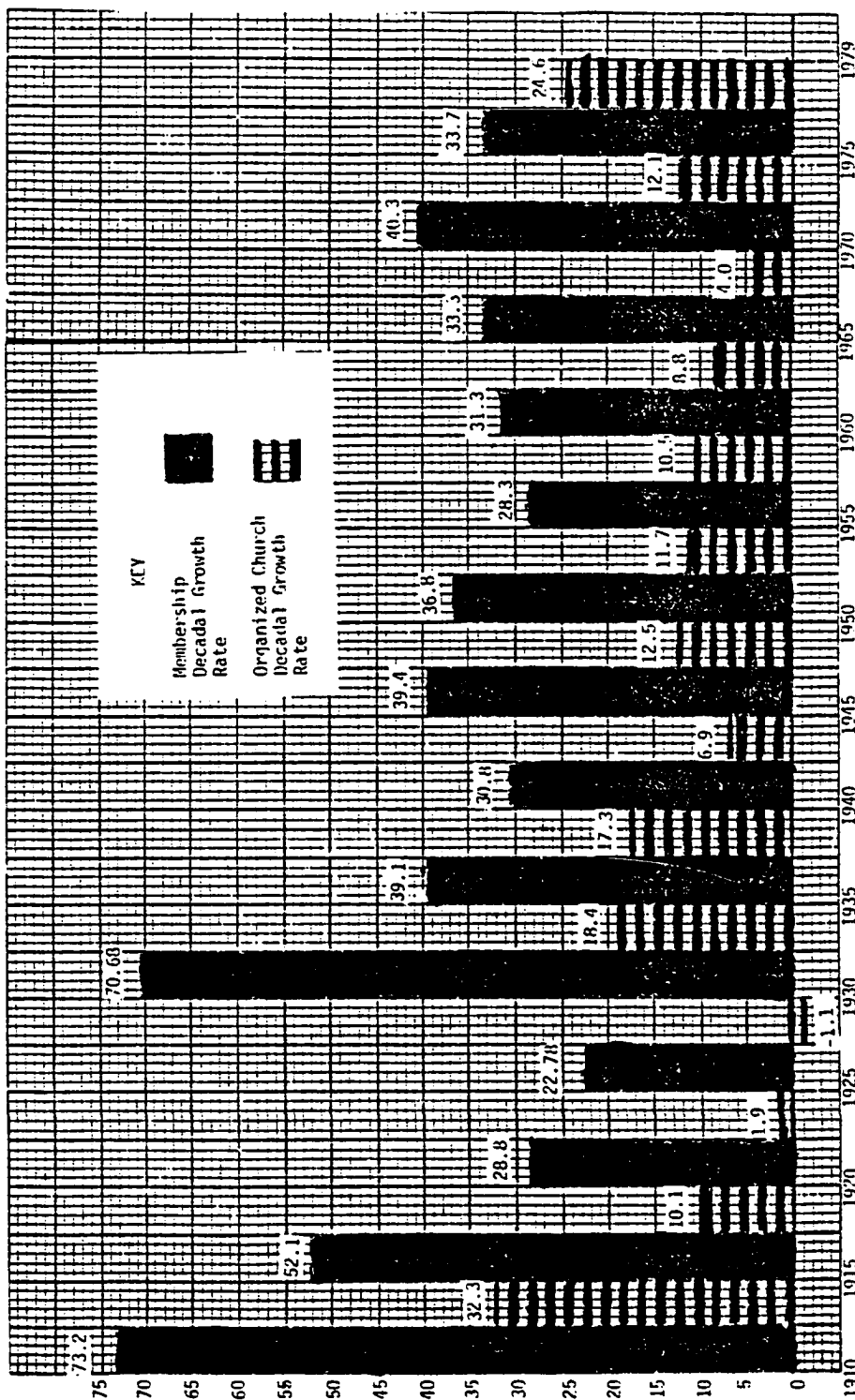


Fig. 11. Decadal Growth Rates of Membership & Number of Organized Churches of the North American Division of SDA Compared: 1910-79

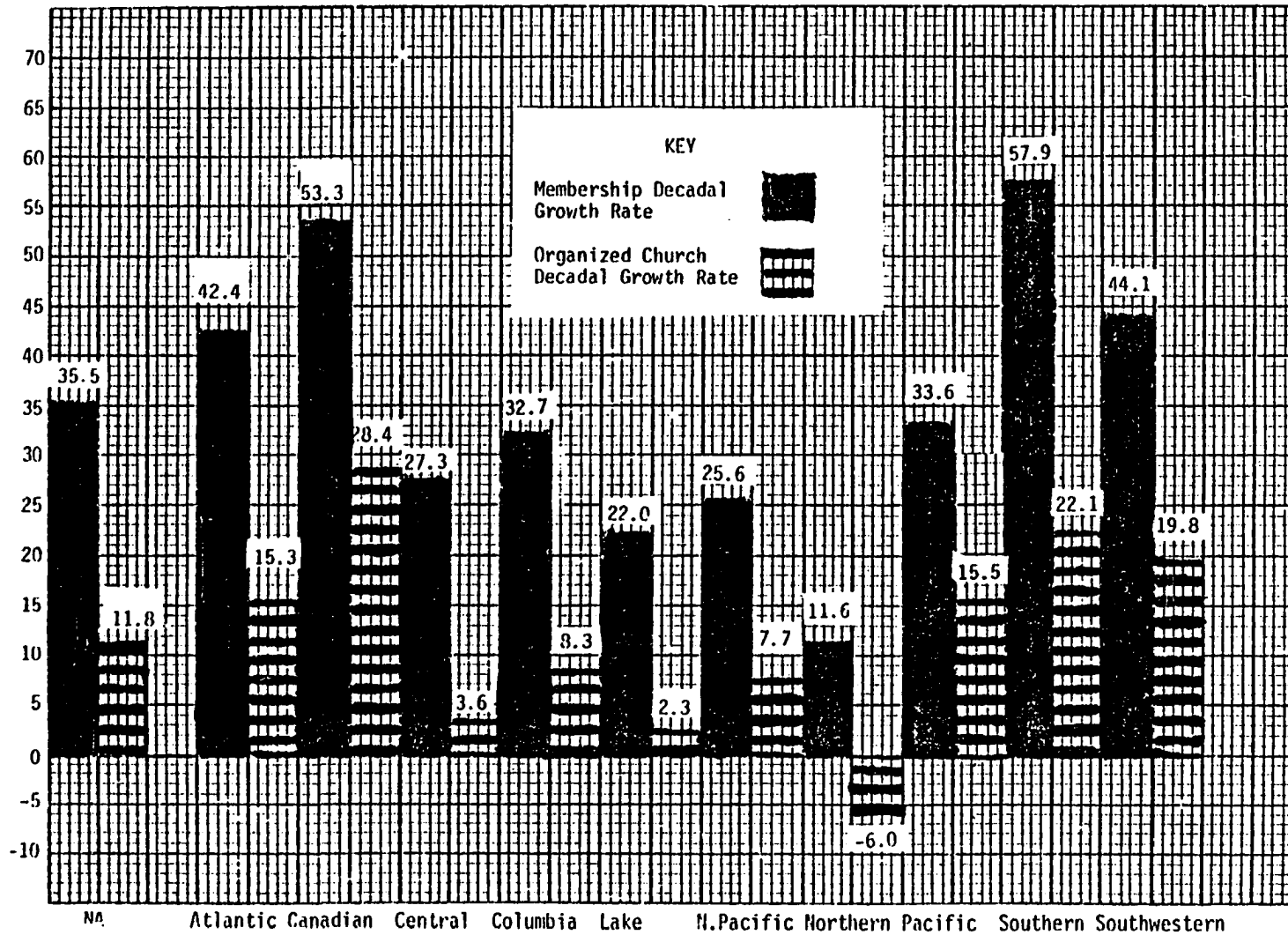


Fig. 12. Decadal Growth Rates of Membership & Number of Organized Churches Compared by Unions: 1964-79

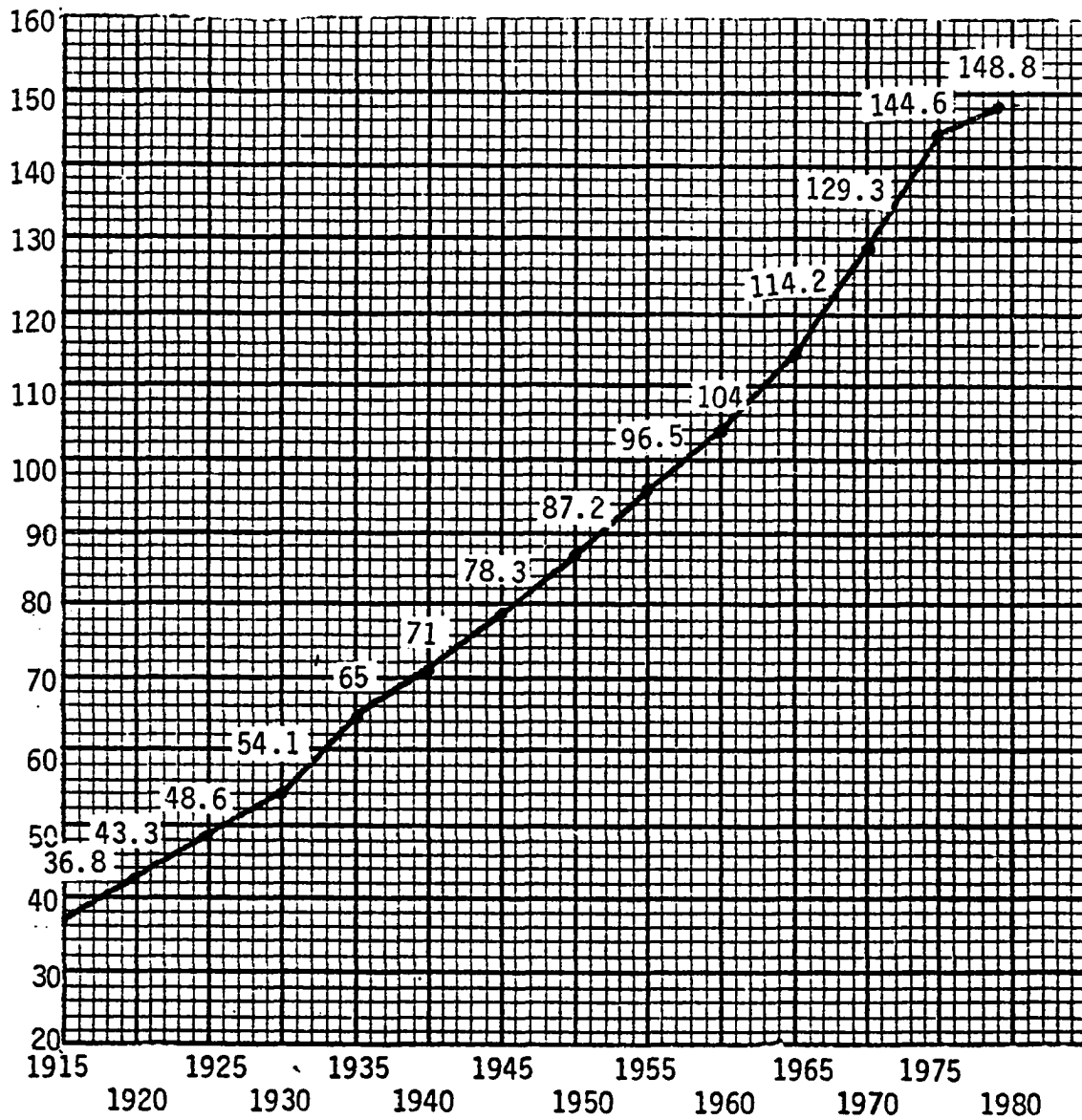


Fig. 13. Growth of the Mean Membership of Organized Churches of the North American SDA Church: 1915-1979

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF BAPTISMS IN 1976 BY AGE OF CHURCH

Years	Number of Baptisms	Percent of Baptisms	Number of Churches	Percent of Churches
Less than 11	26,142	7.6	2,356	7.1
11-20	51,822	15.1	3,796	11.5
21-30	61,200	17.8	4,646	14.1
31-40	27,671	8.0	2,305	7.0
40+	177,322	51.5	19,867	60.3
Total	344,157	100.0	32,970	100.0

TABLE 2
AVERAGE NUMBER OF BAPTISMS PER 100 RESIDENT MEMBERS
PER CHURCH BY AGE OF CHURCH*

Years	Average Number of Baptisms Per 100 Resident Members	Number of Churches
Less than 11	9.5	2,314
11-20	6.3	3,732
21-30	5.7	4,577
31-40	4.6	2,274
40+	3.7	19,651
Total	-	32,548

*Calculated from 32,548 Churches

SOURCE: Phillip Barron Jones, "An Examination of the Statistical Growth of the Southern Baptist Convention," (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, The Southern Baptist Convention, 1977), Tables 5 and 6.

TABLE 3

1976 BAPTISM RATE BY 1976 RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP
BY AGE OF CHURCH*

Age of Church	Number of Resident Members												
	1-49	50-99	100-149	150-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-749	750-999	1000-1499	1500-1999	2000-2999	3000+
Less than 11	11.4	10.2	8.9	8.0	7.9	7.3	6.6	6.1	5.7	7.1	7.8	-	-
11-20	7.1	7.6	6.3	6.4	5.9	5.4	5.0	4.7	5.1	5.6	4.8	5.3	2.6
21-30	7.8	5.7	5.5	5.3	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.1	4.2	3.8	4.8	4.7	3.6
31-40	5.5	5.4	4.8	4.5	4.2	4.4	3.9	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.4	2.2	6.4
40+	3.3	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.6	3.5

*Calculated from 32,548 Churches

SOURCE: Uniform Church Letter Data as quoted by Phillip Barron Jones, in "An Examination of the Statistical Growth of the Southern Baptist Convention," (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, The Southern Baptist Convention, 1977), Table 7.

TABLE 4

DECADAL GROWTH RATES (DGR) LISTED ACCORDING TO UNIONS
AND CONFERENCES: 1964-1979

Union/Conference	Churches			Membership		
	1964	1979	DGR	1964	1979	DGR
Atlantic Union	252	312	15.30	27387	46535	42.4
Bermuda Mission	4	7	41.7	883	1739	57.1
Grtr. New York	46	55	12.7	4660	7361	35.6
New York	61	59	-2.2	4121	4640	8.3
Northeastern	35	73	63.2	8891	21435	79.8
North. New England	46	53	9.9	2751	3747	22.9
So. New England	60	65	5.5	6081	7613	16.2
Canadian Union	174	253	28.4	15926	30222	53.3
Alberta	30	45	31.0	3402	5320	34.7
British Columbia	32	52	38.2	4046	7254	47.6
Manitoba-Saskatchewan	34	41	13.3	2538	3188	16.4
Maritime	19	21	6.9	1157	1483	18.0
Newfoundland	6	8	21.1	431	677	35.1
Ontario-Quebec	org. change--not included in study					
St. Lawrence Miss.	information not available					
Central Union	292	308	3.6	26079	37440	27.3
Central States	24	32	21.4	2653	5529	63.2
Colorado	72	72	0.0	8772	12399	26.0
Kansas	58	60	2.3	3691	4755	18.4
Missouri	58	63	5.7	4273	6925	38.0
Nebraska	58	58	0.0	5272	5882	7.6
Wyoming	22	23	3.0	1318	1950	29.8
Columbia	449	506	8.3	44865	68586	32.7
Allegheny (East & West)	74	107	27.9	10355	22297	66.8
Chesapeake	37	51	23.9	3658	6191	42.0
New Jersey	47	51	5.6	3203	4781	30.6
Ohio	91	92	.73	8124	10384	17.8
Pennsylvania	101	95	-4.0	6942	7703	7.2
Potomac	72	80	7.3	10771	14823	23.7
West Virginia (Mountain View)	27	30	7.3	1812	2407	20.8
Lake Union	433	448	2.3	42118	56735	22.0
Illinois	74	79	4.5	7320	8641	11.7
Indiana	71	70	-.9	5168	5793	7.9
Lake Region	44	66	31.0	6673	15567	75.9
Michigan	162	156	-2.5	17821	20671	10.4
Wisconsin	82	77	-4.1	5136	6063	11.7
North Pacific Union	314	351	7.7	42979	60467	25.6
Alaska Mission	9	16	46.8	714	1187	40.3
Idaho	37	38	1.8	3041	4094	21.9
Montana	31	36	10.5	2346	2941	16.3
Oregon	102	112	6.4	17246	24697	27.0

195
TABLE 4--Continued

Union/Conference	Churches			Membership		
Upper Columbia	72	88	14.3	11278	17097	32.0
Washington	63	61	-2.1	8354	10451	16.1
Northern Union	216	197	-6.0	12846	15143	11.6
Iowa	67	62	-5.0	3572	4473	16.2
Minnesota	67	65	-2.0	4771	5280	7.0
N. Dakota	51	45	-8.0	2745	3368	14.6
S. Dakota	31	25	-13.4	1758	2022	9.8
Pacific Union	419	520	15.5	88521	136735	33.6
Arizona	29	47	38.0	3380	6880	60.6
Central California	90	98	5.8	15157	21661	26.9
Hawaiian Mission	20	21	3.3	2477	3995	37.5
Nevada-Utah	22	30	23.0	1654	3295	58.3
Northern California	97	115	12.0	20654	28849	25.0
S.E. California	75	93	15.4	21140	36712	44.5
Southern California	86	116	22.0	24059	35343	29.2
Southern Union	485	654	22.1	47719	94687	57.9
Alabama-Mississippi	59	64	5.6	4200	6160	29.0
Carolina	68	78	9.6	4944	10002	60.0
Florida	67	107	36.6	10549	19411	50.2
Georgia-Cumberland	77	105	23.0	7993	16567	62.6
Kentucky-Tennessee	75	79	3.5	6384	9160	27.2
So. Atlantic	80	126	35.3	8816	20291	74.3
So. Central	59	95	37.4	4833	13096	94.4
Southwestern Union	292	383	19.8	22248	38500	44.1
Arkansas-Louisiana	49	73	30.4	3945	7207	49.4
Oklahoma	54	65	13.2	3762	5659	31.3
Southwestern Region	50	62	15.4	3700	7842	65.0
Texas	94	127	22.2	8180	13755	41.4
Texico	45	56	15.7	2661	4037	32.0

The Correlation Coefficients for the two growth rates are as follows:
 for the Union level .951
 for the Conference level .803
 Both were significant at the .001 level.

SOURCE: Raw data from Annual Statistical Reports for 1964 and 1979.
 The correlation was determined by the Academic Computer Services Center at Andrews University.

TABLE 5
NORTH AMERICAN DENOMINATIONAL WORK FORCE BY PERCENT (ACTIVE)

	Pastors, Evangelists, Literature Evangelists	Administration Promotional	Total Evangelism & Administrative	Institutions
1965	11.6	6.5	18.1	81.9
1970	10.8	6.2	17	83
1975	11.6	10.4	22	78
1979	10.8	7.8	18.6	81.4
AVERAGE	11.2	7.8	19	81

SOURCE: Annual Statistical Reports (Washington, D. C.: General Conference of S.D.A., 1965, 1970, 1975, 1979.)

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF SDA CHURCHES WITH A MEMBERSHIP OF 250
AND OVER LISTED BY UNIONS AND CONFERENCES

Union/Conference	Number of Churches by Size		
	250-549	550-749	750 & over
Atlantic Union	not listed		
Bermuda Mission	5		
Greater New York	2		
New York			
North Eastern	15	9	5
North. New England	3		
So. New England	5	1	1
Union Total	30	10	6
Canadian Union			
Alberta	3		1
British Columbia	1	1	
Manitoba-Saskatchewan	2		
Maritime			
Ontario	3	3	2
Union Total	9	4	3
Columbia Union			
Alegheny East	8	2	4
Chesapeake	5		
Mountain View	1		
New Jersey	1		
Ohio	6	1	1
Pennsylvania	1		
Potomac	21		
Union Total	43	3	5
Lake Union			
Illinois	6		1
Indiana	3		
Lake Region	7	4	3
Michigan	16	1	3
Wisconsin	3		
Union Total	35	5	7
Mid-America			
Central States	3	3	1
Colorado	12	1	1
Iowa	3	1	
Kansas	3	1	
Missouri	2	2	
Minnesota	5		
Nebraska	1	1	1
No. Dakota	2		
So. Dakota	1		
Wyoming			
Union Total	32	9	3

TABLE 6--Continued

Union /Conference	Number of Churches by Size			
	250-549	550-749	750 & over	
North Pacific Union				
Alaska Mission	1			
Idaho	2	1		
Montana				
Oregon	23	6	3	
Upper Columbia	9	6	3	
Washington	10	1		
Union Total	45	14	6	
Pacific Union				
Arizona	1	4		
Central California	20	3	2	
Hawaiian Mission	1		1	
Nevada-Utah	3			
Northern California	18	7	7	
S.E. California	17	11	11	
Southern California	39	4	7	
Union Total	99	29	28	
Southern Union				
Alabama-Mississippi	9			
Carolina	9	2	1	
Florida	15	6	2	
Georgia-Cumberland	12		1	
Kentucky-Tennessee	8	1		
So. Atlantic	9	3	3	
So. Central	5	2	2	
So. Eastern	new conference			
Union Total	67	14	9	
Southwestern Union				
Arkansas-Louisiana	4	1		
Oklahoma	2			
S.W. Region	2	1	2	
Texas	5	1	1	
Texico	4			
Union Total	17	3	3	
GRAND TOTAL	377	91	69	(537)
% of TOTAL North American Churches (3932 in 1979)	9.7	2.3	1.8	(13.8)

SOURCE: Conference Directories for 1979 and 1980. In a few instances when recent directories were not available, directories for 1976-1978 were consulted.

TABLE 12

ACTUAL GROWTH RATE BY SIZE CLASSIFICATION
TOTAL SAMPLE

Size	Number of Churches	Average Actual Growth
1-50	76	2.1%
51-100	72	9.7%
101-150	36	9.8%
151-200	16	3.0%
201-300	17	4.2%
301-400	10	4.4%
401-500	6	8.1%
501+	15	5.0%
Total	248	6.1%

TABLE 13

PERCENT OF CHURCHES EXPERIENCING ACTUAL GROWTH
OR DECLINE: TOTAL SAMPLE

Size	Percent of Churches with No Growth or a Decline	Percent of Churches with Some Growth
1-50	63.2	36.8
51-100	36.1	63.9
101-150	27.8	72.2
151-200	37.5	62.5
201-300	41.2	58.8
301-400	30.0	70.0
401-500	33.3	66.7
501+	40.0	60.0
Total	43.5	56.5

SOURCE: Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., "A Study of Factors Relating to Church Growth in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists," Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, April 1981, pp. 28, 30.

TABLE 14

KINGDOM GROWTH RATE BY SIZE CLASSIFICATION
TOTAL SAMPLE

Size	Number of Churches	Average Kingdom Growth
1-50	77	6.0%
51-100	72	9.6%
101-150	36	10.8%
151-200	16	7.5%
201-300	17	4.4%
301-400	10	4.4%
401-500	6	6.2%
501+	15	8.2%
Total	249	7.8%

SOURCE: Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., "A Study of Factors Relating to Church Growth in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists," Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, April 1981, p. 32.

TABLE 15

UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE CHURCH GROWTH STUDY

Size of Church	Average % of Growth	% of Churches with 0 Growth or Decline	% of Churches with Some Growth
1-50	5.3%	25.0%	75.0%
51-100	9.5%	14.0%	96.0%
101-150	5.0%	10.6%	89.4%
151-200	21.5%		100.0%
201-300	6.0%	16.7%	83.3%
301-400	6.6%	50.0%	50.0%
401-500	3.2%	33.3%	66.7%
501-	3.2%		100.0%

SOURCE: Clarence Gruesbeck, "Applying Church Growth Principles for Effective Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Case Study: Upper Columbia" (D. Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, May 1980), table 11.

APPENDIX B

CONFERENCE PRESIDENT'S LETTER ANNOUNCING THE
PLANTING OF THE SOUTH HILL CHURCH



UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE

May 17, 1977

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
SPOKANE CHURCHES

Dear Friends and Fellow Believers:

You will be pleased to know that provision has been made to organize a new church in the South Hills of our community. For years various members have been interested in the possibility of evangelizing this large unentered section of Spokane.

Elder Larry Evans has been appointed pastor of the South Hills area. Elder and Mrs. Evans (Carolyn) and their two young sons will be moving to Spokane shortly after July 1. I imagine that the church organization will take place sometime between August 15 and October 1.

Any further announcement concerning the new church will be received from your pastor or through your church bulletin. Elder Evans will work in close cooperation with the Spokane pastors in effecting this endeavor.

May God bless us all as we witness daily to the love of Christ. Spokane is a great place to live and "be alive" for our Lord!

Cordially your friend,

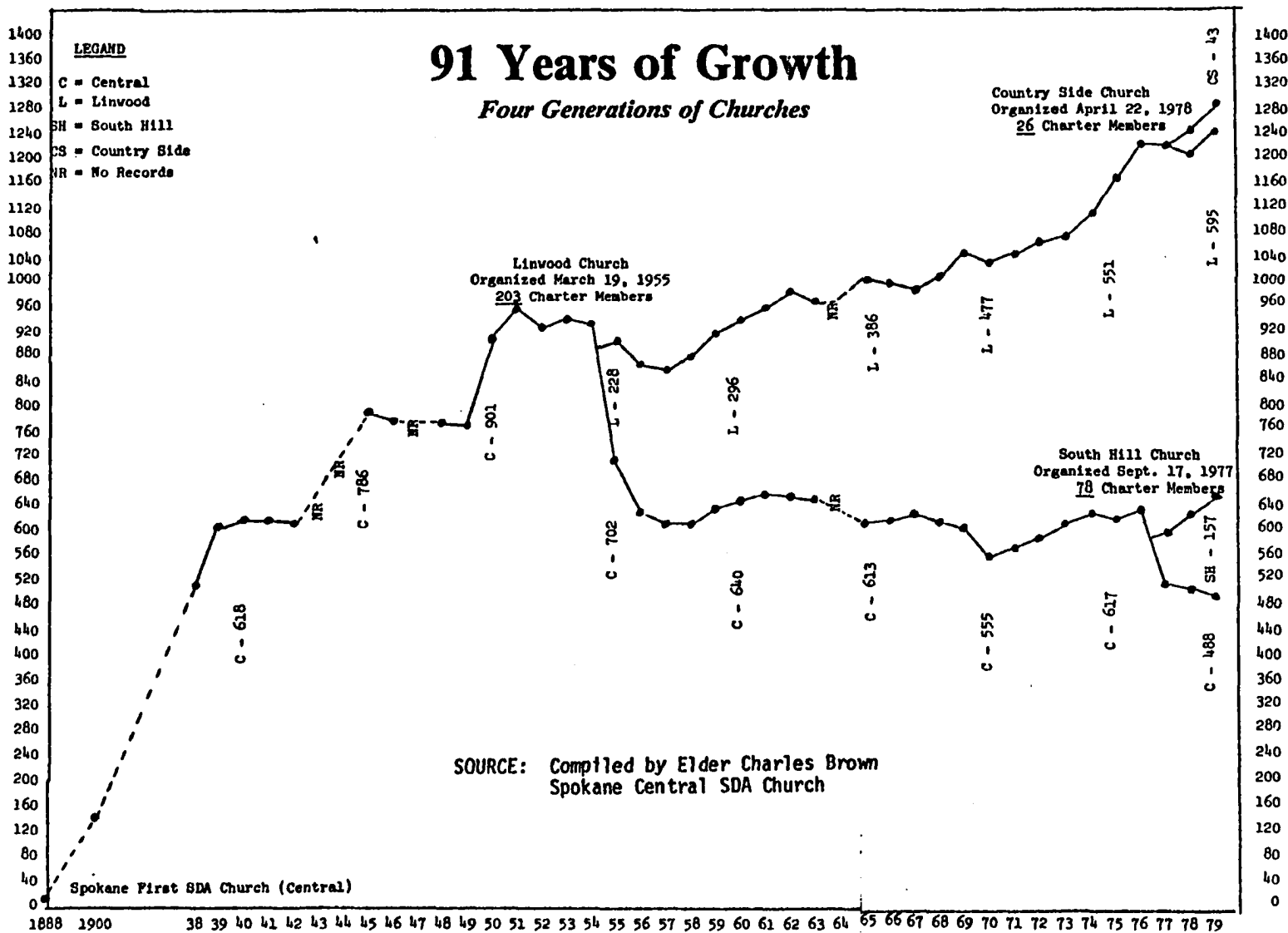
Richard D. Fearing
Richard D. Fearing
President

RDF/cs

WEST 1025 INDIANA AVENUE • SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99205 • TELEPHONE (AREA CODE 509) 326-1550

APPENDIX C

THE EXTENSION GROWTH OF THE
SPOKANE CENTRAL CHURCH



APPENDIX D

SURVEYS TAKEN OF THE SOUTH HILL SDA CHURCH

The church survey was originally given to everyone who came to the afternoon meeting at Camp MiVoden during the church retreat, and then mailed to each family by a means of the last UPDATE. We received 46 responses from South Hill SDA members, 9 from other SDA's and 10 from non-SDA's who attend. Not all questions were answered by those filling out the survey and some were difficult to tabulate. In tabulating these questions we counted as "no" when someone indicated a specific complaint or criticism, although their overall response was positive. While there were still several missing it does represent a good response and I do appreciate the good, but open, spirit that seemed apparent.

The following is a question by question analysis with a summary statement:

SABBATH SCHOOL

Childrens:

1. Are you satisfied with the children's divisions?

Yes (21); No (5).

2. What specific suggestions do you have for improving the children's divisions?

See summary statement below.

Summary: Obviously there would be a strong correlation between those who were not satisfied and the suggestions, but there were several who were satisfied but who offered suggestions. Some of the suggestions included carts for moving materials back and forth week after week, difficulty with age guidelines for SS divisions, parents need to study with children more, and one complaint mentioned by several was the need of pianos (partly solved now). There was a concern mentioned about feeding the teachers and the need of a VBS.

Adult:

1. Are you satisfied with the first part of the Sabbath School (Superintendent's Remarks, Mission Spotlight, etc.)?

Yes (29); No (11).

2. Do you feel that enough time is given for the lesson study?

Yes (19); No (28).

3. Do you feel that there are enough, too few, or too many adult classes?

Enough (27); Too few (17); Too many (1).

SURVEY ANALYSIS--continued--2

Summary: There seems to be a real desire to study more. Several suggested shortening the first part or at least try to vary it. In addition to more time to study is the desire for a more in-depth study of the Word. Some felt we were getting into a rut. The class size comments were centered around creating more discussion. The only one opposed was because of the confusion with that many classes in the sanctuary.

WORSHIP SERVICE

Order of Service:

1. Do you like the present order of service that we use (no closing song, speaker having the benediction, etc.)?

Yes (53); No (6).

2. Do you like the idea of the children's story?

Yes (56); No (4).

3. Do you like the Pastor and his wife greeting the visitors, or do you think it takes too much time?

Yes (61); No (2).

Summary: The majority like our order of service. Those who suggested improvements did so in the area of congregational singing. Either a closing hymn or substitute the Doxology with a hymn were some of the ideas presented, but it would seem that the majority prefer the way it is.

Sermons:

1. Do you feel that the majority of the sermons meet your spiritual needs?

Yes (55); No (4).

2. Do you normally feel comfortable inviting your non-members to the worship service?

Yes (52); No (5).

3. If you could choose the subject matter for the next three sermons, what would they be?

See summary statement below.

4. Do you feel you would like more guest speakers? (Currently we average about one per month.)

Yes (3); No (56).

SURVEY ANALYSIS--continued--3

Summary: The majority felt that the sermons were meeting their spiritual needs. Those who did not feel that way felt that they might be hard to reach or didn't expect the sermon to meet all their needs, but they were glad that they came anyway. One mentioned that they would like more depth. The majority also felt that they could invite others to the South Hill Church but some were hesitant to do so because of the example of some of the attire that was worn. The subject matter of your choice for the next few sermons seemed to center around the home, the last day events, personal relationship with Christ and one another, and doctrinal review. Without exception all ideas suggested dealt with day to day needs. None in the theoretical area. The majority felt that one guest speaker per month was enough.

Church Service, Misc.:

5. Would you like to see more "calls" for commitment in the church service?

Yes (19); No (27).

6. Do you like our communion services?

Yes (49); No (1).

7. Do you like the organ music?

Yes (55); No (2).

Summary: No clear majority was seen as far as whether to have more calls during the worship hour or not. Some thought it should be a private affair while another thought there ought to be one in every sermon. Most likely there was a lot of ambiguity in the question. When it comes to our communion services nearly everyone likes them, but with the suggestion to keep them simple. The organ music, often a real debated issue, captured an easy majority with the suggestion from seven individuals that it was sometimes too loud, while one person said he liked it loud.

EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH

1. Do you think South Hill is active in its outreach into our community?

Yes (29); No (11).

2. Would you be willing to support an evangelistic series this fall by your attendance?

SURVEY ANALYSIS--continued--4

Yes (50); No (3).

3. Would you be in favor of your pastor conducting the series?

Yes (47); No (3).

Summary: There seems to be a good feeling about the outreach of the church, but most feel that there is room for more improvement. There seems to be a strong willingness to support an evangelistic series and one that is conducted by the pastor. There were some who questioned whether the pastor would have time and energy for the series and some who would just prefer someone else, while others were very strong in their feeling that the pastor should conduct the meetings himself. (I think I see the handwriting on the wall!?)

SOCIAL OUTREACH

1. Do you feel that South Hill is a friendly church? Why or why not?

Yes (52); No (none, but see suggestions below).

2. What is the greatest single factor for you choosing the South Hill Church?

See summary statement below.

3. What specific suggestions could you make to the social committee for providing a program that would meet your family's needs or others that you know of?

See summary statement below.

Summary: There seems to be a good feeling among those questioned as to the friendliness of the church. One person mentioned he appreciated different ones asking them over for dinner--even if they were asked to do so. The greatest reason for people joining South Hill was to help establish a new work along with the idea of "saving gas" and even because of the pastor (I needed that! ha). There seemed to be a real desire to have more socials such as: progressive parties, something designed for "middle age" as well as for other groups within the church and also for the whole church as a unit, taco and ice cream feeds and something each month.

PASTORAL CARE

1. Do you feel that the pastor should visit his members more often than he is at the present?

Yes (18); No (15)

SURVEY ANALYSIS--continued--5

2. Are there persistent things that he does that either annoy you or offend you?

Yes (10); No (30).

3. What specific needs do you or others have that are not presently being met?

See summary statement below.

4. What three characteristics would you most like to see in any pastor that you have?

See summary statement below.

5. Consideration is being given to forming small groups within the church to study, prayer and fellowship. Would you like to belong to one which meets regularly in a home? What leader of the group would you choose?

Yes (31); No (2).

6. Specific criticisms may be placed in the box to the right.

See below.

Summary: When it comes to pastoral visitation there is a desire for the pastor to visit, but many commented that evangelistic visitation is more important unless there is a specific need. Counsel was given to the pastor such as "remember that you are human". When it comes to specific things that he does that annoy or offend, the following were listed: forgets names, not spending enough time with family because of Bible studies--needs to turn over to laymen, joking in pulpit, tends to lecture in SS class, tendency to become nervous when someone goes overtime, too much of a hurry to listen adequately, does not thank people for their special music. The ten who mentioned these items seemed to be sincere and are being considered in that context. Some are changeable and are in the process of change while others are part of his job, such as seeing that schedules are met, although the appearance of nervousness is not. Among the specific needs that are not being met is the idea of not enough fellowship--contact with the church membership. This need may very well be associated with the overwhelming desire for group Bible studies. The majority also felt that specific criticisms could not be placed in the small box--I planned that one very well!

SURVEY ANALYSIS--continued--6

Overall summary: There is a lot more positive about South Hill than negative. It must be remembered that the negative comments are mentioned to assist our church in meeting the needs within and without. The very fact that we mentioned the negative comments has a tendency to emphasize them, but they must be viewed by the number of negative and positive responses. I am reassured by your response that South Hill is meeting the majority of the needs and will do so even more as these various suggestions are incorporated into its overall ministry.

South Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church

E. 2224 - 48th
Spokane, WA 99203

November 13, 1978

TO ALL MEMBERS AND
PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF THE
SOUTH HILL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Dear Fellow Members:

Recently your Building Committee met and asked me to relate a few items of importance to you as soon as possible. I would first like to say that I am very impressed with the Committee. They are very interested in developing plans for the church that will represent the desires of our membership and at the same time create a very functional and worshipful atmosphere.

Enclosed with this letter is a survey that will help to determine the thinking of our membership. We are asking you to fill this out immediately and either mail it to me or bring it to church on the 18th. It is imperative that we have these by then so that the Committee will be able to tabulate the results before we meet with the architect.

At the present time 92% of our membership is tithing to our South Hill Church which, of course, represents 10% of an individual's income. Based on our yearly tithe, the Building Committee has determined that it will take an additional 7% to accrue sufficient funds in order for us to break ground in four years. At the present time 65% of our membership is giving something towards the Building Fund, and 61% are giving towards the Combined Budget.

If four years for ground breaking sounds like a long time to you like it does to me, let me encourage you. The four years are based on our current membership and our present tithe. The South Hill Church is the Lord's project and there are many variables. If the Lord sees fit to have a building on South Hill sooner, He can do so. "Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing." Ministry of Healing, p. 481.

Sincerely yours,


Larry R. Evans, Pastor

LRE:go

P.S. If more than one person fills out the survey, please do so by putting the appropriate number of checks by each box. It is our desire to have each adult represented in this survey.

Church Building Committee Questionnaire and Response

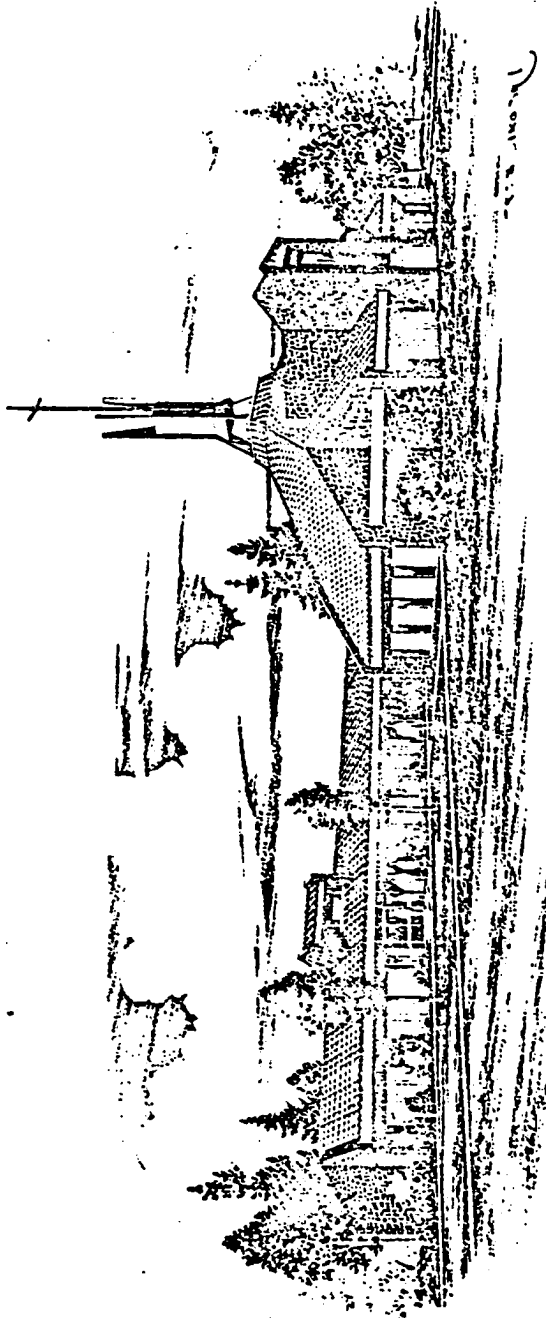
1. What seating capacity should we plan for? (3) 250 (24) 300 (24) 350 (10) 400
2. What style of construction do you favor? (1) Frame (13) Masonry (49) Combination
3. What seating arrangement do you like? (45) Semicircle (13) Regular (3) Round
4. Do you prefer upholstered seats? (57) Yes (3) Don't care
5. Would you like a balcony? (21) Yes (21) No (10) Undecided (8) Don't care
6. Do you want provision for a choir in the Sanctuary? (52) Yes (1) No
(2) Undecided (5) Don't care
7. Shall we plan for a future pipe organ? (25) Yes (17) No (12) Undecided
(7) Don't care
8. What shape sanctuary do you like? (28) Rectangular/Square (25) Round
(8) Don't care
9. Do you like separate Adult Sabbath School classrooms or areas? (50) Yes
(2) No (4) Undecided (5) Don't care
10. Do you want a Fellowship Hall? (61) Yes
11. Would you like to see a fireplace included? (53) Yes (3) No (2) Undecided
(1) Don't care
12. Do you like a courtyard area? (46) Yes (4) No (4) Undecided (6) Don't care
13. Do you plan to contribute any amount regularly to the Building Fund?
(57) Yes (1) No
14. Would you be interested in working on planning one of the following areas?
 Worship Training Room (5) Fellowship Hall (11)
 Sabbath School wing (9) Church Administration (2)
 Sanctuary (7)
 Other:
 as needed (2)
 Audio System (2)
 Landscaping (1)
 Church Sign (1)
 Decor. (2)
 Nursery (1)

Suggestions:

Mother's room with view of sanctuary	Consider an apartment for older couple to act as custodians to best guard against vandalism
Library	No flat roof
Sabbath School adult rooms with sliding doors	Will we have an organist every Sabbath who can play a pipe organ
Tables under stage in Fellowship Hall	Colonial style fireplace
Sound in all areas:: Restrooms, Training room, etc.	Electronic organ
Pews of wood, not formica	Overflow room (balcony)
An atrium in foyer	Like Wenatchee church to help eliminate noise
Plan to seat more than projected membership	
Basement	
Outside door to kitchen	
Emphasize accoustical considerations	

South Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church

*Meeting at Heritage Congregational Church
E. 1801 - 29th Avenue
Spokane, W.A. 99203*



Proposed Future Home

'A Church That Cares for You'

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE SOUTH HILL AREA
OF SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

POPULATION TRENDS, WASHINGTON: 1960 TO 1970 ^{1/}

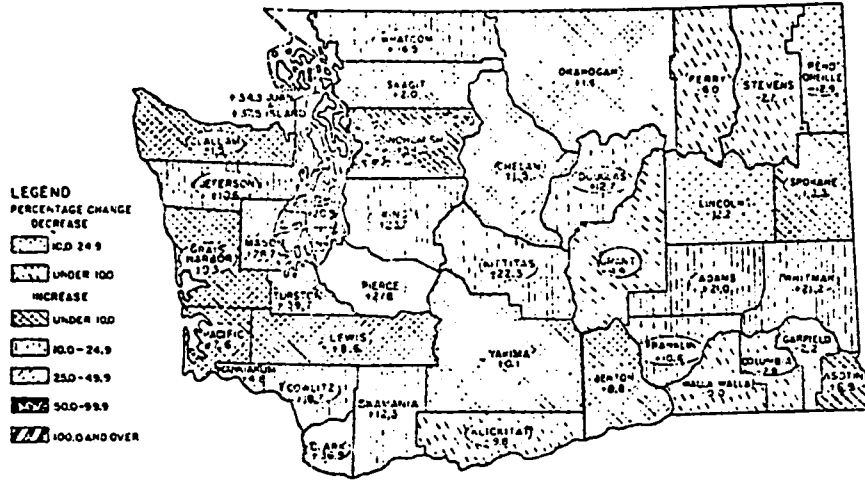
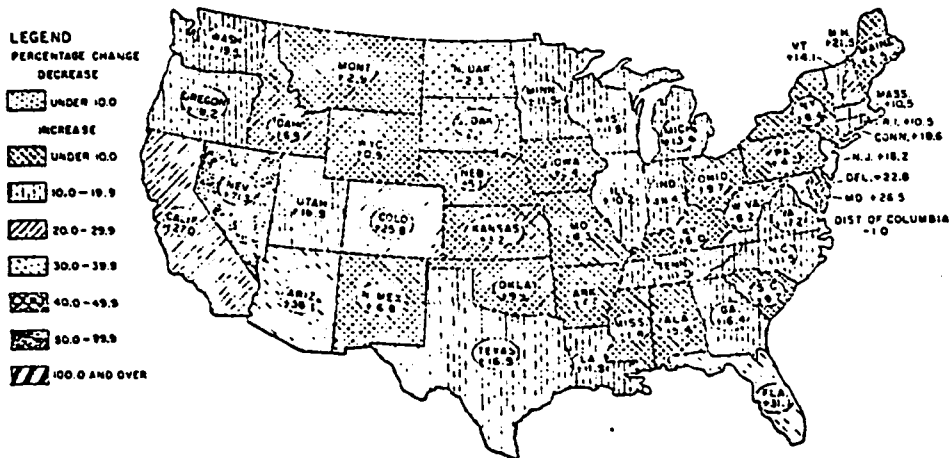


Fig. 14. Population Trends, Washington: 1960 to 1970

POPULATION TRENDS, UNITED STATES: 1960 TO 1970 ^{1/}



^{1/} STATE OF WASHINGTON, 1970 CENSUS DATA BOOK, OFFICE OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT, MARCH 1

Fig. 15. Population Trends, United States:
 1960 to 1970

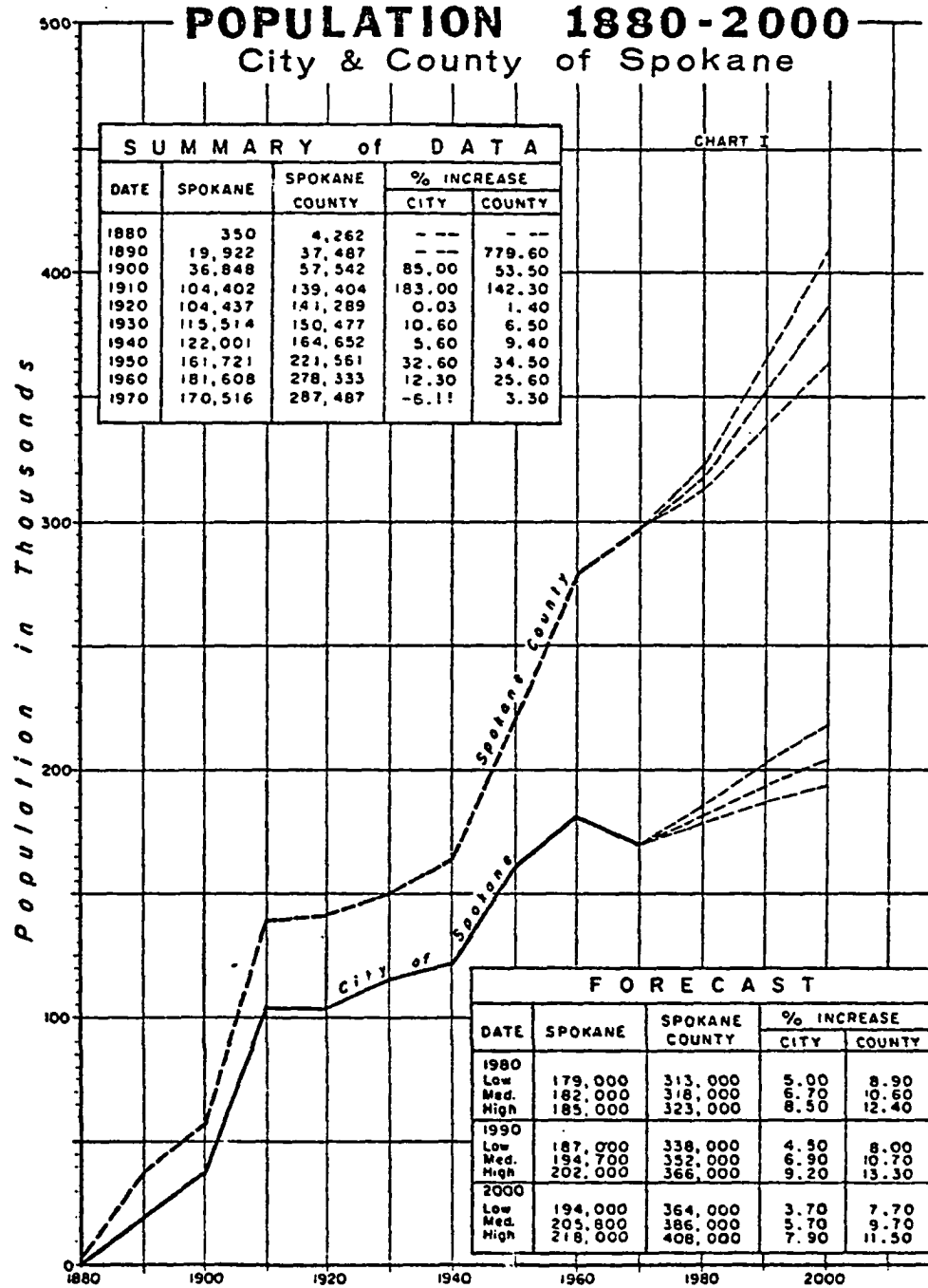


Fig. 16. Population 1880-2000, City and County of Spokane

Key to Wealth Zones

HIGH	A
MEDIUM HIGH	B
MEDIUM	C
MEDIUM LOW	D
LOW	E

Key

TERRITORIAL LINES	—
PRIME TARGET AREA	▨
CENSUS TRACT	Numerals (eg. 45)
WEALTH ZONE	Letters (eg. A)
CHURCH	■

SOURCE: CENSUS TRACTS, Spokane, Washington, Standard Metropolitan Area, (Map).
 COLE'S CROSS REFERENCE DIRECTORY, Greater Spokane, pp. 8a, 9a.

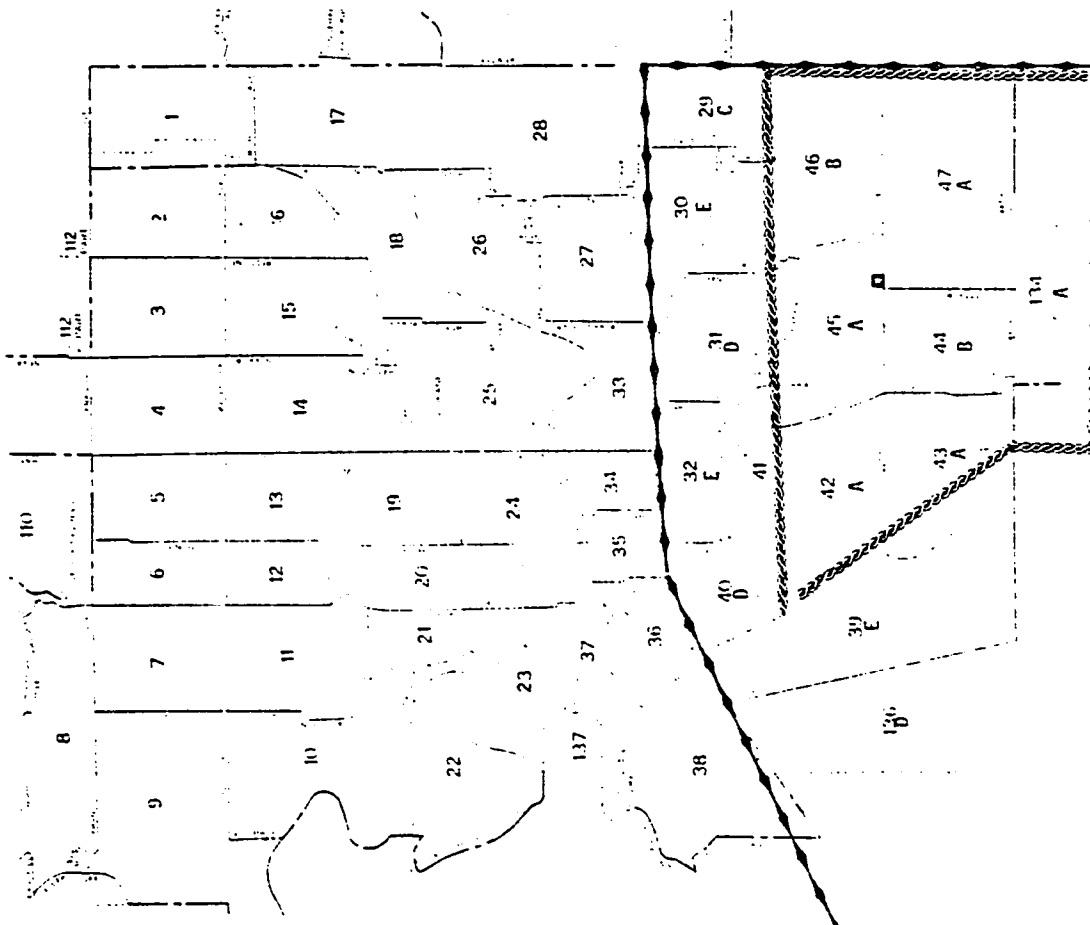


Fig. 17. The South Hill Church's Territorial Lines, Census Tracts by Wealth Zones and the Prime Target Area of the South Hill Church

TABLE 11
LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION: 1970
"PRIME TARGET AREA OF THE SOUTH HILL CHURCH"*

Tract Numbers:	42	43	44	45	46	47	134	All Tracts	Percentage of Occupations of All Tracts
Professional, technical, and kindred workers.	570	287	353	430	329	294	129	2392	22.4%
Managers and administrators, except farm.	409	242	334	241	265	332	159	1982	18.5%
Sales workers	334	158	248	153	165	149	102	1309	12.3%
Clerical and kindred workers	435	212	430	266	362	310	106	2121	19.8%
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers.	134	66	177	46	249	126	41	839	7.9%
Operatives, except transport	66	48	45	34	64	55	33	345	3.1%
Transport equipment operatives	41	11	81	11	47	44	20	255	2.3%
Laborers, except farm	50	26	63	15	34	51	24	263	2.4%
Farm workers	6	0	3	0	31	19	19	78	.70%
Service workers	209	106	202	68	179	128	56	948	9.4%
Private household workers	28	34	21	28	18	0	5	134	1.2%
Total Workers in Each Tract:	2,282	1,190	1,957	1,292	1,743	1,508	694	10,666	
Percentage of Workers According to Tract of Prime Target Area	21.4	11.2	18.5	12.1	16.3	14.1	6.4		100%

SOURCE: "Labor Force Characteristics of the Population", Census Tracts, Spokane, Washington, Standard Metropolitan Area, (Table P-3).

*See fig. 17, app. E for map of tracts

TABLE 7

POPULATION DENSITY STUDY OF SPOKANE AND SUBURBAN AREAS FOR THE DETERMINATION
OF TERRITORIAL LINES FOR THE SPOKANE SDA CHURCHES
MARCH 27, 1978

Geographic Boundaries	Population Density	Total Population Density
<u>LINWOOD CHURCH</u>		
North suburban	26,080	
Francis & City limits to Rich	<u>50,653</u>	76,731
<u>CENTRAL CHURCH</u>		
Rich to Freeway	70,494	
Airway Heights	1,350	
West Suburban	<u>12,558</u>	84,402
<u>VALLEY CHURCH</u>		
City limits (Havana to stateline)	75,015	
Millwood	<u>1,838</u>	76,853
<u>SOUTH HILL CHURCH</u>		
Freeway to 17th	20,964	
17th to 29th	14,674	
29th to 44th & city limits	13,264	
South Suburban	<u>3,706</u>	52,608

*The Countryside Church was not organized at this time.

TABLE 8

FAMILIES PER INCOME CATEGORY IN SPOKANE COUNTY AND WASHINGTON STATE

Income Category	Spokane County				Washington State	
	1960		1970		1970	
	Number of Families	Percent of Total	Number of Families	Percent of Total	Number of Families	Percent of Total
Total	70,186	100.0	71,859	100.0	862,542	100.0
Less than \$5,000	24,418	34.8	14,391	20.1	142,631	16.5
5,000 - 10,000	35,021	49.9	24,346	33.9	263,478	30.5
10,000 - 15,000	7,859	11.2	20,208	28.0	259,746	30.2
15,000 and over	2,888	4.1	12,914	18.0	196,687	22.8

SOURCE: 1960 and 1970 U.S. Census of Population

TABLE 9

DIVORCE/MARRIAGE COMPARISONS FOR SPOKANE COUNTY

Year	Divorces Filed	Divorces Granted	Applications for Marriage Licenses
1975	3,058	2,437	3,176
1976	3,052	2,514	3,058
1977	2,866	2,313	3,158
1978	2,945	2,343	3,311
1979	3,030	2,459	3,516

Ratio of Divorces Filed to Application for Marriage Licenses from 1975-1979 is 1:1.08.

SOURCE: County Clerk and County Auditor

TABLE 10

Breakdown of Population According to Country of Origin and Race
in the City of Spokane

A. Population Breakdown by Country of Origin

	<u>Total Foreign Stock</u>		<u>Foreign Born</u>		<u>Native of Foreign or Mixed Parentage</u>	
	Total	White	Total	White	Total	White
All Countries	32,370	31,440	6,508	6,179	25,862	25,261
Europe/USSR	22,655	22,630	4,068	4,058	18,587	18,572
Asia, excluding USSR	1,267	487	396	106	871	381
North & Central America	7,506	7,410	1,775	1,753	5,731	5,657
South America	67	67	47	47	20	20
All Other	875	846	222	215	653	631

SOURCE: "Country of Origin of the Foreign Stock by Nativity and Race: 1970", Census of the Population: 1970, (Table 141).

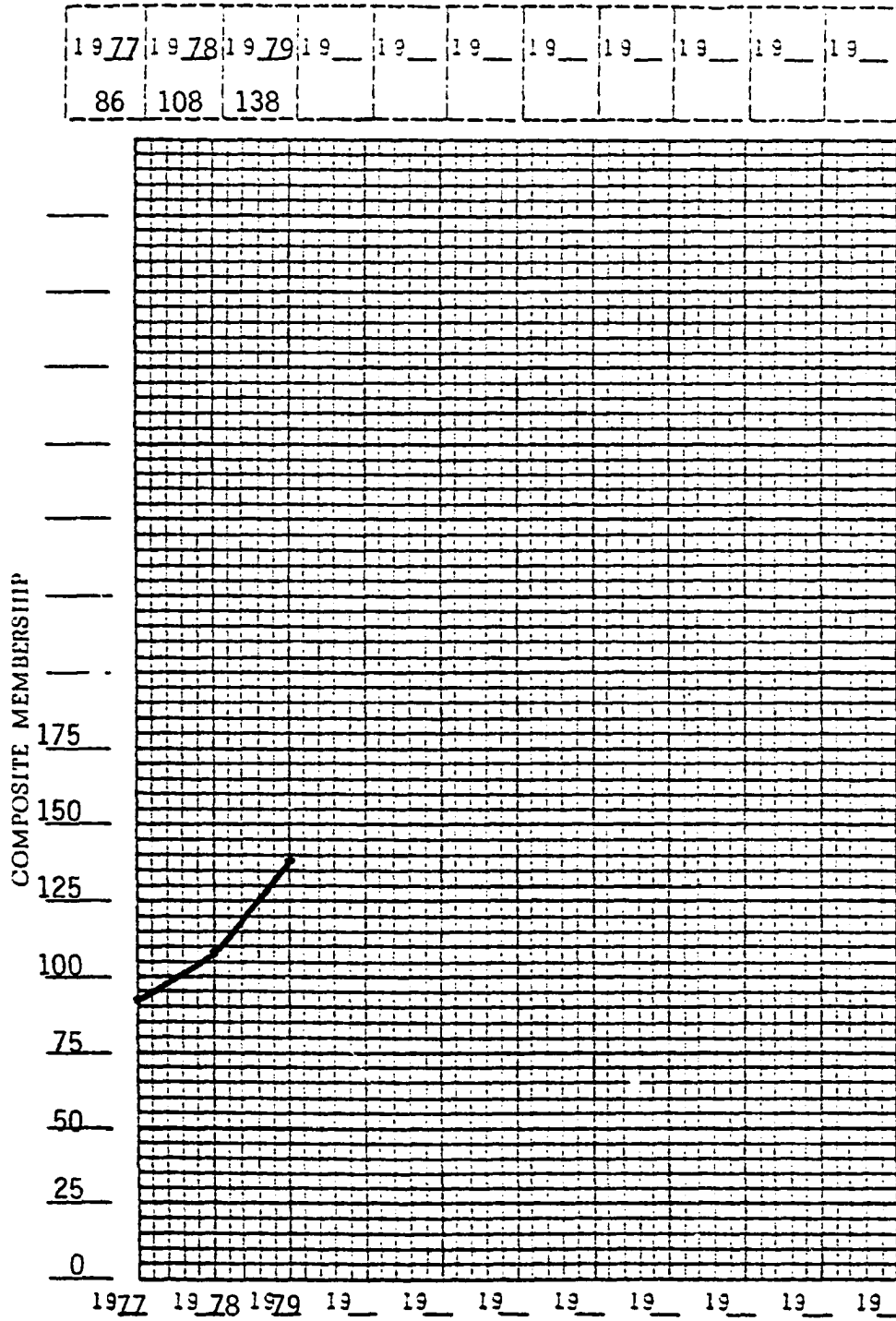
B. Population Breakdown by Race

TOTAL Population	White	Negro	Indian	Japanese	Chinese	Filipino	All Other
170,516	165,339	2,161	1,419	985	149	99	364

SOURCE: "Race by Sex, for Areas and Places: 1970", Census of Population: 1970, (Table 23).

APPENDIX F

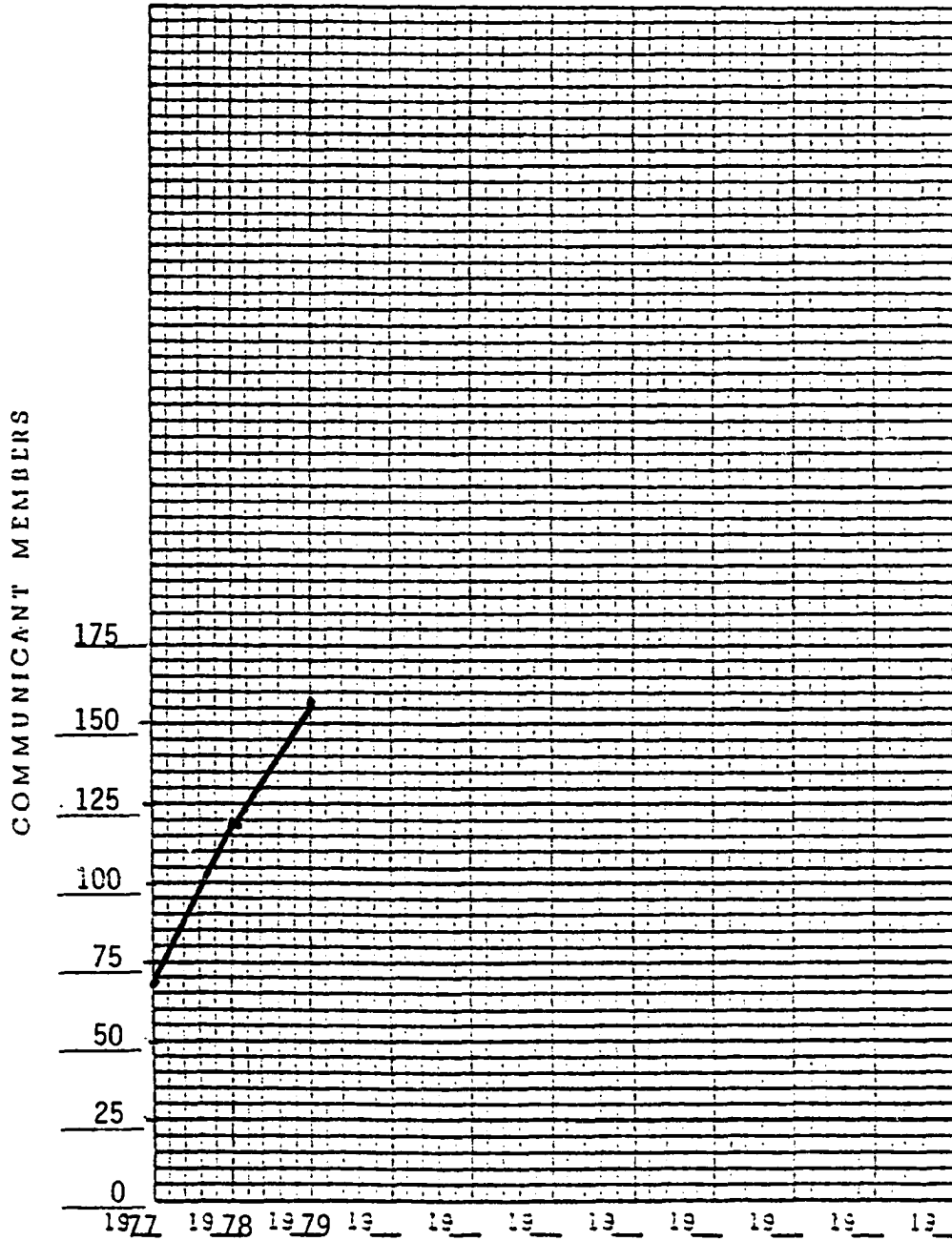
DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION OF THE SOUTH HILL
SDA CHURCH: 1977-1979



Decadal Growth Rate: 963.9%

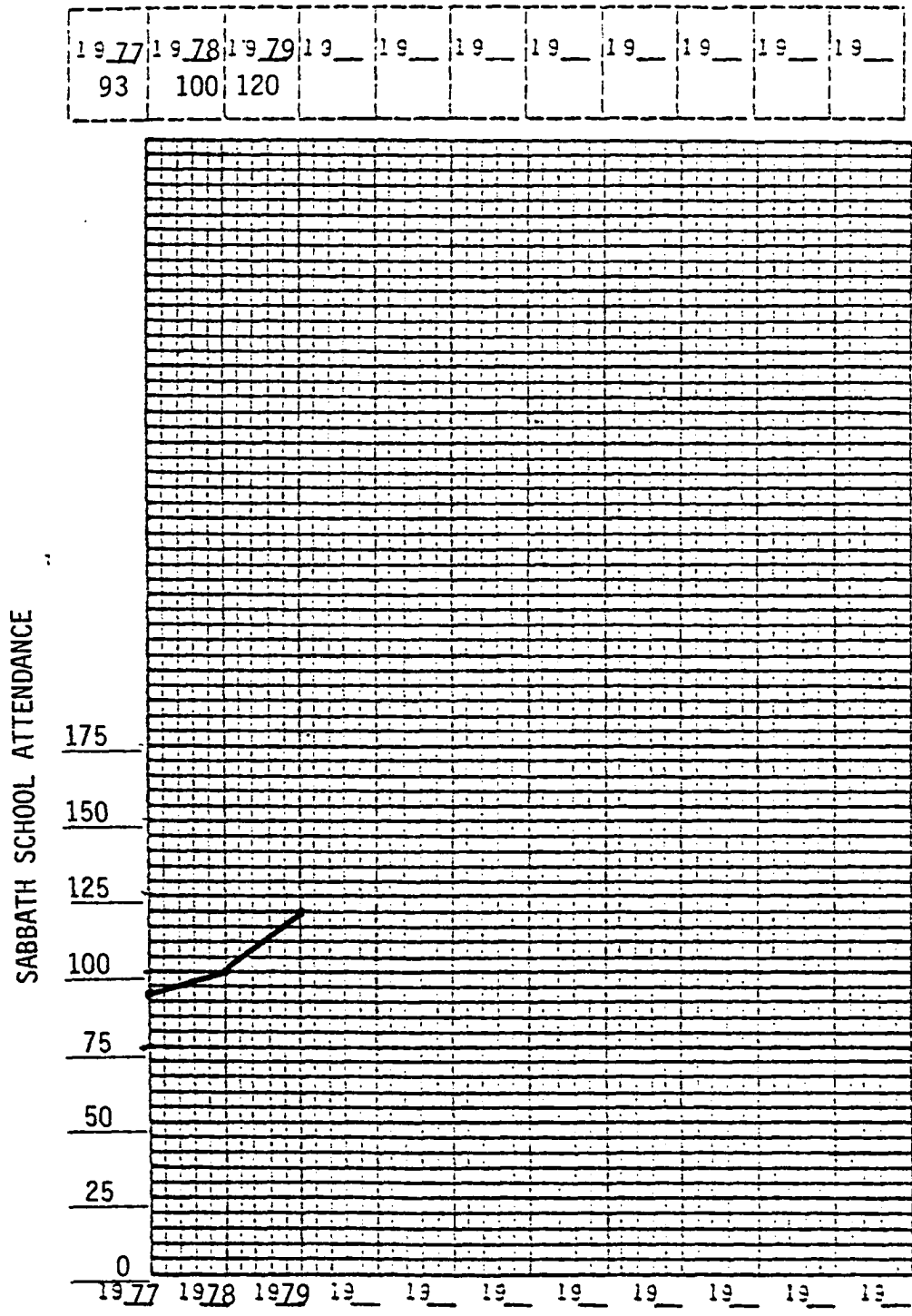
Fig. 18. Composite Membership Growth

1977	1978	1979	19__	19__	19__	19__	19__	19__	19__	19__
69	119	157								



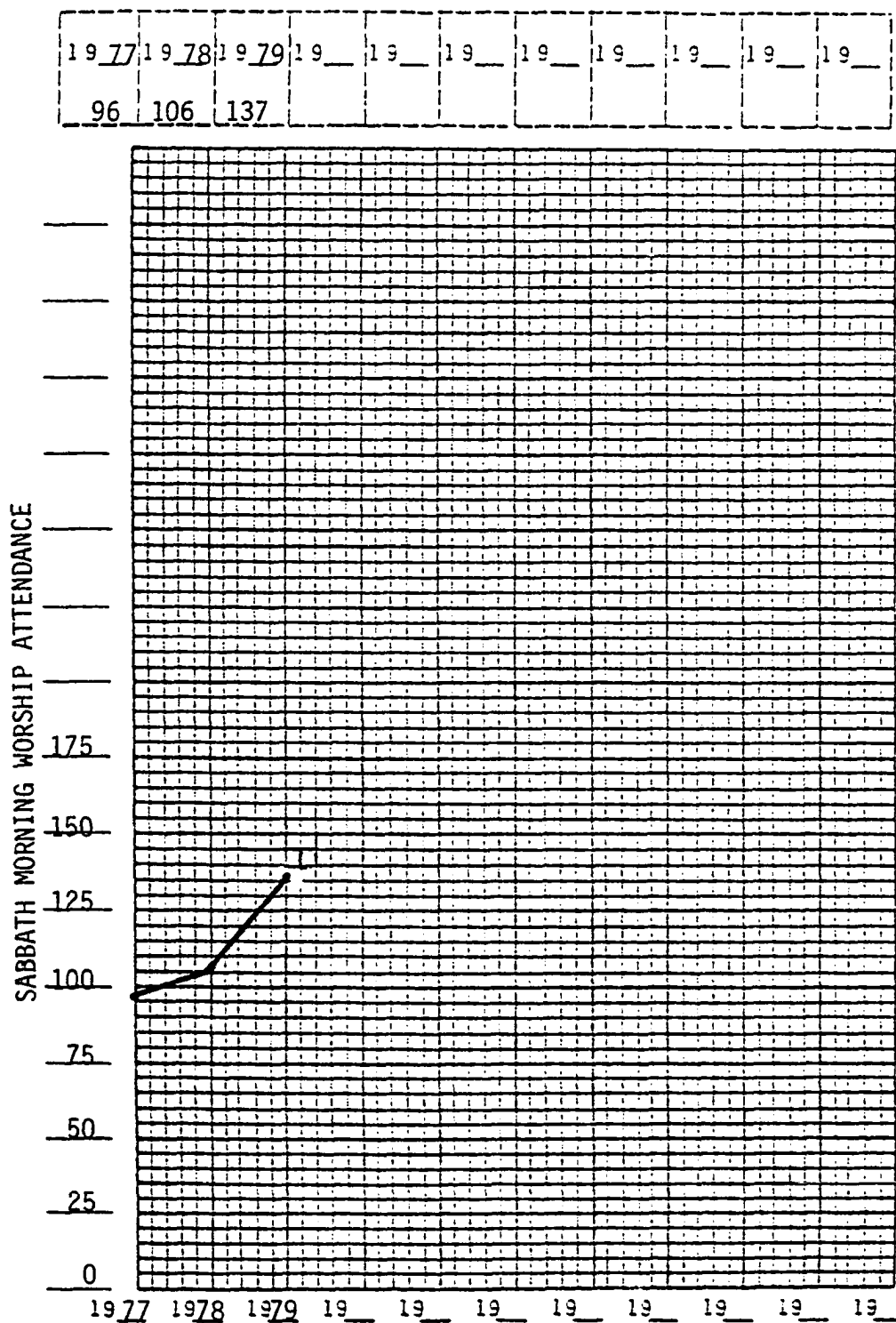
Decadal Growth Rate: 5,999%

Fig. 19. Communicant Membership



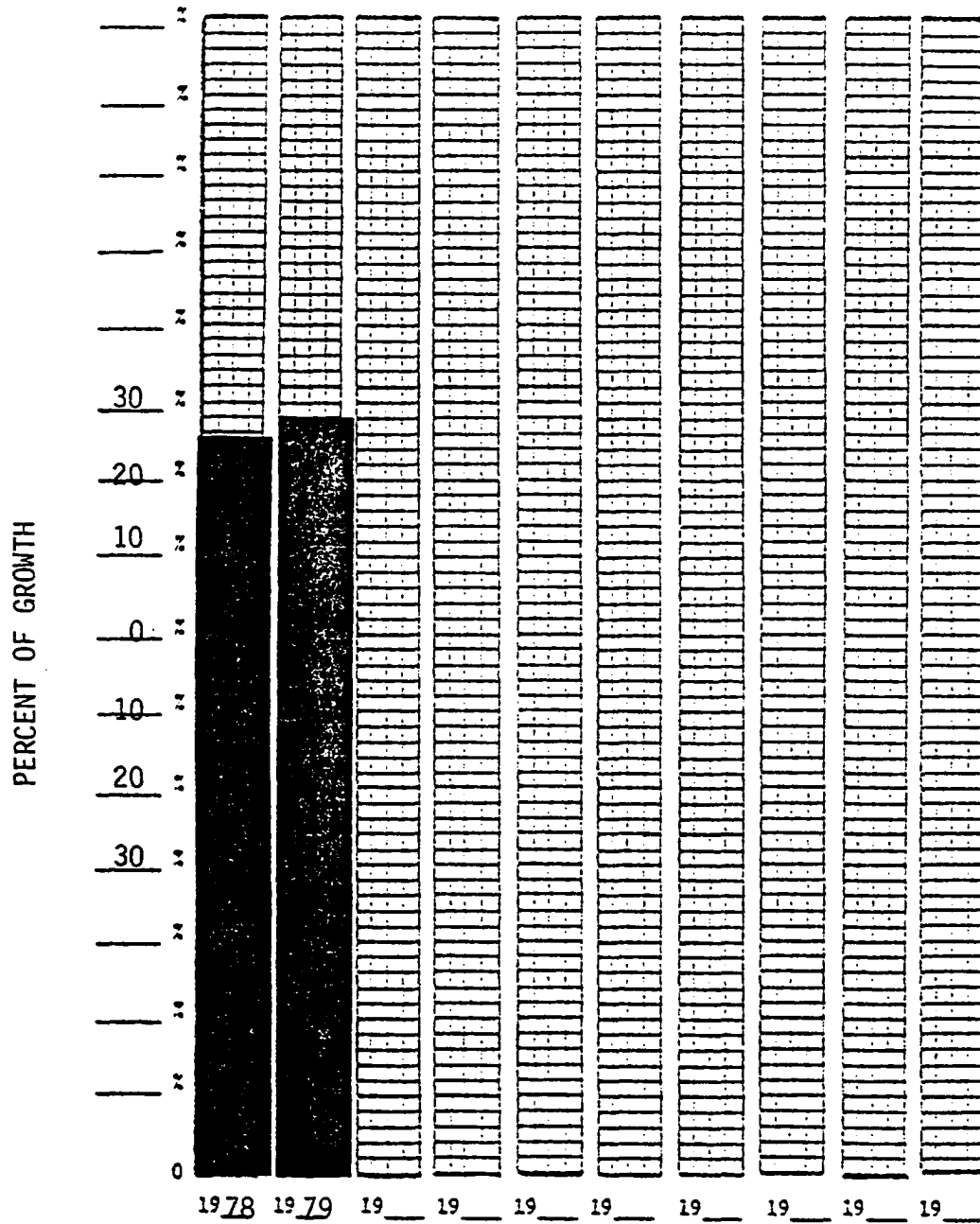
Decadal Growth Rate: 258%

Fig. 20. Sabbath School Attendance



Decadal Growth Rate: 492%

Fig. 21. Sabbath Morning Worship Attendance



Annual Composite Growth Rates

1978 - 25.6%
1979 - 27.8%

Fig. 22. Annual Composite Growth Rates

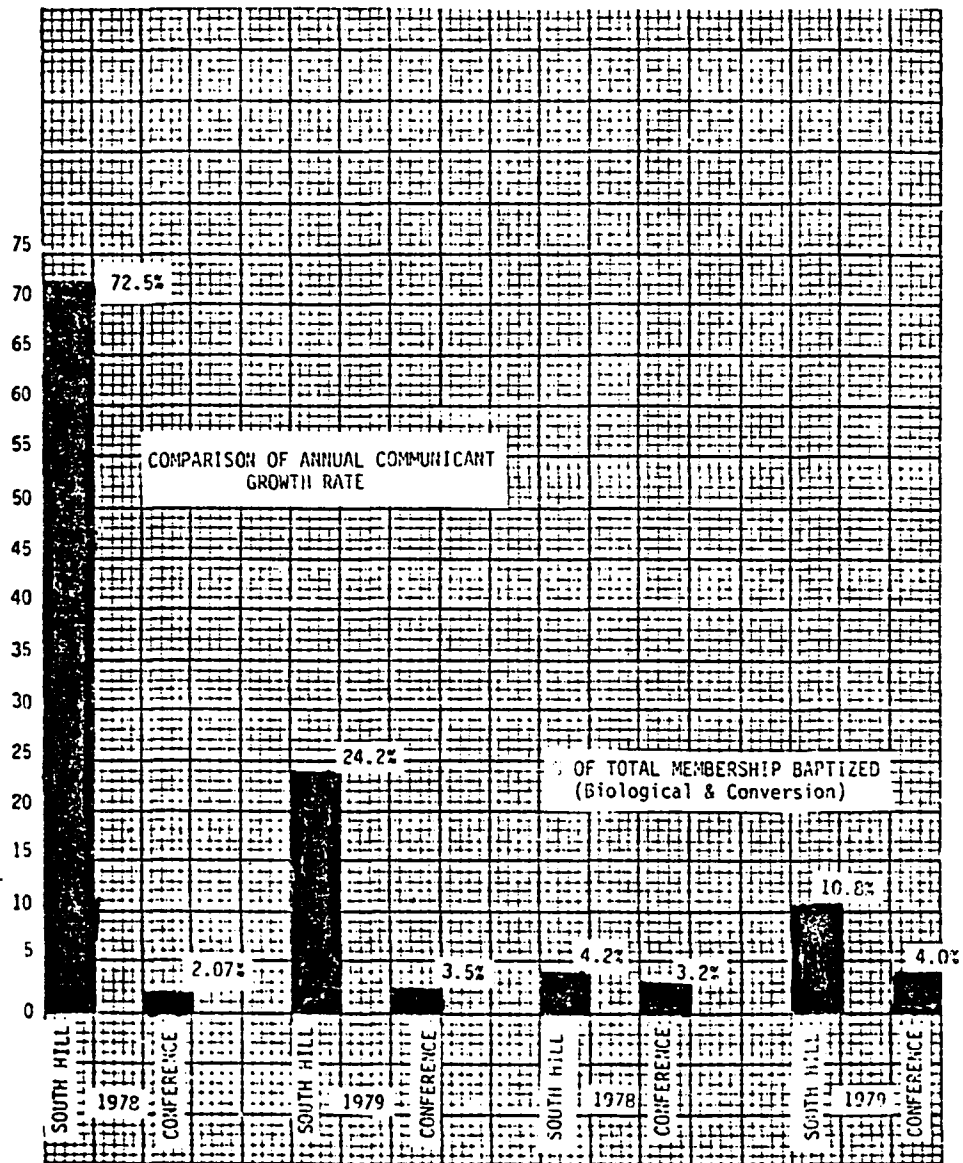


Fig. 23. Growth Comparisons of the South Hill Church and the Conference

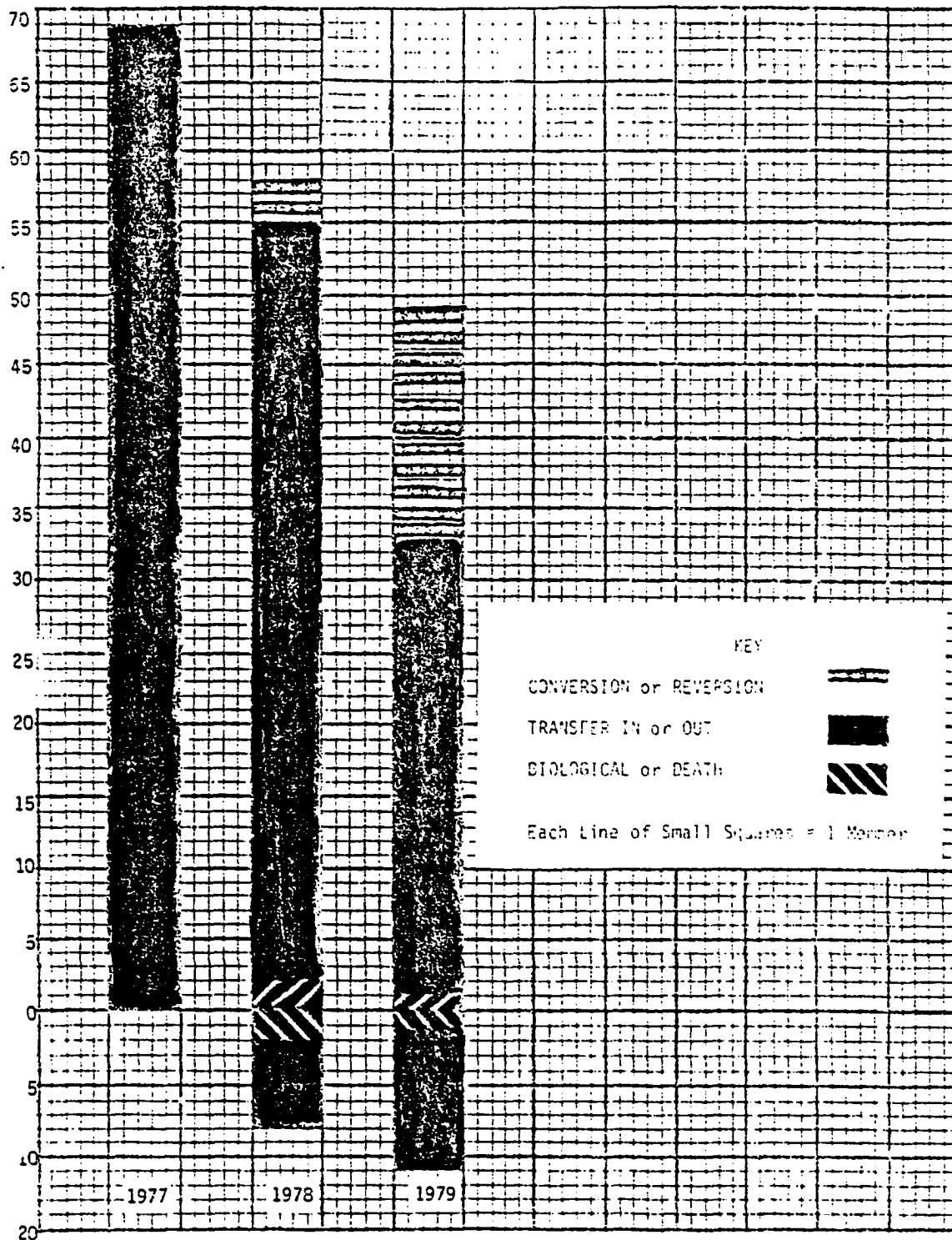


Fig. 24. Growth and Loss Comparisons

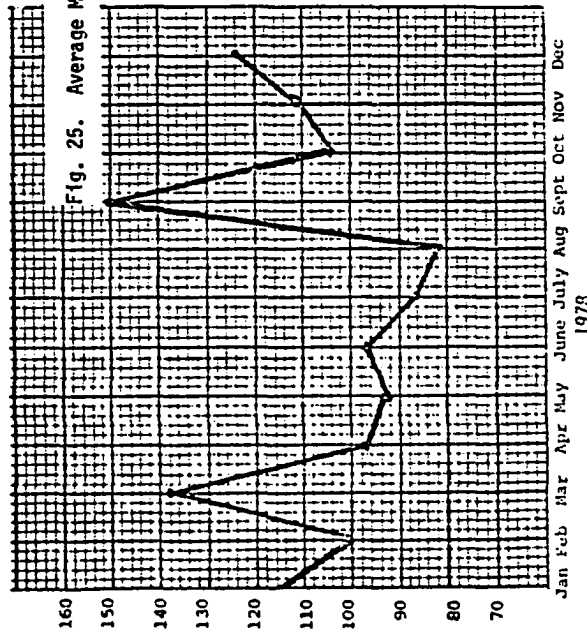
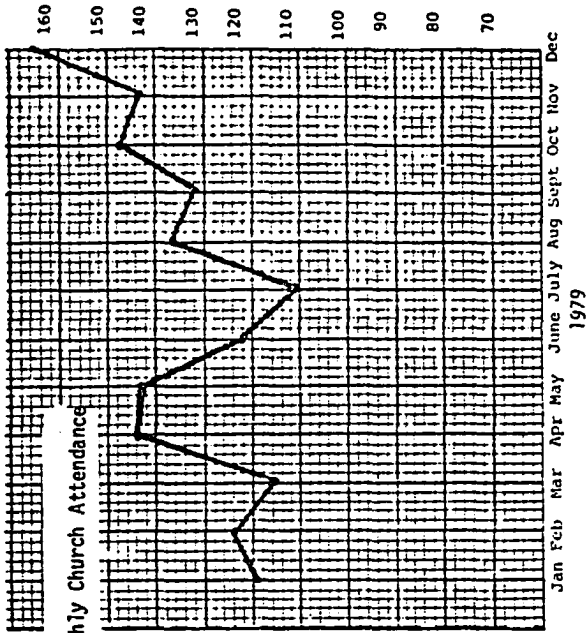
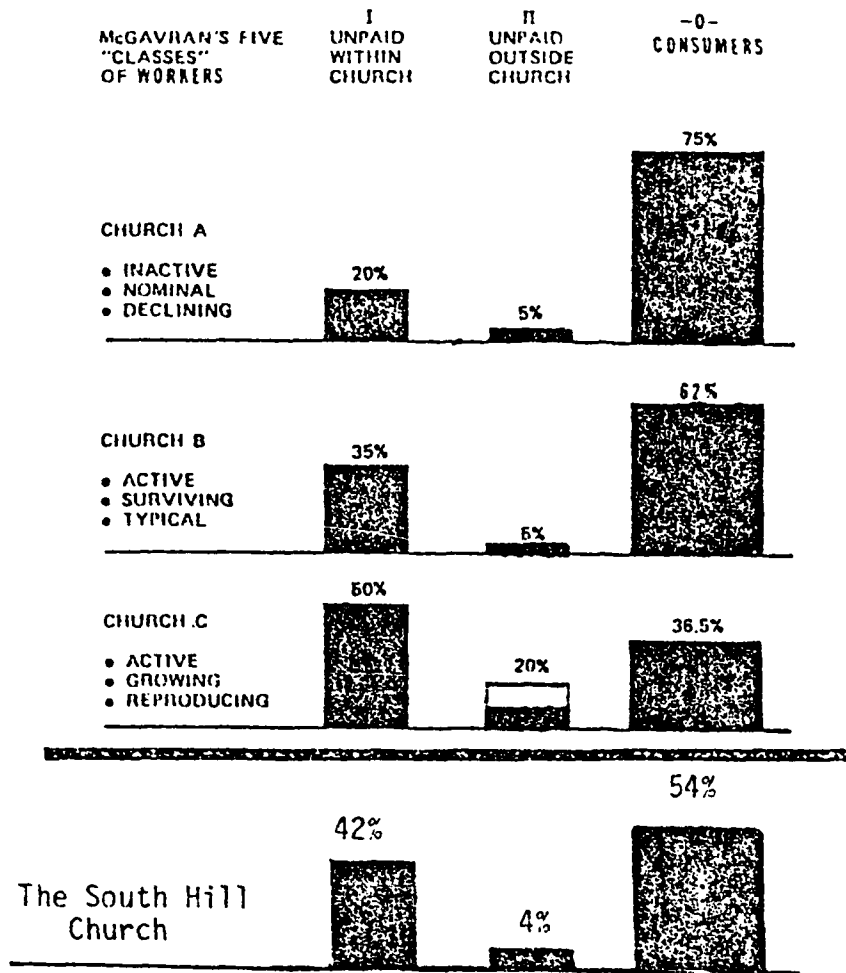


Fig. 25. Average Monthly Church Attendance



SOURCE: Worker Analysis, Fuller Evangelistic Association (Pasadena, 1977)

Fig. 26. Worker Analysis

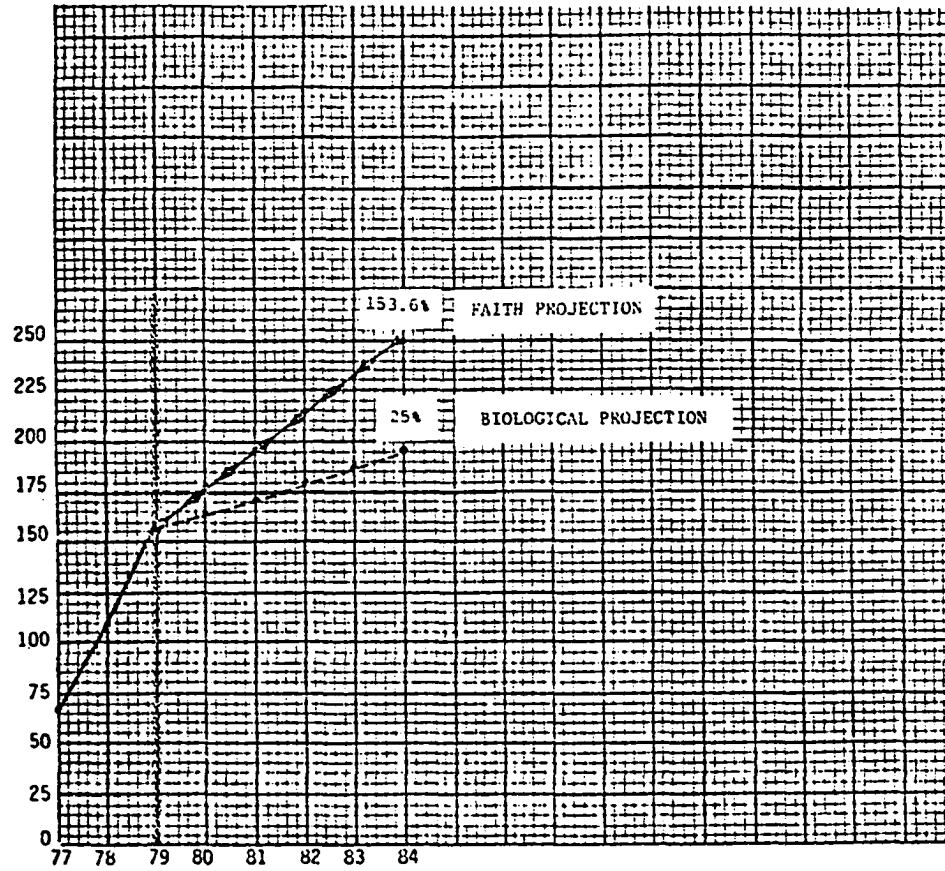


Fig. 27. 1984 Communicant Membership Growth Projection

APPENDIX G

HOW TO CALCULATE DECADAL GROWTH RATES

HOW TO CALCULATE GROWTH RATES.....

2. DECADAL GROWTH RATES (DGR)

Decadal growth rates (DGR) are used for determining the rates of growth across a period of more than one year. DGR is a standard measurement that can be used not only for ten years (a decade, thus "decadal") but for two or five or 20 or any number of years. Converting growth for any period to what the growth would have been for ten years allows for ready comparison, and therefore valuable in diagnostic efforts. You will want to master DGR calculations for use on graphs on the next few pages.

A. Simple calculation

When you have data that is ten years apart (such as 1969-1979), follow the same procedure as you did for AGR;

Example: A church has 180 members at the end of 1969
640 members at the end of 1979 (ten years)

- Step 1. $640 - 180 = 460$
Step 2. $460 \div 180 = 2.56$
Step 3. $2.56 \times 100 = 256\%$ (DGR)

B. Calculation for other than a ten year period.

When your figures are not ten years apart, there are two ways to obtain the DGR which will convert the rate over the period of years you have to a ten-year rate, thereby enabling you to use it for comparison with other churches or with other periods for the same church. One is to use a calculator as described in para C. The other is to use the appendix tables as follows:

Growth Rate Tables (see appendix)

Divide the latest years membership by the beginning years membership. This will give you the ratio of "latest" to "beginning" (L/B) for that number of years. Go to Table A in the appendix and locate the number (or number nearest to yours) in the left hand column=L/B; Then in the column under the number of years, locate the AAGR (Average Annual Growth Rate). Now turn to Table B and locate the AAGR nearest to your AAGR. Read the corresponding DGR.

Example: A church has: 500 members at the end of 1973
700 members at the end of 1979 (six years)

- Step 1. $700 \div 500 = 1.4$
Step 2. 1.4 on Table A for 6 years is AAGR = 5.77%
Step 3. Locate 5.77% on Table B between 5.70% and 5.82%.
Step 4. Read nearest listed DGR 76%.
Note: One can see in this example the more accurate DGR-would be 75%. If the exact DGR is desired follow instructions below Table B.

C. Electronic calculation for other than a ten year period

In order to do this calculation, which is more precise, you will need an electronic calculator which has the y^x and $1/x$ functions. A Texas Instrument TI-30 (costing about \$15.00 in the USA) will serve, as will many other brands.

Here is how to do it. (Caution: push only the buttons indicated:)


Example (same as manual calculation above): 500 in 1976
700 in 1979 (3 years)

	<u>your display</u>
Step 1. Clear calculator	0
Step 2. 700 (latest membership)	700
Step 3. \div	700
Step 4. 500 (earliest membership)	500
Step 5. =	1.4
Step 6. y^x	1.4
Step 7. 3 (number of years 1976-1979)	3
Step 8. $1/x$	0.333
Step 9. = (wait until answer shows!)	1.118
Step 10. y^x	1.118
Step 11. 10 (for ten years)	10
Step 12. = (wait until answer shows!)	3.069
Step 13. x	3.069
Step 14. 100	100
Step 15. -	306.9
Step 16. 100	100
Step 17. = (answer is DGR)	206.9 or 207% DGR

NOTE: You may want to check your answer in the tables in the appendix. This will be good practice and help familiarize you with the tables.

PRACTICE CALCULATING DGR:

To make sure you understand the calculations for DGR, try the following and see if you get the correct answer:

1. Simple (10 yrs): 350 members 1969
850 members 1979 (answer: 142% DGR)
2. Table: 500 members 1974
850 members 1979 (5 yrs) (answer: 189% DGR) (see note)
3. Electronic same figures as table (answer: 189% DGR) 

NOTE: 190% DGR is the nearest number reflected on Table B. However, by simple calculation (interpolation) as described at bottom of Table B you can obtain the exact DGR. In some cases the exact number will be reflected on Table B.

SOURCE: The Global Church Growth Bulletin
(Santa Clara, CA).

APPENDIX H

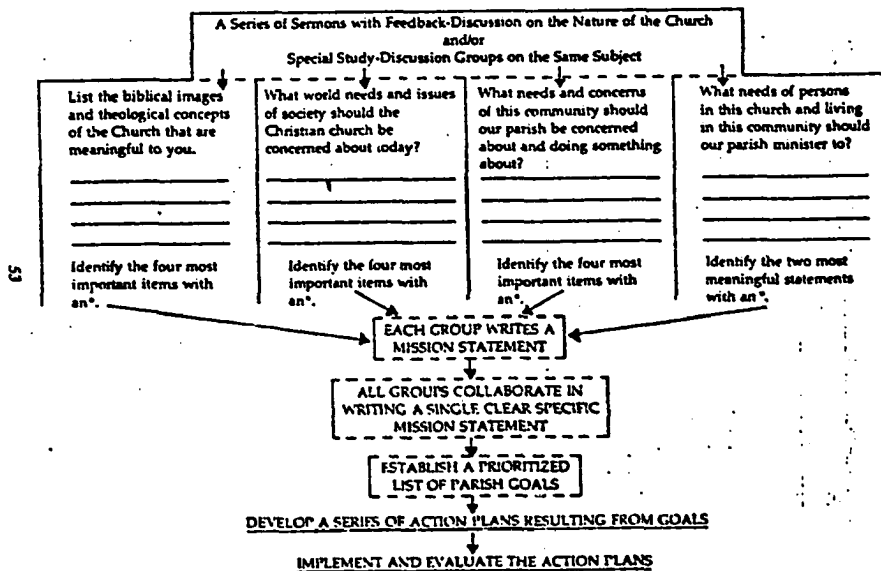
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THEOLOGICAL-MISSIONAL STATEMENT

A MODEL FOR DEVELOPING A CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

We have developed a process for preparing a congregational mission statement that is proving helpful to a large number of local churches at the time of this writing. These churches are of varying sizes and denominations. Not only are churches able to come up with clear and useful mission statements, but they report that participants are enthusiastic about the process of working out the statement. A diagram of the process is presented on the following page. The time line for this process will vary with the number of participants. Phase one involves a serious congregational study and discussion of the nature and mission of the church that might include sermon talk-backs, small discussion groups, or a retreat. Phase two involves an overnight retreat to develop a mission statement. This design requires a

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A PLANNING MODEL TO DEVELOP A MISSION STATEMENT



Management for Your Church

period of several weeks to carry out and should be followed immediately by a goal-setting, action-planning process.

We will briefly describe the model.

Phase I: Study and Discussion

1. A series of sermons on the nature and mission of the Church with feedback discussion may open the subject. This will involve the entire congregation.
2. Special study-discussion groups may be conducted on the nature and mission of the Church, following step one or as an alternate option.

Phase II: Developing a Mission Statement

1. The administrative board members and all interested members of the congregation are invited to a series of workshop sessions or a retreat to develop a mission statement to be used as a basis for goal-setting and action-planning for future programming.
2. Divide the total group into small groups of no more than eight. Each group will do the following:

Session I

- a. On newsprint, list (brainstorm) the biblical images of the Church and theological concepts group members find most meaningful and relevant.
- b. Take a break, walk around and browse at other lists, return and complete your own list.
- c. Discuss and select the two images or concepts your group finds most meaningful and write them on newsprint.
- d. All groups share their two images and/or concepts and the reasons for their selection.

Session II

- a. Use the same groups, giving each

Mission Intentionality and Systems Theory

group three sheets of newsprint with separate headings (questions). They are to brainstorm responses to each question. The questions are:

- 1) What world needs and issues of society should the Christian church be concerned about today?
- 2) What needs and concerns of this community should our church be concerned about and doing something about?
- 3) What needs of persons in this church and living in this community should our church minister to?
 - b. Take a break and scan the lists of other groups.
 - c. Each group now completes its lists and identifies the top four items on each list with an asterisk.
 - d. Share those items with other groups.

Session III

Each group places its own newsprint listings for Sessions I and II before them. After reviewing the material, draft a clear, brief statement of no more than a few sentences beginning, "The mission of our church is _____."

Share the statements of each group with the total group by having them read, and then post them in the room.

Session IV

Each group elects two persons (one person if there are more than six groups) to "fishbowl" in a collaboration session to work out a single mission statement for all groups. The mission statements of each of the groups must be posted in plain view. Blank newsprint will be posted to work out

Management for Your Church

the single statement. The fishbowl group will sit in a circle in the center of the room with two empty chairs. Members of the original groups will sit next to one another in a larger circle surrounding the fishbowl group. Any person may move into one of the two empty chairs to ask a question or make a suggestion; he then must move out. Every fifteen minutes the collaborators from each group will go back to their original group for suggestions. The process goes on until a mission statement is agreed upon by the collaborators, checking it out with each group.

Members of the congregation should be especially urged to attend this session, to form groups of eight, and to participate in the fishbowl collaboration session. This is likely to be a long session requiring two or more hours of time, as will likely be true of each of the three other sessions.

The time structure of each session may be altered to fit the needs of the situation. The larger the number of participants, the more time the design will take. The design can be carried out at an overnight retreat or in three separate sessions.

It is also possible for organizations within the church to adapt this design to their own planning needs.

SOURCE: Alvin J. Lindgren and Norman Shawchuck, Management for Your Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), pp. 52-56.

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE BROCHURE FOR PROMOTION OF CHURCH PLANTING



A Great Need Calls For A Great Effort On Your Part

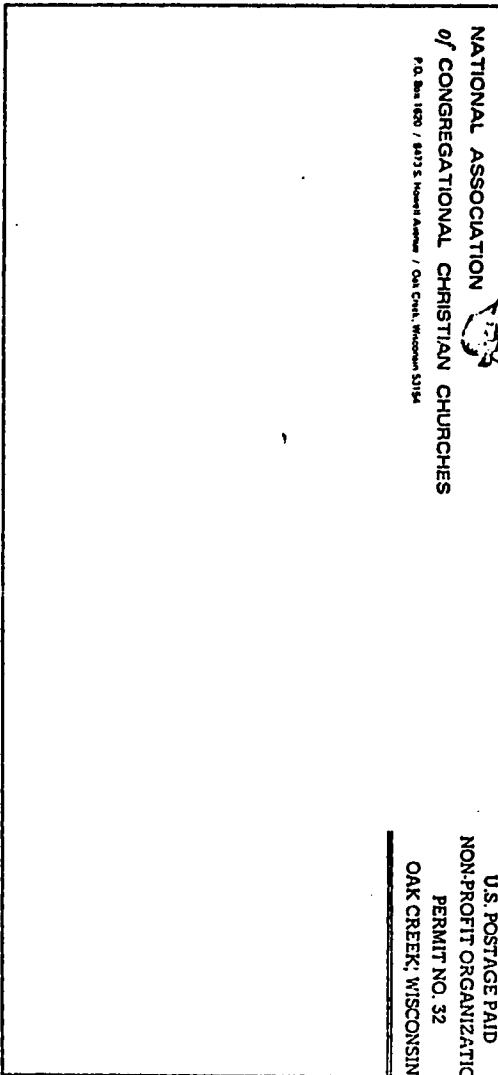
- If you are sympathetic to the concept of expanding congregationalism; or
- If you desire to help a specifically designated NEW CHURCH; or
- If you desire to help establish more NEW CHURCHES; or
- If you wish to extend the teachings of Jesus into new areas of urbanization.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO

New Church Development Fund

National Association
of
Congregational Christian Churches
8473 South Howell Avenue
P.O. Box 1620
Oak Creek, Wisconsin
53154

7M5 4-77



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
of CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
P.O. Box 1620 / 8473 S. Howell Avenue / Oak Creek, Wisconsin 53154



U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
PERMIT NO. 32
OAK CREEK, WISCONSIN

HELP START A NEW CHURCH NOW!



Efforts

"And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." Acts 16:5

Justifiable requests for new Congregational Churches come from all parts of our nation. Our efforts to answer these requests are limited solely by the extreme limitations of funds.

The New Church Development Board of the National Association desires to work cooperatively with state associations in gathering new churches. At present, active planning is being done with the Connecticut Fellowship and the CAL-WEST Association of California. New churches are desired in southern Connecticut and California.

The following new churches have been gathered and organized. They still need financial support

The following new churches have been gathered and organized. They still need financial support for ministerial services.

- 1 MAYFLOWER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(June 1, 1975). Rev. Harvey Cutting, 4305 Woodbine Street, Box 40313, Lewisville, Texas 75067.
- 2 MOUNTAIN VIEW CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(Dec. 1, 1975). Rev. Stephen W. Tucker, 6936 S. Wadsworth Court, Littleton, Colorado 80123.
- 3 THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(April 1, 1976). Rev. Dr. John H. Alexander, 10701 Garrette Drive, Sun City, Arizona 85351.



Hopes

- 1 A new church each year in newly expanding population centers

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 3:47

- 2 To have strong Congregational Churches in every state

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

- 3 To stimulate local and individual acceptance of Jesus' teachings yet not create an authoritarian church structure either by spiritual dogma or financial pressure

"And he said unto them, let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore come I forth." Mark 1:38



Needs

To expand takes spirit, support by prayers, and money

The individual can help by:

- contributing to the general effort to gather NEW CHURCHES
- contributing monies specified for a particular NEW CHURCH already in the process of gathering
- referring to the minister the names and addresses of friends in the area of a gathering church
- considering the NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT DIVISION for bequests, legacies, and as a beneficiary in the will.

Established churches can help by:

- contributing to the general effort to gather NEW CHURCHES as a way of expanding their national outreach
- contributing good materials needed in religious services and church school efforts-hymnals, communion service plate, duplicating machines, church school lesson books, etc.
- adopting "sister" churches and providing them spiritual and financial support during their early growing period.

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