

AN INQUIRY INTO THE GROWTH
OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN ONTARIO

An Abstract of a Project/Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Graduate School
Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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ABSTRACT

A minister inquires into the growth of the churches of his fellowship within the Canadian province of Ontario.

At the beginning of this century, Churches of Christ, a conservative expression of the then declining Disciples of Christ, chose an independent path. Thus, a small group of churches has struggled throughout this century for existence, growth, and awareness.

Affiliated as autonomous congregations, they have produced no uniform system of record keeping, constraining somewhat the processes of self-examination and analysis. Thus, the inquiry seeks to contribute a base of information which may assist the churches in developing goals and strategies for future growth.

In considering factors contributing to the growth achieved, the inquiry examines possible correlations between theological perceptions and the growth realized, and between social awareness and the growth experienced. The involvement of the membership in outreach and the receptivity of the larger community are also examined.

The three ministries of the Godhead--revelation, reconciliation, and relationship--are presented as the three-fold thrust of the church in mission, of its ministers

in service, and of its members in Christian practice. This three-fold unity is seen as working through the social experience: according to the principles of church growth as informed by sociology and anthropology, and according to the theories of family systems as applied to the congregation as extended family.

Four questionnaires were developed to elicit both the growth profile, and the mind and practice of the churches. An overview assessment was gained by interviewing three ministers in group discussion.

Churches of Christ in Ontario are seen as part of the conservative evangelical community which, representing only 7% of the population, has been historically unable to draw membership from the larger populace which retains a traditional preference for mainline church affiliation.

Experiencing a modest growth rate (300%), somewhat greater than that of the Ontario population increase (290%), over the nine decades, Churches of Christ in Ontario demonstrate a moderately good perception of their Biblical position and social presence, but have some difficulty in translating their understanding into effectual evangelical life.

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This project/thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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CHAPTER I

THE TASK

Introduction

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test (II Cor. 13:5-6).

Paul here reflects the two sides of religious accountability: the genuineness of our faith before God, the efficacy of our faith among men. In both conditions Paul enjoins examination. For surely testing will come. God tests us as he disciplines us. Men test us as they probe the truthfulness of our words and the usefulness of our deeds.

As the 20th century moves to its conclusion, the accelerating urgency of the Christian task, the marked decline of some churches, and the remarkable growth of others, the erosion of historical Christianity in the Western world, and its expansion elsewhere, have converged to produce a major enterprise in self-examination. Churches everywhere are taking a look at themselves, their convictions, their activities, and by extension, their friends round about.

Test questions are drawn up from the Word, because first of all our enterprise is from God. Questions also emerge from the world, from the social sciences, for our

enterprise has to do with men. Some are satisfied to answer only the first question: Am I safe in Jesus Christ? The second question also demands to be answered. Am I a friend of God in bringing Christ Jesus effectually into the lives of others? It was in this latter respect that Paul said, "I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test."

Churches are in the business of growing, for they seek to be indentified with that Kingdom which is filling all the world. In a complex age some churches grow for the wrong reason. Some unlikely churches grow. Some churches are actually "growing" when they are shrinking in numbers. And some likely churches do not grow as they ought.

Churches of Christ in Ontario, the fellowship of which the author of this inquiry is a part, are good churches. They have a right to exist. They are involved in a good work. They need to grow. Many of its members are committed to growth, are inquiring into the dynamics of growth, are petitioning the Lord of the Harvest for growth. This inquiry is offered as one contribution to that examination process.

This project/thesis is an inquiry into the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario during the 20th century with a specific focus upon the decade 1979-1989.

Problem and Purpose

Problem

While there has been persistent interest within Churches of Christ in Ontario in its growth,¹ it is perceived that the increase of members and churches over the period has been only modest. Given their mandate and their resources, this condition has perplexed the membership. This slow growth rate is reflected elsewhere in Canada: given an overall 170-year experience, Churches of Christ in the nation total only some 135 churches with approximately 6,000 members.

The problem has broader implications. Disappointing growth rates for Churches of Christ are not uncommon elsewhere in the world, with the exception, in other times, of the United States. These people are driven by two convictions: (1) they believe that Churches of Christ have approached success in restoring the pattern of New Testament Christianity in polity and practice, and (2) they believe in the urgency of believers everywhere finding unity in Christ on the common footing of the Scriptures alone. Thus, the lack of a generous growth curve causes puzzlement and discouragement.

At the same time, following a strict application of the principle of congregational autonomy, Churches of Christ do not have access to data regularly compiled and analyzed by a central office regarding statistics of membership and growth. Record keeping by local churches can be irregular

and in some cases almost non-existent. The practice of self-examination and strategy formulation consequently may be constrained.

Furthermore, in Canada generally, while there is an increase of interest among Canadian churches in growth rates, especially with persisting decline in some quarters, exciting growth in others, and widespread plateauing, the study of church growth as a science with a commitment to vigorous growth characteristic of the church growth movement elsewhere has not penetrated the Canadian church scene.

Purpose

It is the purpose of this project/thesis to profile the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario. It seeks to understand the condition of that growth with respect to the mind of the church regarding spiritual matters, the work of the church in terms of its application, and the relations of the church with regard to its social setting.

It is the purpose of this study to encourage a growing practice by leaders among Churches of Christ in careful record keeping. It is hoped that the benefits of thoughtful analysis and strategic planning for appropriate growth will be recognized, and that the need for assessing the social context in which the churches minister will be better understood. While concentrating on Ontario, the inquiry, hopefully, will be informative for possible similar studies by members of Churches of Christ in other regions of Canada.

Finally, it is the purpose of this study to lay a groundwork for further investigation and prescriptive planning with respect to the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario during the decade of the Nineties and the coming millennium.

Ministry Setting

Ontario

Ontario, the leading province of Canada's ten, is a well differentiated region. Having traditionally an English-Protestant population, Ontario is bounded on the east by the French-Catholic province of Quebec, on the south by the American states of New York and Ohio, on the southwest by Michigan, and on the northwest by a wilderness barrier of some 1,000 miles separating it from Manitoba. While Ontario stretches 1,000 miles to its northern boundary, its main population density is in the southern sector in a wedge defined by Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron, and by the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers to the northeast. One of the two "central" provinces, Ontario has one-third of Canada's population and exerts a strong influence upon the rest of the nation.²

Churches of Christ

Churches of Christ, with roots in a "Restoration Movement" which began in Ontario in the early 1800s, presently are a fellowship of 69 churches and a total membership of 3,100. They function autonomously without the involvement of

co-ordinating associations, conferences, or synods. Yet, they do sense a "brotherhood" connection. This is based on the perception of a common doctrinal position, an awareness of a shared historical development, the experience of a variety of fellowship activities, the transfer of membership between congregations, and participation in cooperative ventures. The "June Meeting," a remnant of the 19th century camp meeting, draws members from across the province to a service hosted by a volunteering congregation on the first Sunday of each June. Toronto churches have sponsored a training-for-service workshop each Good Friday since 1963; this draws a province-wide participation. Another time of general gathering is in mid-October at the annual Bible lecturship of Great Lakes Christian College. Churches of Christ co-operate in mission efforts. Their members, on an individual basis, identify and support several para-church organizations: Camp Omagh, Milton, Ontario, as well as other camps scattered throughout the province; Grove Park Home for seniors, Barrie; and Great Lakes Christian College, Beamsville, a boarding high school and Bible College. They read the national journal, the Gospel Herald, for religious instruction and news of the churches. This perception of unity is not limited to provincial boundaries, but rather spreads nationally and internationally. Nevertheless, their differentiation, geographically and culturally, and their cohesion establish Ontario Churches of Christ as a suitable entity for study.

Ministry

The author of this study is a preacher with the Church of Christ in Waterloo, Ontario, a congregation which was established in that city in 1975. It currently has a membership of 80. This congregation has supported two church plantings: Stratford (1985) and Guelph (1987). In 1988 it hosted *Vision: Canada*, a national church growth seminar which included over 200 participants from eight of the ten provinces and one of the territories. A native of Ontario, his ancestry in Churches of Christ dates back to 1867, the year of Canadian Confederation. During 1954-1984, his ministry included teaching and administering at Great Lakes Christian College for seven and 23 years respectively. This nurtured a regional awareness of and involvement in the life of the Churches of Christ in Ontario.

Definitions and Assumptions

Definitions

"Inquiry," from the Latin, *quaero*, "to seek," by definition is a questioning, an investigation, a search for information. This inquiry will seek to quantify the growth of Churches of Christ and to qualify the contributing factors. Inquiry invites a response. During the course of the inquiry it is hoped that the involvement by various members of the subject group will lead to their stimulation, increased understanding, and activity.

"Growth," with respect to churches can mean numerical

enlargement or spiritual maturation. This study will concentrate on the former, because of its empirical susceptibility, and on the latter through a more subjective assessment. Because spirituality fuels activity, in seeking to discover a correlation between theological perception and numerical growth, the more intangible factor of spirituality will necessarily be present. Numerical growth will be measured in terms of members added and churches planted.

"Churches of Christ"³ is a description that designates those 69 congregations in Ontario which (1) consciously identify themselves as a fellowship, (2) are beneficiaries of the 19th century Restoration Movement in Ontario, and (3) have a conservative doctrinal position which excludes open membership and ecclesiastical organizations greater than the local congregation and are vocal in music.

Assumptions

Certain assumptions are identified which will shape the inquiry and the analysis. These have to do with understanding, application, involvement, and receptivity:

1. Understanding: Deficiencies in theological insights into the nature and purpose of God, the church, the ministers, and the people, if present will contribute to slow growth. Theology supplies motivation and direction for action.

2. Application: Limitations in awareness of the social context and appropriate means of approaching the target

community will hinder effectual evangelism. The theoretical framework conditions application.

3. Involvement: The shape and commitment of leadership will have a direct bearing on the ability of the group to be successful. Widespread participation by the membership is essential.

4. Receptivity: The openness and responsiveness of the target population will have a direct bearing on church growth rates.

Limitations of the Study and Hypothesis

Limitations

This inquiry does not purport to be a sociological study of religious phenomena. Rather, it is an inquiry by a minister into the life of a fellowship to which the inquirer is spiritually and emotionally tied. The study may have some broader application, but its intent is to minister to the body that is the object of its examination. At the same time, while not a sociological research effort, the social dimension of the church is not ignored. The social sciences have a legitimate place in informing the believer who considers the relational behavior of people, both in the church and in the broader community.

Beyond admitting the bias of the inquirer, a certain subjectivism is identified with respect to the subject group. The project will involve representatives of these churches at its various stages. Their responses will bear

the coloration of their own thoughts and attitudes. These are at once the object of the examination and the elements which will obscure the results.

The inquiry will be under some restraint pertaining to the spiritual. Raising questions concerning causes of growth and non-growth can verge upon judgments of faith and faithfulness which are beyond the finite assessments of men.

The inquiry seeks to uncover reasons for the rate and extent of the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario, and will attempt this, in part, by looking at possible correlations between attitude and accomplishment. Nevertheless, it is admitted that no instrument of measurement has been devised or is included in this study to determine empirically the causal relationship.

Hypothesis

Church growth is directly affected by theological perspectives, social awareness, and the involvement level of the church, while moderated by the receptivity condition of the target population.

Objectives

The inquiry proposes to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assemble the statistics of the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario during 1900-1989, with a particular emphasis upon the decade of 1979-1989.
2. To develop a profile of theological and sociological

perceptions and levels of involvement on the part of members of Churches of Christ in Ontario.

3. To explore the possibility of a correlation between the perceptions and practices of #2 with the growth curve of #1 as a means of understanding the growth rate.

4. To involve a significant number of members of Churches of Christ in the processes of data gathering, results analysis, and future projections, so as to stimulate increased interest in the growth of the church in Ontario.

5. To draw from the research suggestions for further studies and directions for achieving accelerated growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario.

6. To provide information, research, and analysis which will be useful to members of Churches of Christ in Ontario as they think about the growth of their congregations.

7. To gain personal insight into the dynamics of church growth in order to be better able to serve the church.

Survey of Literature

Both from historical and sociological perspectives the study of religion in Canada awaits a better day. Regarding the historical, it has been observed that while "religion of one sort or another is the glue that holds Canadian history together" it seems that "...most historians of our own secular age tend to underestimate the fundamental importance of religion in Canadian society."⁴ This viewpoint is not isolated:

Canada in general is poorly serviced when it comes to the religious history of the country or its origins. With a few noteworthy exceptions, Canadian historians have resolutely ignored religion as an historical topic, appearing embarrassed by any serious mention of the subject.⁹

Concerning sociological studies, "Recent surveys by O'Toole of the scope of sociology of religion in Canada provide evidence that research in this field has been sparse."¹⁰

With regard to the church growth genre of writing, its chief flow is from the United States. While the movement's intention is to deal with principles of universal application, works of this type focusing specifically on the Canadian setting are yet to be written.

Canadian bibliographical works frequently omit sections on religion and church history. But giving welcome coverage is Claude Thibault's Bibliographia Canadiana⁷, with works selected from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and political science. An important source of locating periodical literature is mentioned: Dwight L. Smith, ed., The History of Canada, drawn from the data base America: History and Life, an annotated bibliography of periodical literature relating to Canadian history and life including many references to Christianity, church history, etc.⁸

While Canadian general church histories are few in number, background information is available in: The Cross in Canada,⁹ an anthology of vignettes of leaders and events in Canadian church history; The Christian Church in Canada,¹⁰ an overview of Canada's religious development; and The

Church Grows in Canada,¹¹ helpful, for the purpose of this study, in its section, "Recent Developments." The updated The Church in the Canadian Era¹² is the latest release to include coverage in this century.

S. D. Clark's Church and Sect in Canada¹³ stands at the watershed between the earlier factual histories and those reflecting a more recent social analytical interest. His "analysis of the role of religion in the development of Canadian society and his later study...were pioneer contributions in the sociology of Canadian society."¹⁴ Clark "...interprets the role of religion...by combining the frontier thesis with a theory of social disorganization and a cyclical movement from sect to church in religious organizations."¹⁵ Coloring developments in Canada, and especially in Ontario in the early part of this century, was the social gospel movement; a sociological examination of this influence is The Social Gospel in Canada.¹⁶

Canadian sociologies of religion have recently advanced through the publication in 1976 of Crysedale and Wheatcroft's Religion in Canadian Society,¹⁷ and by Reginald Bibby's recent work, Fragmented Gods.¹⁸ "This is the first work to compile and analyze studies by social scientists on the subject."¹⁹

Among journal articles which have proved helpful, the following are mentioned: Carl S. Dudley, "Measuring Church Growth" (1979), church growth from the viewpoint of a mainline church leader;²⁰ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark,

"How the Upstart Sects Won American: 1776-1850" (1989),²¹ examining church and sect responses to a developing nation; Wayne McClintock, "Sociological Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle" (1988),²² a scientific review of McGavran's strategy; and Reginald Bibby, "Religious Encasement in Canada: An Argument for Protestant and Catholic Entrenchment" (1985).²³

While there is an ample number of dissertations on church growth, the interest in examining social context does not appear to be large. One Canadian dissertation bears special attention: Ross, "A Theological Analysis of the Socio-critical Role of the United Church in Canada Between 1925-1935" (1982).²⁴

Restoration history in Canada has one compiled source, Butchart's The Disciples of Christ in Canada Since 1830 (1949).²⁵ This work, from the Disciples' perspective, is rather cool toward Churches of Christ and largely out of touch with them as it moves into the early 20th century. Periodical sources in the form of Christian journals deriving from writers within Churches of Christ are available for the entire period of our study.²⁶ The Gospel Herald, beginning in 1936, is particularly valuable, carrying for many years reports on the churches and listing by name those accepting baptism (as drawn from church bulletins). For the early period, and useful for subsequent research, is Eugene Perry's thesis, "A History of Religious Periodicals of the Restoration Movement in Canada" (1971).²⁷

A flood of books has been published on Church Growth. From McGavran's Understanding Church Growth (1970) to Wagner's Church Growth: State of the Art (1986), the subject has been covered in some detail, but mostly with the practitioner in mind.²⁹ From the viewpoint of Churches of Christ, Flavil Yeakley's Why Churches Grow (1979) and Church Leadership and Organization (1980) are helpful.³⁰ Among a variety of dissertations giving parallel investigations is Hiebert's "Biblical Principles for Church Growth: Strategies for the Contemporary Church" (1987).³⁰ The 1988 issue of Bibliotheca Sacra, edited by Glasscock, on "The Biblical Concept of Elder" investigates Biblical leadership, including Allison Trite, "Church Growth in the Book of Acts."³¹

The related subject of evangelism is increasingly better served from the time of Michael Green's lone but valuable Evangelism in the Early Church (1970).³² Books on this subject, helpful in clarifying the theological perspective of mission as well as in developing the research questionnaires, are: Barrett's Evangelize: A Historical Survey of the Concept (1987);³³ and Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge (1984)³⁴ by Conn. For evangelistic leadership, Greenway's Pastor-Evangelist: Preacher, Model, and Mobilizer (1987)³⁵ speaks to one of the critical points of this project/thesis. McGavran's recent work, Effective Evangelism, A Theological Mandate (1988),³⁶ is an essential work for the theology section.

Two works on communication are reviewed for this study: Bettinghaus and Cody's Persuasive Communication (1987),³⁷ and Cummings, Long, and Lewis's Managing Communication in Organizations (1987).³⁸ Specifically helpful in bringing an integration to the disciplines of communications and church growth is Philip Slate's dissertation, "Communication Theory and Evangelism" (1976).³⁹

In the area of the theology of ministry, Anderson's Theological Foundations of Ministry (1978)⁴⁰ will remain basic. From the Lutheran viewpoint, Braaten's The Apostolic Imperative: Nature and Aim of the Church's Mission and Ministry (1985)⁴¹ is helpful in the area of polity.

Having considered the problem, purpose, setting, definitions, assumptions, and limitations of this study, as well as having given an hypothesis, identified objectives, and surveyed the literature, the inquiry must now turn to the broader context in which the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario is to be examined.

NOTES

¹Cf. Geoffrey H. Ellis, "Developing a National Perspective for Canadian Church Growth," paper presented to the Vision: Canada seminar, Waterloo, Ontario, Aug. 12, 1988, pp. 6.10.1-10.

²Ontario with Quebec form the linear urban agglomeration tabbed "Main Street, Canada." See Maurice Yeates, Main Street: Windsor to Quebec City (Toronto: Gage Publishing Limited, 1975).

³The phrase "Churches of Christ" has wide-spread generic use, designating the body of Christendom in its broadest sense. Those who use it to identify their fellowship, specifically, find its Biblical usage appealing, i.e. Rom.16:16, and would prefer to see it as a description rather than as a title.

⁴D. A. Muse, ed., A Reader's Guide to Canadian History, I. Beginnings to Confederation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 140.

⁵Barry Moody, "Notes and Comments - Religious History: The State of the Craft in the Maritime Provinces," Journal of the Canadian Church History Society 25 (October 1983): 93-94.

⁶Helen Ralston, "Strands of Research on Religious Movements in Canada," Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses 17 (Summer 1988): 257.

⁷Claude Thibault, Bibliographia Canadiana (Don Mills, Ont.: Longman Canada Ltd., 1973).

⁸Dwight L. Smith, The History of Canada (Santa Barbara, Cal.: ABC-Clio Information Services, 1983).

⁹John S. Moir, ed., The Cross in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966).

¹⁰H. H. Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1956).

¹¹Douglas J. Wilson, The Church Grows in Canada (Toronto: Committee on Missionary Education, Canadian

Council of Churches, 1966).

¹²John Webster Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era (Burlington, Ont.: Welch Publishing Company, Inc., 1988).

¹³S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948).

¹⁴Helen Ralston, "Strands of Research," p. 258.

¹⁵Ibid., quoting Harvey H. Hiller, "The Contribution of S. D. Clark to the Sociology of Religion," Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses 6 (1976-77): 415-27.

¹⁶Richard Allen, ed., The Social Gospel in Canada (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1975).

¹⁷Stewart Crysedale and Les Wheatcroft, eds., Religion in Canadian Society (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976).

¹⁸Reginald W. Bibby, Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987).

¹⁹Ibid., p. ix.

²⁰Carl S. Dudley, "Measuring Church Growth," Christian Century 96 (June 1979): 635-639.

²¹Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, "How the Upstart Sects Won America, 1776-1850," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 28 (January 1989): 27-44.

²²E. Wayne McClintock, "Sociological Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle," International Review of Missions 77 (January 1988): 107-116.

²³Reginald E. Bibby, "Religious Encasement in Canada: An Argument for Protestant and Catholic Entrenchment," Social Compass: International Review of Sociology of Religion 32 (February-March 1985): 287-303.

²⁴Douglas H. Ross, "A Theological Analysis of the Socio-Critical Role of the United Church in Canada between 1925-1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1982).

²⁵Reuben Butchart, The Disciples of Christ in Canada since 1830 (Toronto: Canadian Headquarters' Publications, Churches of Christ (Disciples), 1949).

²⁶See "Periodicals" under Bibliography.

²⁷Eugene C. Perry, "A History of Religious Periodicals of the Restoration Movement in Canada" (M.A. thesis, Pepperdine University, 1971).

²⁸Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970); Peter C. Wagner, ed., Church Growth: State of the Art (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986).

²⁹Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr., Church Leadership and Organization (Arvado, Col.: Christian Communications, Inc., 1980); Why Churches Grow (Broken Arrow, Okla.: Christian Communications, Inc., 1979).

³⁰Arthur Hiebert, "Biblical Principles for Church Growth: Strategies for the Contemporary Church" (D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987).

³¹Allison A. Trites, "Church Growth in the Book of Acts," Bibliotheca Sacra 145 (April-June 1988).

³²Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970).

³³David B. Barrett, Evangelize! A Historical Survey of the Concept (Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope, 1987).

³⁴Harvie M. Conn, Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1984).

³⁵Roger S. Greenway, Pastor-Evangelist: Preacher, Model, and Mobilizer for Church Growth (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1987).

³⁶Donald A. McGavran, Effective Evangelism, A Theological Mandate (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1988).

³⁷Erwin P. Bettinghaus and Michael J. Cody, Persuasive Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1987).

³⁸Wayland H. Cummings, Harry W. Long, and Michael L. Lewis, Managing Communications in Organizations (Scottsdale, Ariz.: Gorsuch Scarisbrick, Publishers, 1987).

³⁹C. Philip Slate, "Communication Theory and Evangelism" (D. Miss. dissertation, Fuller Theological

Seminary, 1976).

⁴⁰Ray S. Anderson, ed., Theological Foundations of Ministry (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978).

⁴¹Carl E. Braaten, The Apostolic Imperative: Nature and Aim of the Church's Mission and Ministry (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985).

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT

The Theological Perspective

The context for the examination of the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario is presented in a three-fold study: the theological perspective, the theoretical framework, and the demographic setting.

Theology provides both direction and motivation. The clarity and comprehensiveness with which a group sees its theological position and mandate will have a direct bearing upon its enlargement. Pertinent to the subject of the growth of the church are theologies of the God of purpose, the Church in mission, Ministers in service, and Christians in practice.

God of Purpose

The unity of God is expressed, through the three Persons who make up the Godhead, in three ministries to the creation: revelation, reconciliation, and relationship. These three ministries, while interlocking, broadly encompass three periods of salvation history: God's interaction with Israel whereby God became known in his person and priorities--revelation; God's achievement, through his Son, of the means for the redemption of the

human race--reconciliation; and God's entrance through his Spirit into the very heartland of his creatures--relationship.

God is known through his doing. As Anderson states in his premise:

Ministry precedes and produces theology not the reverse...Out of this [God's] ministry emerges theological activity, exploring and expounding the nature and purpose of God in and for creation and human creatures.¹

Man, the creature, sees God through his creative feats: the endless universe and the matchless symmetry of the biosphere, earth. Thus, "God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made..."(Rom. 1:20). The statement, "God rested," following his intensive activity, suggests that he was able to remove himself somewhat from a creation which "was good." Interactive life was now in place. The food chains were functioning. The global ecology was supportive of life. Man had two essential responses: to tend the creation and to worship the Creator. Creation points man to the transcendence of God. He is over and above and beyond. He is not the creation. To see God as in the flower or as a spark within the breast of man is idolatry.² God's revelation to man as the majestic, all-powerful, transcendent, wholly other Being was the thrust of his dealings with Israel. The demonstration was not to be limited to the Hebrew nation. Such is the understanding for all the world to grasp. For this reason the Old Testament Scriptures are the prerequisite testimony for lovers-of-God

in all times and places.

God, however, is more than Creator. He is Savior. Man's rebellion and fall ended God's "resting" and resulted in God's persistent activity, working among men to bring about their reconciliation. In this the purposefulness of God is dramatically revealed: his is not the capricious working of a deity supporting the endless cycles of the seasons and of harvest, or a tinkerer in the endless rise and fall of nations. Rather, his is the inexorable working out of his plan for man "according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with his purpose and will" (Eph. 1:11). Yet, this activity of God in ministry would remain enigmatic, a "mystery," were it not for the explanation and definition given through God-inspired prophets and, especially, at the last through his Son, God's ultimate revelation of himself (Heb. 1:1, 2). His Son is both the object and the means of God's ministry. The Christ in whom "all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form" (Col. 2:9) is both the message and the ministry of God. The meaning of God for man is translated into terms which man can understand, expressed through the life of Jesus. In effect, God says, "Look upon Jesus and know what I am like. In him are demonstrated my concerns and priorities for you. The beauty and completeness of his surrendered life, sustained by my strength, are possible for you also." This is God's message to man through his Son. "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...And those he predestined, he also called; and those he

called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified" (Rom. 8:29a, 30).

The objective of God's mission to men is their return to his side through reconciliation. Estrangement and alienation from God have characterized man's relationship with God since the Fall. God works persistently to overcome the separation. The familiar themes "For God so loved the world..." (Jn. 3:16) and "God is not willing that any should perish..." (II Pet.3:9) identify God's disposition toward man. The fact that God would carry through with creation even though aware, through his foreknowledge, that man's greater history would be marked with rebellion and loss and that man's return to himself would be at great cost to himself and with great struggle by man indicate God's acceptance of these terms. Life would be a challenge for all men, a discipline for those who accepted the narrow road, an ennobling struggle for those who would finish the course. Man would be transformed out of a crucible of testing, struggle, and suffering, into one who has achieved the appearance of "a son of man."

God's ministry to man is both to save him and to translate his status into the actuality of human achievement. His ministry is to nurture man's maturity in the likeness of Christ, that is, his own. Reconciliation is thus restoration and improvement. The improvement of the world is by and through the transformation of individuals. The ministering God focused on Calvary and on the outpouring of Pentecost. Consequently, cleansed and empowered, man is

ready for his transformation "from glory to glory" in his likeness (II Cor. 3:18b).

The purpose of God's self-revelation as God of mission in human history and as God with a reconciling mission in the lives of men is to foster relationship. Not only does he desire a restoration of the Edenic companionship, his object is to admit his creation into his family. This upgrading from the early privilege illustrates the benefits expected to be gained from the purging, chastening, refining effects of human struggle. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba, Father'" (Rom. 8:15). God's ministry is to establish the relationship of family. Jesus leads man to call God "Our Father" (Mt. 6:9). Through the gift of God's Spirit, God willingly takes up residence in the lives of men. God's men, in turn, share the privilege of relationship with all men.

Throughout salvation history, the intentionality of God is striking: "...God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised..." (Heb. 6:18). Man must relate to God as the God of purpose. The transcendence and immanence of God are discovered in his revelation--Creation and Salvation; they are discovered in his reconciliation--Righteousness and Redemption; and they are discovered in his relationship--Holiness and Family. Yet, man often thinks of his response to God as being two-fold: to his transcendence with reverence and to his immanence with fellowship. Rather, his response must be

three-fold. He must further join with God in his purposefulness, to share with the restless God in his pursuit of his grand objective, the reconciliation of the world.

Church in Mission

If God is understood as one who ministers to his creation, even so those called into his family are to see themselves as extensions of that ministry. As well, the theology of the church is understood through its mission. The church has a ministry identical to that of the God it serves, namely revelation, reconciliation, and relationship. So essential to its nature is this function that it is proper to say the church is ministry. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:20). In imaging Christ, the church engages in revelation. "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Through the church, the world sees God (cf. Eph. 3:10). In carrying the Gospel to the world, the church engages in reconciliation. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation..." (II Cor. 5:18). In receiving the lost in warm embrace, the church engages in relationship. "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience...Let the peace of Christ

rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace" (Col. 3:12).

God's entry into the human world in order to gain its reconciliation through Christ, required a submission and a surrender by his Son the scale of which dumbfounds any mortal who seriously contemplates it. The twin poles of redemption, the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ, cover the magnetic field of God's gracious willingness to join with man in his struggle. So intensive was God's determination to make possible the return of man to his side that he was willing to share the mortal realm. When Christ gave his charge to the apostles "...go into all the world," it was based on the splendid leadership of the One who had done just that. "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (Jn. 17:18) is Christ's high priestly prayer to God regarding his disciples. Thus, the church must forever hold the incarnation of Christ as the model of its disposition toward the world. This is the meaning of "...eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man" (Jn. 6:53), and of "...take up his cross and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). The world and its redemption must become the preoccupation of the church. The church must penetrate the agony of the world's struggle. It must be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the world's citizens so that the world might be saved. This is the incarnational theology of the church in mission.

To reflect God's perfection (*teleois*, Mt. 5:45), it is necessary for the church to achieve maturity (*teleion*, Eph.

4:13). Paul considered that the goal of his ministry was to present "everyone perfect (teleion) in Christ" (Col. 1:28). The scope and shape of this maturity is the person of Christ: "...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13b). Maturity for the church is both the result of and the means to salvation. The future of the immature is in doubt: "infants tossed back and forth by the waves" (Eph. 4:14). Maturity gives promise: where Christian virtues are added "in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ...if you do these things you will never fall" (II Pet. 1:8, 10b). Maturity is the means to salvation for the church and, through the church, for the world: "...so that you may become blameless and pure, children without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life" (Phil. 2:15, 16a). Herein is revelation.

It is essential that every effort be made to move the entire church to maturity. The history of Christendom is a pattern of satisfaction with, or resignation to, the maturity of the few, the immaturity of the many. The emergence of priestly orders in the ancient church, resulting in clergy-laity layering, tacitly accepted two standards of spirituality. This distinction was perpetuated in the rise of Protestantism even in the face of its repeated expressions of loyalty to "the priesthood of all believers." The rise of the monastic orders with their

withdrawal from society for spiritual exercises by the few was a capitulation to the idea that the church population in the main could or would remain worldly. Centuries of solitary meditation by the few in a quest for the mystical experience of the presence of God ignored the promise that God would be found among his people. The nearly universal model today among Protestantism, of congregations being ministered to by one pastor, threatens to leave the church in perpetual infancy. The accretions of history result in a church ministered unto rather than a church galvanized in ministry. In weakness, it has difficulty in saving either itself or others. The church with integrity has the whole body in ministry. Herein is reconciliation.

The church must be clear in its understanding of the thrust of its ministry in reconciliation. "Evangelism" describes the procedure.³ The church's ministry in reconciliation is carrying the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven come to earth and standing open to receive men and women "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9b). World evangelism is the ultimate reason for the existence of the church on earth and whereby it shares the intentionality of God. The incompleteness of its task is only that which is prolonging the world in its present form: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Mt. 24:14). The very concomitant of maturity for the Christian church is evangelism: the "inexpressible joy" because of the "indescribable gift" becomes the

"irrepressible telling" (I Pet. 1:18; II Cor. 9:15; Acts 8:4).

Evangelism is the announcement of heaven's amnesty. The actual experience of heaven's grace by those who heed the invitation is through sharing life with a gracious church. The ultimate test of the mature church is that its people love one another (Jn. 15:17). And this is an inclusivist love: it readily receives into its circle all who respond to the call of the Gospel. It ministers to the needs of these broken ones so that they, too, may find health and wholeness. The church's capacity for accepting, protecting, and nurturing the penitent enables its significant ministry in sustaining. Without this ministerial enfolding, the initial evangelistic function is of little worth. A loving church is God's prime instrument for the redemption of the world. For this reason, man's relationship with God (vertical) is conditioned by his relationship with man (horizontal) (I Jn. 4:20-21). Herein is relationship.

Thus, the God of purpose works through the church in mission. It in turn shares God's objective that his Kingdom on earth multiply until it reaches the uttermost.

Ministers in Service

That it might be the more effective, the church is served by its ministers. That the church is forever penetrated by the world, that its people are in varying stages of spiritual maturation, that its life and work are often pursued in a collective modality, require, logically,

that it be led. Its leaders are not of the compulsive-ruler model common in the world, but rather they are of the brother-servant model unique to the polity of Christ (Mt. 20:25-28). Contrary to the oft-repeated viewpoint that the New Testament is neutral in its interest in church organization,⁴ the very essence of the Christian Way is bound up in the type and status of its leaders. To the uninitiated, the leadership might even appear to be non-existent. The leaders do not hold offices so much as they move through the services they render. They are honored for their faith and example, not because of prerogatives of place. They stand among, rather than above, the people. They are obeyed because their words are assessed to be accurate according to the Scriptures and weighty because of the authenticity of their spirituality.

The leadership of Christ's church form a triumvirate of servants whose interactive benefits achieve a unity of influence which stirs, directs, and moves the church. Its ministers are designated elders, evangelists, and servants. Their functions are in the areas of revelation, reconciliation, and relationship, respectively. In spirit and design, in purpose and function, this Christian leadership, characteristic of the church of Christ in the New Testament, is entirely consistent with the character of the church as a grass roots community. When in place, balanced, and functioning, the leadership is able to inspire a dynamic for irresistible growth.

As God has this three-fold ministry, which achieves the

unity of his purpose, even so Christians have three spheres of growth development which lead to the unity of their persons. In keeping with God's self-revelation, his people are to enter into his holiness. Sharing in God's eternal purpose, his people learn to communicate the good news of salvation. Responding to God's invitation to fellowship, his people are to embrace each other in brotherhood. The three leaders correspond to this three-fold enrichment. They serve the church in its quest for maturity.⁵

Completeness comes when the church combines holiness with outreach and with service. This is the essence of Christ's prayer for his church given under the shadow of the cross. Christ prayed, "...that all of them may be one as we are one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us..." (Jn. 17:21a). He prayed for their unification in fellowship (Jn. 17:11), for their sanctification (17:17), and for the effectiveness of their message (17:20). The congruence of this trinity of values is impressive: the threefold purpose of God for mankind corresponds to the threefold leadership in the church, which in turn responds to the threefold spheres of growth and development for the individual Christian. This three-in-one integration on three levels--divine, corporate, and individual--means that there is an economy of energy. Pursuit on any level works for the harmony of the whole, through interrelationship. Each emphasis requires the presence of the other for balance and legitimacy. For example, holiness requires brotherhood for it to be genuine:

"...anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen" (I Jn. 4:20b). The double privilege of the Christian's fellowship with God and brethren reduces to selfishness if it is not offered to the outcast. In this light it is understandable why Christ says, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men I will disown him before my Father in heaven" (Mt. 10:32-33).

Evangelism is not first doing: it is being. Christians must become what they would encourage others to become. In their holiness, they are to be modelers of God. To assist them in this development of being is the elder. The elder is the exemplar out of his spiritual maturity; he is a shepherd, a teacher who nurtures; he is an overseer, i.e. the visitor who looks over the condition of souls (cf. I Pet. 5:1,2; Acts 20:17, 28).

Evangelism is not only telling: it is serving. Christians must be ready to receive those who are ready to convert. Jesus, in his "magnificent condescension," first became a servant in his walk to the cross (cf. Phil. 2:1-11). Christians, in their service, are modelers of this Son of God who came not "to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:25). To assist them in this development is the deacon, or servant. The servant of the church facilitates body life so that in practical and relational ways the body is harmonious, supportive, and aglow with love. Paul teaches that "servants

are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, [holding]...the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience...Those who have served will gain an excellent standing..." (I Tim. 3:8, 9, 13).

Evangelism is also telling. Christians must be what their doctrine describes, and they must do what is consistent with love. As well, they are called on to verbalize the Gospel. The growth of the early church was described as "the spread of the Word of God" (cf. Acts 6:7; 12:24; 13:49; 19:20). The Son came as the "Word" (Jn. 1:1), and he came "preaching" (Mk. 1:14). Christians in their telling are modelers of the Holy Spirit, who came into the world, yes, inundated the world with his baptismal presence (Acts 2:33), to convict it of sin, righteousness, and the judgment (Jn. 16:8-12). The Spirit is the great agent of communication for the Kingdom of God. To assist the Christian in this development is the evangelist. The evangelist is the communication leader in the church. The evangelist was one of the gifts of Christ to the church (Eph. 4:11). A church which is led by a team of men who are seriously engaged in hands-on, word-speaking evangelism will be an evangelistic church. The power of their example, the benefit of their equipping, and the stimulus of their zeal will lead the church into activity.

It is one thing to see the three-fold leadership of the church as being Biblical. It is another thing to appreciate it for its potential for dynamic growth and the development of the church, both in its numerical enlargement

and its spiritual improvement. The efficacy of this three-fold leadership, however, depends upon a sensitive balance between the respective leadership roles. In this the leaders must not fail the church: the preachers must not displace the elders in their pastoring; the elders must not move into the deacons' realm, forcing them to become primarily non-people functionaries; and the preachers must not fail to fulfill their royal work, serving as ambassadors at large to a dying world.

Christians in Practice

The entire church ministering is the goal. For the church to recline in relative passivity while enjoying the ministrations of its servants, whether of the triune Biblical pattern, or of its singular pastor in the Protestant model, is repugnant given the action of God, the example of Christ, and the work of the Spirit. Every member a minister is the goal. Each Christian has the right and the privilege of sensing God's call into specific opportunities for doing good work. He can so dedicate his daily vocation to God's glory that he can rightly claim that, in his life, the secular has given way to the sacred. Each Christian receives the heavenly call into the kingdom; his response to his specific opportunities is in discovering God's gifting and the special responsibilities which confront him in his own time-place habitation.⁶

The "ordinary" Christian must not fall prey to the ancient heresy which held that the church consisted of the

clergy while the people were simply adherents appealing to the church for the grace it dispensed. The people are the church. The ordinary people are God's instrument for the redemption of the world. The sense of ownership and the parallel awareness of accountability must be universal among the saints. The professionalism, training, and salaried status of the church's fulltime workers must not lead to intimidation, resulting in the elevation of the few while depreciating the many. "So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours..." (I Cor. 3:21). Fulltime workers are resources for Christians; they are the Christians' possession in terms of benefits to draw on. Neither the fulltime worker nor the Christian "volunteer" can afford the indulgence of the hireling arrangement. The ordinary Christian draws on the knowledgeable assistance of the fulltime worker from time to time as he confronts a dizzying world. The fulltime worker needs the life of the ordinary Christian to be reminded what living the Christian life without the benefit of stipend really means.

The church must return to understanding that the "gathered" church is that which has been called to the kingdom of God's dear Son for a lifetime of service. It is not simply the group that gathers in a particular building at a specified time. The church is at work severally and variously through the lives of its people as they filter into and spread across the demographic map. The church can and does organize in groups, small and large, to do planned work for the Lord. But to view the church as existing only

when it is physically assembled, and functioning only when it is corporately involved, is to deal an indignity to the church of the people who, scattering, are preaching the word wherever they go.

Every member a minister means every Christian an evangelist. This assertion recognizes that each Christian has a three-fold accountability before God: in holiness, in service, and in speaking. Whether sharing the good news informally as natural opportunities arise or expressing the good news through deeds of kindness or through postures of integrity, convicted Christians exude the grace of God and are the aroma of Christ (II Cor. 2:15). Every man in his own way, evangelism is a life-style which expresses itself in gossiping the Gospel, showing a concern for a neighbor, through religious conversations, in home Bible-studies, among friendships, in silent witness, with every and any response which fulfills this preoccupation with the other person's spiritual well-being. Paul said,

Pray for us...Pray that I may proclaim it [the message of Christ] clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone (Col. 3:3a, 4-6).

The theological perspective has attempted to develop an understanding of the evangelistic thrust of the God of purpose, of the Church in mission, of Ministers in service, and of Christians in practice. The inquiry now turns to theories of relational behavior which affect the growth of churches.

The Theoretical Framework

Theories are developed through the examination of selected phenomena and the formulation of a reasonable explanation of the factors and forces in place. The theoretical construct, by its very nature, does not become absolute in its authority, and is always open to question and modification. Workable theories are helpful in seeking understanding. This inquiry advances two theoretical constructs: church growth and family systems. This examination is preceded by a reflection on the social rootage of religion.

Ministry in Context

Churches are spiritual entities. They exist because of the revelation by God of himself and of his will, and in response to his invitation to enter into relationship with him through reconciliation. They are shaped by divine teaching and act out of a set of spiritual values and according to heavenly agendas. They are comprised by those who have been "rescued...from the dominion of darkness and brought...into the kingdom of the Son he loves..." (Col. 1:14). They have set their minds, "on thing above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God...on things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:1a, 2). They are of the heavenly order.

Yet, at the same time, Paul asserts that those who have turned to the order of the Second Adam, as long as they

dwell in this world, have at least one foot in the realm of the first Adam (cf. Rom. 5:12-21). Christians are still of the earth, earthy. The old struggle with sin continues. Paul confessed this dichotomy in regard to his own ambivalence with sin: "So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin" (Rom. 7:25b). What is more, they must continue to deal with the population of the first Adam.

Church people are also human. Congregations are social groupings. As such, they are not immune to the dynamics of human relationships. Churches must function in a social setting. While the Christians' pilgrimage is to heaven, they have, en route, returned from the mountain of their transfiguration to serve in the valley of human existence until Christ calls or comes. They must serve humankind on human terms with the daily taking up of their cross, the symbol of their renunciation of their own lives for the sake of the Gospel. Thus, Christians have two sides; they live in two worlds. They must have competencies in both areas: the spiritual and the social. The reality is that social influences are strong, capable of squeezing the church into its mould (Rom. 12:2). The optimism is that the skilful handling of social forces can enhance the growth of the Kingdom as it works among men: Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Mt. 10:16).

There is an increasing recognition of the significance of the social in the working out of spiritual matters.

A well worn phrase in social psychology is that ideas are socially created, socially sustained, and socially changed. Religion shows no sign of having been granted an exemption from that pattern.⁷

With but little reflection, the shaping, conditioning, even controlling influences of the social setting are identified, be they expressed through family, schooling, culture, or even through social relationships within the churches. Shaw has observed: "Attitudes, the end products of the socialization process, significantly influence response..."⁸ And, in turn, man's attitudes regulate his actions:

Attitude entails an existing predisposition to respond to social objects which in interaction with situational and other dispositional variables, guides and directs the overt behavior of the individual.⁹

The church will be blindsided by social forces unless it becomes alert to their presence and skilled in their management.

Since interaction among people is required by the basic nature of the church, interpersonal processes can get in the way of the church's pursuit of its authentic purpose...The complexities of human interaction if not recognized and managed, can absorb the attention and energies of a congregation to the neglect of its real purpose.¹⁰

Understanding the place and importance of the social forces present within the church is a useful insight for appraising the conditions of the growth of the church. Rejecting the prevailing wisdom that lack of commitment is the primary reason for the failure of churches to grow, Lyle Schaller states:

Perhaps the most persuasive single explanation of why small membership churches tend to remain on a plateau in size or decline slowly, rather than to grow in numbers, is based on the theory of group life.¹¹

Therefore, the social sciences need to be "taken captive...and made obedient to Christ" (II Cor. 10:56).

It may be a belated recognition by the country's religious groups that the social sciences can assist them in understanding themselves better--that religious commitment, in the words of sociologist, Peter Berger, 'involves commitment to clear thinking.'¹²

In response to the apprehension that secular disciplines might be employed to assess spiritual matters, it remains to be said that the proper application of social theory is to the social phenomena of the life of the church, not to the spiritual component: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Mt. 22:21). Thus, the conclusion is reached, as expressed by Crysdale and Wheatcroft, since religion "is intrinsically social," it remains that "...all social and cultural behavior originates within a given context."¹³ Because religious behavior is contextually situated, it can be observed:

The observation of experiences that are repetitive and common to many persons in varying settings and through succeeding generations leads to generalizations which may be tested and modified, validated or rejected [for]...while religion is usually, if not essentially individual, it is also inevitably social.¹⁴

The task, then, is to see the Ontario Churches of Christ in their social context.

Church Growth

In the last half of this century, the application of the behavioral sciences to the growth of churches has spawned a "church growth" movement whose fountainhead is the School of World Mission of the Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. Its mentor is Donald McGavran whose

works The Bridges of God (1955)¹⁵ and Understanding Church Growth (1979)¹⁶ launched what has become a globe-encircling application. Church growth theory stresses the importance of applying the findings of the social sciences in (1) an attempt to understand and properly approach the target population, (2) the need to assess adequately the social dynamics at play within the church itself, in order to maximize growth, and (3) the effort to design evangelistic strategies which are socially apt and numerically productive.

Church growth theory, its proponents insist, is based on a Biblical theology of growth. "Donald McGavran...sees church growth as essentially theological. He never tires of affirming that 'God wants His lost sheep found and brought into the fold.'"¹⁷ Reviewing the Biblical record, Gibbs concludes,

This presents us with a consistent picture, namely that it is God's declared purpose that his people will grow in number not simply through biological growth...but as they exert a powerful spiritual influence upon the world.¹⁸

Yet the church growth movement has been criticized for a perceived theological "thinness." In a defence on this point, Wagner, a leading influence within the movement, observed that the movement is young: "Dynamic movements directly involved in Christian ministry rarely begin with theological formulations."¹⁹ And McGavran, earlier, acknowledged the formative condition of its theology and then offered a challenge:

The basic positions of church growth are profoundly

Biblical and theological; but are not a complete theology. Complete your theory by building these basic growth concepts as to the urgency and authority of evangelism into it...The test as to whether you have done this or not is whether your congregations are stimulated to vibrant, grateful growth such as New Testament churches exemplified.²⁰

More recently, in Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate (1988), McGavran returned to present an apologia for church growth theology. Citing criticisms on the right, "too little attention to correct doctrine, etc.," and on the left, "unaware of world hunger, injustice, etc.," and with both sides certain that the movement is concerned with "mere numbers," McGavran replies that his theology is based upon,

...great emphasis upon the New Testament mandate for effective discipling. Those engaging in church growth are not pursuing the latest fad. They are emphasizing essential Christianity...Any truly Christian theology in the most responsive world ever to exist must demand church growth. Any fully Christian theology in America, where at least four-fifths of the population is either very nominally Christian or totally non-Christian, must pray for, give to, and work for substantial church growth.²¹

McGavran's definition of church growth is informative:

Church growth is much wider and deeper than adding names to church rolls. It delves into how persons and peoples become genuinely Christian and revolutionize the cultures and populations in the midst of which God has placed them. Church growth arises in theology and Biblical faithfulness. It draws heavily on the social sciences because it always occurs in societies. It continually seeks for instances in which God has granted growth and then asks what are the real factors which he has blessed to such increase.²²

The major propositions developed by this theory involve the shifting receptivity of people, the homogeneous unit principle, and the importance of demographic understanding. The construct of these theories provides a useful model by which to evaluate the effectiveness of Ontario Churches of

Christ.

Receptivity. Individuals make responses and life-changing decisions which are largely compatible with tacit approvals experienced within their social groups. This is true even in Western culture where the cult of individualism is well advanced. It is more evident in other areas where the community mentality is strongly in place. The attitude of the people at large toward Christianity, thus, will support or impede its penetration into the respective societies.²³ Certain groups are more open at given times to responding. Locating such and working carefully for this fuller harvest is recommended by church growth theory. "The world is full of receptive and resistant populations. While all must hear the gospel (Mk. 16:14), we must make sure that the ripe fields are the ones that are reaped to the last sheaf."²⁴ Any number of social, economic, political, and religious factors may open the societal group to the Christian message. The turning of a few to the Gospel can spark a "people movement"²⁵ response: "...Where a close-knit social group receives the gospel and they have an opportunity to weigh it together rather than as individuals in isolation, a powerful interaction goes on to help the group toward decision."²⁶

The Homogeneous Unit. This viewpoint is first sensitive to people group differentiation. "Humanity is a vast mosaic of tens of thousand of pieces."²⁷ Americans are awakening to the fact that their society is not now one monolithic culture, nor, in spite of the "melting pot"

perception widely held, has it ever been. Canadians well know that their country is "regionally, ecologically and demographically, a highly differentiated nation..."²⁸ And even though the world urbanization shift is going on apace, with the projection that by 2000 more than half of the world's population will live in great cities, "each city is composed of many different ethnic strains."²⁹

This viewpoint proceeds to structure evangelistic strategy and church building efforts on the assumption that people move more freely from and into like group settings. Evangelism that is others-conscious will be sensitive to conditions which either impede or encourage the prospect's progress toward the Gospel. There will be the understanding that the unreconciled person has yet to adopt the generous mindset expected of a Christian. Further, it is to be expected that the prospect will move more readily within the zone in which he is comfortable. This translates into a more ready reception of the message of the Cross in his own language from one who reflects familiar cultural habits and which invites association with people who live within that common social expression. "People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers."³⁰ Research done by Yeakley among American Churches of Christ indicates that "subjects were much more likely to be in the convert category if they were similar in age, socio-economic status, and educational levels to the congregation with which they were associated."³¹ This is Christianity functioning through the homogeneous unit.

It is true that in Christ there is neither "Jew nor Greek," and that the spirit of Christian brotherhood will transcend ethnic separation. Yet, the achievement of such a full-hearted unity in Christ is the mark of Christian maturity, not the condition to be demanded of the inquiring prospect or the fledgling Christian. Often those demanding heterogeneous fellowship are in the cultural majority, secure in their predominant position.³² This is not to argue for an easy gospel and cheap grace. It is not demanding an inflexible maintenance of a uni-ethnic church. Rather, it is a recognition which, from the viewpoint of evangelism, makes practical sense.

The homogeneous principle in church growth theory has, however, been criticized. Presented by the movement as a sociological response to a social phenomenon, it is appropriate that it should receive a sociological assessment. This Wayne McClintock does in a study in which he finds that equating tribes, castes, lineages, and classes in total, i.e. "all the nations" of Christ's commission, as being equivalent to "the people groups" of sociology is to be imprecise. "The vagueness of his [McGavran's] definition of the HU...is of little practical assistance to anyone wishing to identify particular homogeneous units."³³ He is critical of McGavran's technical knowledge regarding anthropology and sociology.

[Church leaders] are left with a broad and vague concept which, while flexible enough to encompass a whole nation (political unit) or a kinship group (clan), offers little guidance for determining the membership of a given HU group in the intermediate scale of social

organizations.³⁴

McClintock goes on to develop and to define more accurately what a homogeneous unit might be. In so doing, he does not reject the basic premise of the unit being the appropriate evangelistic target, but, in fact, his argument helps to reinforce the importance of accuracy in sociological theory, perception, and application.

Demographics. The congregation which is alert to the social position of prospects for the Gospel and which is sensitive to the importance of single culture evangelism will find the need for a careful assessment of the people and people groups which comprise the community in which it is located. The demographic study as an exercise in community analysis is valuable in laying the groundwork for such enlightened outreach.³⁵ Demography asks who lives where, in what numbers, and under what conditions? What are the unique features of a given community? What ethnic concentrations exist? What are the socio-economic, religious, and political features which prevail? In short, anything and everything which can be garnered and added to the emerging profile is of value. Resource material such as newspapers, census reports, market guides, phone directories, and chamber of commerce publications are available. Resource people such as librarians, real estate agents, church secretaries, and residents are usually willing to be helpful. The demographic study will surface the group or groups that the congregation may be best suited to target. It will uncover needs which may be within the

congregation's ability to respond to. It will encourage an awareness that is outward looking, others focused, opportunity sensitive, and method shaping. It will promote evangelistic approaches which will help to surmount social barriers to congregational enlargement.³⁶

Critiquing. Church growth theory must be seen as a concerned Christian response to the challenge of making sense of the complexities of society, how people respond, and what stand as social barriers and gates to the Gospel. As such it deserves neither to be praised nor damned, but rather, analyzed, the good used, the questionable and the bad discarded. Wright approaches an exercise on the positive critiquing of the church growth movement, by asking if it is "ultimate or penultimate?" He raises three significant concerns: (1) the very normal tendency of the church simply to become acculturated, that is "to absorb, integrate, and reflect the culture to which it is called by God to serve..." (2) the use of contemporary science in the church: "can we ever scientifically program the success of the church [making] efficiency our goal and pragmatism our method?" and (3) if by growth we mean additions to our rolls, "will we not make the mistake...of simply making it too easy for people to become members?"³⁷ At the same time he lists values he perceives in the movement: (1) a corrective to "the former apathy and self-satisfaction in the church," (2) an improvement on "the introspection of those years of breast-beating and self condemnation about how sick the church had become," and (3) "...utilizing those

contributions of technology which are usable..."³⁸ Wright's conclusion is apt:

My conviction is that, in general, the church will grow when it involves itself in mission. The goal, however, is not making the church grow; it is faithfulness to God's mission revealed in the incarnation and through Christ given to the church. The growth is a by-product of a larger goal.³⁹

Family Systems

Church growth theory focuses upon inter-group dynamics. It has an outward, evangelistic focus. On the other hand, family systems, or family process theory, when applied to church studies, focuses upon the group itself, namely the congregation. It entails an effort to understand the social dynamics of its inner life. The congregation itself is an important part of the growth equation (cf. the theology of relationship). Thus, not only is evangelistic outreach important, relational interinvolvement is also important. Converts are to be made, but new believers must be integrated into the family of God as vital, active participants in the life of the body. It is the ease with which the church can be described as a family that gives the key in this section.⁴⁰

During the past quarter century, a way of understanding the psycho-social condition of individuals by seeing them through their place in the web of family relationships has developed. This approach recognizes the power of the family to shape the emotional qualities of the individual. In turn the person's relational behavior is subject to strong impulses which flow from his or her affective conditioning.

The family's power to continue to influence these conditions in one person's life on an ongoing basis, or to reproduce itself in like fashion, repetitiously and in a patterned way, in its offspring generation after generation, has gained increasing recognition. Persons within the family circle are bound together in relationships, the magnetic holding power of which is emotion. There is a tendency for two persons in relationship to work out the conditions of their relationship through a third party. Given that each person is part of a fundamental triangle of father, mother, and child, this three-point interaction is universal in its expression. Each person then is found in multiplied triangular relationships with all other members within the family circle. The total of the emotional attachments which exist in a family system constitute a vast reservoir of emotional force which is compelling in its regulating and binding impact upon its members.⁴¹ This influence derives from beyond the nuclear family to the extended family so that often present forces are reflections of historic values operative in the family in earlier times. The extended family, as an emotional system of regulating power, and as a living organism, manifests the homeostatic condition of resistance to change and of resistance to acceptance of outside material.⁴²

As family systems dynamics are applicable to any interacting group, the theory is of practical value for understanding congregational life. The church is an extended family. It is this because it is a closed circle of

affective relationships. It is also family because God instructs it to respond to him as Father and to each other as brothers and sisters. It is extended family because its respective families merge together in social and familial ways. The church is thus subject to the various conditions and responses which characterize family systems.

The implications of this reality for the church in terms of its daily life as well as for its effectual growth are significant: (1) The conduct of members within the congregation, the extended family, is being influenced continuously by emotional drives arising from the members' families of origin. (2) Relationships are constantly being worked out through third party reference, i.e. triangulation; and in a setting where encouragement to carry each other's burdens is regularly given, this can result in abuse, e.g. "triangling" the elder, the preacher, or another member.⁴³ (3) The congregation, as an organic unit, is resistant to change: growth by adoption, i.e. conversion of outsiders, threatens change; subtle inhibitors to accepting newcomers can thus be experienced. (4) The congregation as a network of people bonded in relationship can experience varying degrees of cohesiveness; where the emotional attachment is particularly tight, the group may become characteristically turned inward with a reduced capacity for accommodating newcomers; or its closeness may result in suffocation, causing upwelling conflict, and negative emotional reactions. (5) The congregation as an intergenerational group has the normal drive to reproduce

itself in repetitious patterns of sameness; it will often be found to withstand with vigor any impetus to reform, to restructure, or to realign. Because the dynamic at work is a matter of process, i.e. emotional drives, rather than content, i.e. cognitive understanding, its presence and force tend regularly to be overlooked. Thus, while plans and strategies for growth are thoughtfully developed, an unseen governor may seem to be in place restraining the conscious determination to enlarge. Clearly, a congregation can profit by developing an understanding of its fundamental nature as family and by learning to manage the dynamics of its affective relationships.

It is helpful in this exercise to gain a deeper appreciation for the human family as God has designed it. For surely, the family is the model of the church. The family as an organism of affective learning has much to offer the church. Its processes can be instructive to the church which is determined to be an organic body of Christ, and not merely a wooden institution. On the other hand, the church as a fellowship of spiritual experience has much to offer the family which is to be the primary developer of spirituality for its members. Thus, the church and family are in symbiotic relationship, each fuelling the other with insight, each drawing from the other its strength. With healthy relationships in place a beneficial setting is provided into which new converts are received.

Church growth in this model has to do with retention. Its concern is with relationship. And it seeks to

understand the interactions of the social side of these relationships through a sociological perspective. Characteristically, few Ontario Churches of Christ exceed the 100 member level. The factors which bind the small church as self-contained, change-resistant, and growth-inhibited are illuminated by this theory of family systems, a useful construct for the purpose of our inquiry.

The Demographic Setting

Churches are shaped by their theology and constrained by the dynamics of human relationships. They are also impacted powerfully by the conditions of the communities in which they find themselves, and this both historically and contemporaneously. Thus, the inquiry, in examining "the context" for the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario, moves on to seek an overview of the experience of these churches during the 20th century in their provincial setting, particularly within the social and religious developments which took place in the province during the period.

The Ontario Churches of Christ in the 20th Century

Historically, Churches of Christ in Ontario emerged from a 19th century Restorationist movement which had its roots in the United Kingdom and the United States. Known as the Disciples movement, the religious group was first identified separately in the Canadian census in 1881 with a following of 20,193.⁴⁴ Antecedents of the Disciples movement

were (1) the thrust for a free church status by a some believers in Scotland and their quest for a Bible based religious expression and (2) Unity or "Christians only" movements in the United States. These shifts influenced Thomas and Alexander Campbell, father and son Presbyterians, who upon migrating to America from Ireland founded what would become one of the largest indigenous religious movements in the United States.⁴⁵ Scotch Baptist immigrants to Canada noted and accepted the unity and restorationist influences penetrating Canada from the United States. The result was that somewhere in the 1830s the Canadian Disciples began to coalesce as a distinct group. Given their commitment to pure doctrine, their sense of their own separateness and distinctiveness, their reaction against the major churches of the day, the Disciples were identified, in sociological terms, as one of the many frontier "sects" of that period.⁴⁶

There is evidence that in the latter half of the 19th century the Disciples were shifting towards being, again in sociological terms, a "church." As a protest to the perceived abandonment of their principles, from within the Disciples, the Churches of Christ formed to retrieve the original position. The census reports for 1891, 1901, and 1911 showed a sharp decline for the Disciples in Canada: to 12,763 in 1891, and to 17,164 in 1901, and 14,554 in 1911. In Ontario, the decline was from 16,051 in 1881 to 10,695 in 1901.⁴⁷ Boden points out that almost all the loss was experienced in the area of Ontario east of Toronto.⁴⁸

Whether the Disciples' loss was the result of the gains by Churches of Christ continues to be debated. The particulars of the separation of Churches of Christ from the Disciples at the turn of the century are given by Eugene Perry, an editor within Churches of Christ:

A report in 1884 gave Ontario 80 churches and sixteen thousand members and twenty-two preachers. But as the result of the formation of the provincial organization, distrust and poor fellowship between brethren increased. Division was very gradual from 1883 to the early years of the 20th century. Instrumental music was gradually introduced in some congregations and this helped to accomplish the distinction between the two fellowships.⁴⁹

The American Disciples were dividing during the same period with "Churches of Christ" being identified separately in the U.S. 1906 census. The view has been advanced that, given the influence of the American Disciples in Canada, the Canadian division was but a reflex action.⁵⁰ However, Canadian protests against "unscriptural" practices by some Canadian Disciples were being raised in the middle of the 19th century. The Canadian split, while paralleling and no doubt being influenced by American developments, reflected Canadian convictions and determinations.⁵¹

American churches, all the same, were interested in the condition of the newly formulated Canadian Churches of Christ. George Klingman reported in 1906 in the American church journal the Gospel Advocate that in Canada there were about 30 "loyal" churches and about a dozen evangelists, only two fulltime; the churches were numerically weak.⁵² Courson identifies the zeal and extended activity of the "dozen" or so evangelists in the first decade.⁵³ The need to

secure and to consolidate the position was there. Partisan zeal no doubt spurred the workers on. When the dust had settled, some 22 congregations of Churches of Christ emerged in the 20th century in Ontario. Early developments included, in addition to the untiring work of the preachers, families joining the trek to new frontiers in northern Ontario and establishing the church as they went (e.g. Thessalon), or families moving with the migration flow to the opening West and again planting churches (e.g. Carman, Manitoba).⁵⁴ Young people from Meaford were attending the Nashville Bible School in 1900.⁵⁵ In 1902, a Tennessean established its counterpart, the Beamsville Bible School, in the Niagara Peninsula.⁵⁶

While the efforts were successful in forming a new movement, they were not immediately successful in touching the Ontario population to a significant degree. Two discouragements marked these early years. The Bathurst Street congregation, a strong 200 member church in Toronto, offered to co-ordinate a fulltime evangelist in the province if other congregations would cooperate in helping with the funding. Little interest developed, and the plan folded.⁵⁷ In 1910, an acrimonious division developed in Beamsville, where the church had numbered 200 at the turn of the century. As this festered until 1936, the work in the entire province suffered.⁵⁸ The Beamsville school was a casualty in 1916. The preaching force declined. The dislocation of the War was followed by the stress of the boom times in the '20s, and of the Depression of the '30s. While the

congregations were making modest gains throughout this period, weakness is reflected in that there was only one fulltime preacher serving in the province during the '30s. One source of encouragement from elsewhere, during a time when the influence of American churches and preachers was noticeably reduced, was the influx of members of Churches of Christ from the United Kingdom in the period between the Wars, locating in such places as Windsor, Hamilton, and Toronto.

Following World War II, the upsurge marking the population at large was reflected among Churches of Christ: a summer Bible School was developed which subsequently evolved into Camp Omagh; a number of young people sought their education in American Christian colleges; and there was talk of a possible Christian college in Ontario. New churches were planted during the '50s: one Canadian returning from his American training led in planting churches in three urban centers: Hamilton, Ottawa, and Thunder Bay; another, the church in London; another, in Niagara Falls. Great Lakes Christian College was opened in 1952 with two divisions: high school and Bible college. In the '60s the first of a number of graduates of American church sponsored schools of preaching began to arrive in Ontario; Church plantings at St. Thomas and Tillsonburg were an early result. The generally robust climate for Canadian churches was being experienced by Churches of Christ in Ontario as well with considerable expansion being experienced during the '50s and the '60s.

The Centennial of Canada, 1967, reflected a time of optimism and national focus even for the churches.⁵⁹ Shortly, however, the social dislocations which set in during the late '60s and early '70s found a parallel mood of uncertainty for the churches. Church troubles in Toronto saw the congregations shrinking from five to three during a time when the metro region was adding a million people a decade. Church plantings and membership increases slowed perceptively. This condition lasted through to the mid-'80s until after recovery from the 1982 recession began to take hold. The latter half of the past decade has seen a return to church planting and membership growth.

Throughout the period Ontario Churches of Christ remained relatively untouched by the shifts in the broader religious scene. Their focus remained on individual conversion rather than on being an agency for society's improvement. They continued to be unmoved, for the most part, by the popular swing to a historico-critical revision of the Christian belief structure. They continued to opt for unity on the basis of Scriptural authority instead of ecumenical union on the basis of accommodation. At the end of the period, however, it appears evident that there is a diminishing ability to deal with the threats to personal and family stability arising from an increasingly unstable society.

On the other hand, Ontario Churches of Christ have been susceptible to the incursions of divisive issues which perennially arise in the American church and work their way

north: Premillennialism in the '30s; the Cooperation debate in the '50s, the Charismatic movement in the '70s; and the Multiplying ministries method in the '80s. The last decade of this century is faced with mixed feelings of optimism--as a time of potentially unprecedented growth, and of apprehension. Word is filtering north from American centers of a possible paradigmatic shift in the church's hermeneutic.⁶⁰ The question of identity, thus, continues to challenge Ontario Churches of Christ as they examine their relationships with each other, society at large, the other remnants of the Restoration Movement in Canada, the larger religious world in Canada, and with Churches of Christ in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.

The Ontario Context

Social. Ontario is a single but expansive geographical region ("twice the size of Texas!"), but it is certainly not a unified social unit. One writer observed, "When you speak of the Ontario character to me, you must define your terms. Which Ontario citizen do you mean?"⁶¹ Ontario was one of the four British colonies to form the Dominion of Canada in 1867. By 1901 it had 2.2 million population; by 1931, 3.4 million; by 1946, 4.1 million; by 1976, 8.2 million; and 8.6 million in the 1986 census.⁶² Following two and one-half centuries of colonial overlooking, Ontario settled into a federal relationship in which the intent was for the provinces to be weaker than the central government. Ontario was an important part of Canada's cultural and trade

connection with Britain through the earlier part of this century. In 1941, 95% of the Ontario population had been born in either Canada, the U.K., or the U.S.⁶³ Attempts to establish trade reciprocity with the U.S. were rejected in 1911.⁶⁴ Gradually, however, the British orientation was replaced by the American: now exports to the U.K. are the minor portion while the U.S.-Canada "Free Trade" arrangement was completed in 1989. Industrialization had already arrived in Ontario by the turn of the century: the manufacturing sector remained steady at 25% of the work force from 1881 through 1921.⁶⁵ Today, the "service sector" absorbs two-thirds of the labor force.⁶⁶

The first three decades, with the exception of two serious recessions before and after World War I, were buoyant times for Ontario. Even during the Depression years population increased 10% in Ontario. The effect of the war was to accelerate Canada toward a fuller independence from Britain and to advance Ontario as the manufacturing center of the country. "Canada went to World War I an agricultural nation. It emerged an industrialized nation."⁶⁷ Social change marked the post-war years in Ontario: Prohibition was voted in in 1916 in response to strong public protest; women received the vote in 1917; a populist United Farmers Party was elected in 1919 and stayed in office for three and one half years. And in the early '20s the age of North American mass culture, with the triple media of movie, phonograph, and radio, came on stream. Expectations were high in Ontario in that decade.

The Depression years meant a new kind of hard times--urban industrial dislocation. At its worst 400,000, or 12% of the province, were on direct public relief. People had feelings of powerlessness, economic uncertainty, government oppression, and impossible global problems.⁶⁸

World War II was both a fruit of the world-wide economic distress and the solution to its difficulties. Fewer Canadians would die during this war than the last, but the war effort completed the evolution of a colony to a nation. The new outlook caught up people in Ontario who, while looking for a post-war turndown similar to the earlier experience, entered three decades of boom times. In the late '40s, there was a new influx of immigrants, chiefly from southern and eastern Europe, an expanding economy, and the war baby boom. Widespread use of the horse in Ontario had discontinued by the end of the '40s. Rural electrification had been completed. The car, truck, and plane were replacing the boat and train. Television came to Ontario in the early '50s, and by the late '70s only 3% of Ontario's population was without a set.⁶⁹ By the late '70s the boom was over. The 1980s would begin with the return to economic hard times.

In a variety of shapes and sizes, major continuities with the past remained. But the long era of prosperity and innovation after the Second World War had left a virtually new society north of the Great Lakes.⁷⁰

Major population shifts and increases were registered in Ontario during this last thirty-year period. By 1981 two-thirds of the population lived in the province's ten largest metropolitan areas. Including Toronto, the area

ringing the western end of Lake Ontario, the "Golden Horseshoe," had grown from 2.5 million in 1951 to 5.5 million in 1981. Metropolitan Toronto itself went from one million in early '50s to three million in the early '80s.⁷¹ A second post-war migration wave came in the late '60s and '70s, this time from south and east Asia and the West Indies, so that by the '80s, two million of Ontario's residents had been born outside of Canada, and only 53 percent were of British origin.⁷²

Religious

The outstanding feature of Canadian religious life is its traditional dominance by a handful of mainline churches. It is helpful to trace the emerging shape of that influence. When the British North American colonies federated in 1867, a national perspective developed among various church bodies. Indeed, the churches supported Confederation and helped to sustain the new Dominion.⁷³ A number of regional and doctrinal segregations were overcome in the latter part of the 19th century: "...Church union negotiations became almost a permanent feature of Canadian church life."⁷⁴ By 1875 the Presbyterians, and 1884 the Methodists, had formed national churches, "coterminous with the new Dominion."⁷⁵ The next possibility was a union of the major denominations to form a national church. The vision of George Munro Grant in 1874 was of a national Church that would embrace the Anglican episcopacy, Methodist enthusiasm, Presbyterian scholarship, Congregational independency, and which would

win the charitable seal of approval of the Roman Catholic church!⁷⁶ Thus, the early drive to ecumenism in Canada was in the context of church/state relations, rather than the mission incentive that gave birth to the wider 20th century ecumenical movement.⁷⁷

The "church" type (sociological) church predominated in Canada. In the 1881 census Methodists held 17.8% of the population, Presbyterians 15.1%, Anglican 13.7%, and Catholics 41.6%, or altogether almost 90% of the population, with Lutherans, Baptists, Orthodox Jews, Congregationalists, and numerous sects, the final 10%.⁷⁸ The concept of a national church, having circulated in the early years of Canada's new life, was given practical impetus. The settlement of the West found many areas too thinly populated to support churches of all the major denominations. The resulting community churches were "...fired with the idea that these churches should lead the way to nothing less than a national church of Canada."⁷⁹ The Protestants felt stretched over a vast land, competing with a strong Catholic church and capable of greater influence upon the government: a national church would be the answer. Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans strove for an agreement of union. The Anglicans withdrew from discussions early and returned too late to be included. They would return in 1977 to reopen discussions.⁸⁰ Legislation was passed June 10, 1925, to create the United Church of Canada. Half of the Presbyterians voted against union, but only 30% opted to continue their separate denomination.

Regarding the early vision of a national church for Canada, while several smaller groups were to be added later, the United Church of Canada, overnight the largest Protestant church in the nation, peaked at 20% of the population in 1961, stood at 16% in 1981, and is now declining.¹ "Some of the hopes aroused by this very great ecumenical victory have been disappointed...[the UCC] lost its original purpose to serve as the national church of Canada."²

This sketch of church developments surrounding the beginning of this century is a necessary backdrop to understanding the church scene in Ontario: one half of the present membership of the UCC is in Ontario, and Ontario is the stronghold for the continuing Presbyterians. While the Union was a national affair, the influences emanating from Ontario on its behalf were substantial. The ceremonies marking the founding were conducted with great fanfare in the Mutual Street Arena in Toronto; representatives from the three Churches marched down three separate streets to the arena. Of the Methodists' 65 church buildings in Toronto in 1925 many were of the finest in the city. The Presbyterians had 55 congregations in the city, the Congregationalists, whose presence was waning somewhat, had five.³ These and meeting houses across the land, by the act of Parliament, became the assets of the new Church.

The union was achieved without the formulation of a distinctive theological foundation. Its founding document, "The Basis of Union," its only authorized and official statement of doctrine even to today, was described by Ross

as containing no in-depth study nor pronouncement of theology. There was no effort to identify and adapt to 20th century issues, but an emphasis upon receiving "the inheritance" from the three confessional sources.⁸⁴ "The Canadian union was largely inspired by consideration of life and work."⁸⁵

As the churches moved from the exhilaration of the '20s to the trying times of the '30s, they faced and responded to the shaping of new theologies. "Movements like the Evangelical, the Oxford, and neo-Orthodox had their repercussions in Canada, but Canadian theology depended upon European theology to bring through fresh discoveries."⁸⁶ The major shift was from concern with individual salvation to social wellbeing. Turning from the strict Puritanism of the 19th century church, e.g. opposition to drink, theatre, novels, dancing, etc., churches in the 20th century developed "an accelerating social and political concern for human needs, the under-privileged, minorities, the mentally disturbed."⁸⁷ The Great Depression shook "the individualistic assumptions of the older puritanism," and the churches moved to a social agenda.⁸⁸ The UCC was one of the world's first bodies to advocate birth control.⁸⁹ The Roman Catholic Church founded hospitals, colleges, trade unions, and cooperatives, in response to the needs of the new industrial age.⁹⁰ In Ontario, the Anglicans established schools, associations for workers, rehabilitation centers, homes for youth and for the aged, missions for seamen.⁹¹ The UCC, "while not always right," did not ignore the gigantic

social problems resulting from the Depression: it issued a report in 1933 condemning capitalism as unchristian, and followed in 1934 with a report, "Christianizing the Social Order"; it engaged in a mammoth relief operation during the years 1932-1938.⁹²

The churches' social concerns increased during and following World War II. Unlike WW I there tended to be less idealizing of war as an exercise of the just among Ontario churches.⁹³ The UCC intensified its involvement with social issues: unionism in the 1940s, "recognition" of Red China in 1952, support for therapeutic abortions in the late 1950s, understanding for homosexuals, and support for a relaxing of divorce laws and for Medicare in 1966.⁹⁴ In the spirit of Vatican II leaders of the UCC, the Anglican church, and the RCC joined in public prayer concerning a strike issue in 1965.⁹⁵ The '50s and '60s were growth periods for Ontario churches and across Canada. The UCC built 1,500 new churches and church halls and 600 manses in the decade concluding in 1966.⁹⁶ Contributions and attendance were growing. Religious debate was vigorous. Then in the mid-60's decline set in. Young people grew disinterested, candidates for the ministry declined, men dropped out of the ministry: troublesome decline confronted the mainline churches and continues to do so. Questioned were mass evangelism, social conformity, overseas missions; in place had come the new theology, new morality, new ecumenism, and new missions. Would the new prove better than the old? The century had begun with confidence and ambitious church building. Would it conclude

with religion without churches? Christianity without the cross?

This chapter has examined the context in which the growth of Churches of Christ in the 20th century is to be considered. Included are investigations in theology, theory, and demographics. The inquiry now moves to survey the methodology used in seeking the shape of that growth.

NOTES

¹Ray S. Anderson, Theological Foundations of Ministry (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 7.

²For a discussion of the perception of the transcendence of God among Churches of Christ, see: C. Leonard Allen, Richard T. Hughes, and Michael R. Weed, The Worldly Church (Abilene, Tex.: ACU Press, 1988).

³For a study of the use of the word "evangelize" in its historical setting see David B. Barrett, Evangelize! A Historical Survey of the Concept (Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope, 1987).

⁴Cf. James A. Scherer, Gospel, Church, and Kingdom (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), p. 235.

⁵For a discussion of servant leadership see Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke, A Theology of Church Leadership (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 106-109.

⁶"An artificial and wholly inaccurate division of the laos into 'full-time ministry' and part-time or passive laity is deeply entrenched." See "Identity Implications" (Chapter 7) for a discussion of whole-church ministry in Lawrence O. Richards and Gib Martin, A Theology of Personal Ministry (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 143; pp. 143-161.

⁷Reginald W. Bibby, Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987), p. 43.

⁸Marvin E. Shaw and Jack M. Wright, Scales for the Measurement of Attitudes (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 1.

⁹Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰Joe S. Ellis, The Church on Purpose (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1982), pp. 121, 122.

¹¹Lyle E. Schaller, Growing Plans (Nashville:

Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 20.

¹²Bibby, Framgmented Gods, p. 6.

¹³Crysdale and Wheatcroft, Canadian Society, pp. 11, 12.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵Donald A. McGavran, The Bridges of God (New York: Friendship Press, 1955).

¹⁶Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970).

¹⁷C. Peter Wagner, Strategies for Church Growth (Ventura, Cal.: Regal Books, 1987), p. 36.

¹⁸Eddie Gibbs, I Believe in Church Growth (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), p.47.

¹⁹Wagner, Strategies, p. 37.

²⁰McGavran, Understanding, p. 8.

²¹Donald A. McGavran, Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1988), pp. 108, 109.

²²McGavran, Understanding, p. vii.

²³"Most cultures of the two-thirds world know nothing about such individualistic decisions (e.g. marriage, employment, place of residence, religious conversions, etc.) and the group rejects them almost by a reflex action when they occur." Wagner, Strategies, p. 187.

²⁴McGavran, Effective, p. 48.

²⁵"The technical description of a people movement in a 'multi-individual, mutually inter-dependent conversion'...the simultaneous decision to follow Christ." Wagner Strategies, p. 186.

²⁶Harold E. Bauman, "Goals of Church Growth." Mission, Evangelism and Church Growth, C. Norman Kraus, ed., (Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1980), p. 145.

²⁷McGavran, Effective, p. 110.

²⁸Leo Driedger, ed., The Canadian Ethnic Mosaic (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1978), p. 10.

²⁹McGavran, Effective, p. 112.

³⁰McGavran, Understanding, p. 223.

³¹Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr., Why Churches Grow (Broken Arrow, Okla.: Christian Communications, Inc., 1979), p. 35.

³²In certain settings, a "cultural agglomerate church" can be more effective because the various members of the mixed community are in an assimilation mode desiring intercultural activity as well as progress toward being part of the perceived dominant culture. Refer to: George C. Hunter, III, To Spread the Power (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), p. 175.

³³Wayne McClintock, "The Sociological Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle," International Review of Missions 77 (January 1988): 107, 108.

³⁴Ibid., 109, 110.

³⁵Cf. Philip Kotter, Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations 5 (1982), recommended by Hunter, Power, p. 138. Cf. Wagner, Strategies, pp. 159-164.

³⁶An example of a demographic study is David Brangenberg's, "A Demographic Profile: the City of Guelph," a paper presented to the Vision: Canada seminar, Waterloo, Ontario, August 12, 1988, pp. 6.8.1-12.

³⁷J. Eugene Wright, "Church Growth: Ultimate or Penultimate?" The Christian Ministry 10 (January-March 1979): 11.

³⁸Ibid., 12.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ray S. Anderson explores the theology of the church as family in the chapter, "Brother and Sisters, We Shall All be There!" while Dennis Guernsey examines the sociology of the church as family in the chapter, "What Kind of Family is the Church?" in On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), pp. 139-154; pp. 155-59.

⁴¹For an introduction to Family Systems, including a historic sketch of its development and an analysis of its psychology, see Dorothy Stroh Becvar and Raphael J. Becvar, Family Therapy: A Systemic Integration (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1988), pp. 1-59.

⁴²The shaping power of the extended family is

explored in Monica McGoldrick and Randy Gerson's Genograms in Family Assessments (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988).

⁴³The triangled preacher is the focus of Edwin H. Friedman, Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue (New York: The Guilford Press, 1985).

⁴⁴Census Canada. 1881.

⁴⁵Robert T. Handy, A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 169.

⁴⁶Following the typology of Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Church, 1911. See Crysdale and Wheatcroft, Canadian Society, p. 17; S.D. Clark, Church and Sect, p. 433.

⁴⁷Census Canada, 1881, 1901.

⁴⁸Brian F. Boden, "The Sectarian Origins of Disciples of Christ on the Frontiers of North America in Terms of the Church-Sect Antithesis," unpublished paper, McMaster University, 1980.

⁴⁹Eugene C. Perry, "Restoration, Digression, and Revival in Ontario," Gospel Advocate 106 (April 1964): 260, 261.

⁵⁰Boden, "Sectarian Origins," p. 43.

⁵¹Claude Cox details how one Ontario church dissociated from the Disciples to identify with the Churches of Christ, citing influences from Toronto and Tennessee. "The Division Between Disciples and Churches of Christ in the Disciples Church at Meaford, Ontario," Restoration Quarterly 27 (1st quarter 1984): 23-26.

⁵²George Klingman, "Canada," Gospel Advocate 42 (June, 1906); quoted by Tom Blake, "The Establishment of Churches of Christ in Canada: 1900-1918," Gospel Herald 41 (July 1975): 2 (122).

⁵³Steven Courson, "History of Churches of Christ in Ontario, 1900-1910," unpublished paper, Brampton, Ontario, 1989, p.2.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 7.

⁵⁵Cox, "Meaford," p. 34.

⁵⁶Archie Culp, "History of the Beamsville Church," Gospel Herald 11 (November 1947): 3.

⁵⁷Courson, "History," pp. 12-14.

⁵⁸Culp, "Beamsville," p. 3.

⁵⁹Cf. Geoffrey H. Ellis and E. Dan Wieb, eds., Centennial Yearbook: Churches of Christ in Canada (Beamsville, Ont.: Rannie Publications, 1967).

⁶⁰See Michael Casey, "The Origins of the Hermeneutic of Churches of Christ, Part I: The Reformed Traditions;" " Part II: The Philosophical Backgrounds," Restoration Quarterly 31 (2nd quarter 1989): 75-97; 31 (4th quarter 1989): 193-206.

⁶¹Max Braithewaite, quoted by Randall White, Ontario 1610-1985: A Political and Economic History (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1985), p. 9.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 184, 244.

⁶³Ibid., p. 184.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 189.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid. p. 256.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 184.

⁶⁸Rodney M. Booth, The Winds of God: The Canadian Church Faces the 1980s (Winfield, B.C.: Wood Lake Books, Inc., published by the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1982), p. 68.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 70.

⁷⁰White, Ontario, p. 244.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 245.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 250, 251.

⁷³William Kilbourn, Religion in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1968), pp. 40, 41.

⁷⁴H. H. Walsh, "A Canadian Christian Tradition," The Churches and the Canadian Experience, John Webster Grant, ed. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963), p. 155.

⁷⁵Kilbourn, Religion, p. 43.

⁷⁶Walsh, "Canadian Tradition," Canadian Experience, p. 158.

⁷⁷Scherer, Gospel, Church, and Kingdom, p. 14.

⁷⁸Walsh, "Canadian Tradition," Canadian Experience, p. 156; Canada Census 1951.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰The 62 congregations of the Evangelical Brethren Church joined the UCC in 1967. Kilbourn, Religion, p. 72.

⁸¹Walsh, "Canadian Tradition," Canadian Experience, p. 158.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Clark MacDonald, "United Church," Spirit of Toronto, 1834-1984, Margaret Lindsay Holton, ed. (Toronto: Image Publishing Inc., 1983), pp. 86-87.

⁸⁴Douglas H. Ross, "A Theological Analysis of the Socio-Critical Role of the United Church Between 1925 and 1939," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1982), p. 119.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 134.

⁸⁶Walsh, "Canadian Tradition," Canadian Experience, p. 159.

⁸⁷Kilbourn, Religion in Canada, p. 50.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Bishop Garnsworthy, "Anglican Church in Toronto," Hutton, ed., Toronto, p. 34.

⁹²Ross, "Theological Analysis," p. 70.

⁹³Kilbourn, Religion in Canada, p. 50.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 72.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 70.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 64.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Rationale and Design of Research Instruments

Difficulty

A search for statistical information among Ontario Churches of Christ faces immediately the paucity of records and wide variation in record keeping. For many a church group, the confident assertion of McGavran holds true: "From its headquarters the annual records are available."¹ Not so with Churches of Christ. Their careful autonomy of congregations does not lend itself to standardization. Congregational smallness often contributes to casualness with respect to detailing events and amounts. Turnovers among volunteers, e.g. treasurers, secretaries, Bible school superintendents, etc., may not include passing on accumulated records, the minimal requirements for which may not be in place to begin with. Preachers may or may not keep close records, and these may go with the preacher when he moves. Where churches are not involved in thoughtful analysis and planning, careful records seem to be of little value. An aversion to record keeping may actually develop: one fellow preacher looked upon such bookkeeping exercises as inappropriately duplicating the record maintained by the Lamb in his Book of Life (Rev. 21:27). And members may

resent the roll keeping as an unwelcome check-up on their whereabouts. In the current exercise, a number of the respondents to the various questionnaires lamented the lack of records. One typical comment received stated, "It [the research undertaken] has taught me a lot about record keeping."

This reluctance to deal with numbers no doubt reflects the skepticism concerning statistical information occurring widely in the general population. The manipulation of numbers to satisfy specific aims of special interest groups is commonplace. Nevertheless, honestly pursued and rigorously investigated, numbers can provide a valuable basis for understanding and decision making.

Exact understanding of the increase of the church is prevented partly by haphazard or inaccurate membership accounting. Approximations blur the picture, omissions distort it, and changed definitions mislead the unwary.²

And while Churches of Christ encounter some difficulty in securing comprehensive, standardized, and continuous records, the task of the researcher is not that much easier elsewhere. For example, religious statistics in past national census taking is open to some restriction:

Analysis of religious organizations in Canada using census data is difficult at best, since it is not practical to identify all religious groups. An unfortunate consequence is the misleading impression of simplicity of structure presented by the major denominational categories since this obscures hundreds of small religious bodies.³

The smaller groups are often hidden in major categories or contained in the "other" designation.⁴

With regard to the statistical records of denomina-

tional offices, Bibby questions their value from a social scientific viewpoint: "Many sociologists have raised questions about the reliability and validity of official church statistics."⁵ Numbers may be reported so as to justify ministries and personnel: those reporting have vested interests. The numbers kept may well miss the more important factors of the group's activity. Thus, the challenge is equally before all groups to surface data that are complete, comprehensive, and relevant.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to see the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario as a response to their perceptions of the will of God and of their sense of ministry responsibility, given the circumstances of their time and place in history. To accomplish this it is necessary to develop at least an approximate record of the churches' enlargement over the nine decades in this century, with a more detailed picture of the latest decade. Over and against this record must be held a sampling of the mind of the people in terms of their Christian awareness and commitment. The difficulty of the first task has been identified given the limitations of records and the complexities of research. The difficulty of the latter is far greater:

The tradition of a particular church is an extremely complex entity which involves a certain forming of the Christian mind, often in its subconscious depths. This 'mind' manifests itself in a definite way of 'seeing' and speaking as well as in typical identifying signs and reaction patterns.⁶

Investigations do not easily uncover the hidden matters of the heart--motivations, faith levels, the affective impact of life experiences. Indeed, the latter pursuit quickly converges on territory able to be traversed only by the omniscient God. Yet, the ongoing responsibility of every elder, preacher, and teacher is to so gauge the "mind" of the church that their teaching will promote progress unto maturity for each disciple (Eph. 5:11-13). This study, thus, will seek to draw out in some preliminary way those perceptual elements which respond to the theology of mission developed above, to attempt at least a modest assessment of the prevailing social awareness level, and to detect possible correlations between the perceptions held and the progress realized by the churches. The inquiry will attempt to uncover contributing factors to the growth development. It will introduce areas of investigation for exploring the conceptual framework as a beginning point for future investigations. In this manner, church growth principles are presented as a way of life for churches for steady advance rather than as a fad to be followed in hopes that miraculous growth rates might be forthcoming.

Form

The project is descriptive in design, including growth analysis and the correlation of experience with theological and theoretical insight. Three interacting conditions are to be inquired into: (1) the receptivity level of the Ontario population, (2) the growth and growth

rate of Ontario Churches of Christ, (3) the mind of the collective Churches of Christ and its life in relation to mission. The first inquiry examines the records of selected Ontario religious bodies to determine their various growth experiences during the period of this study. The second inquiry is statistical in nature: it seeks to establish a profile of enlargement of Churches of Christ for the period 1900-1989 and the decadal growth rate (DGR) during the period 1979-1989. The third inquiry is analytical, and attempts to gain three understandings: (1) What is the theological perception of the church? (2) What is the social awareness of the church? (3) What is the involvement of the church in the Christian mission? Thus, it follows that the inquiry will operate on three levels: (1) general, (2) integrative, and (3) evaluative, and move from a broad to a specific focus, while being interconnected. Proceeding on this format, the instruments to be used are described in the following section.

Crysdale and Wheatcroft identify the sample survey as "the most common method of recent years" for the collection of data, permitting "the gathering of precise and voluminous data in a short time from a carefully drawn sample of a specified population."⁷ "Because identical questions are asked of all respondents, it is possible to standardize and quantify the replies."⁸ The procedure is not without limitation: "...sometimes the questions do not mean to the respondents what the researcher thinks they do, and frequently important aspects of belief and practice are

difficult or perhaps impossible to detect..."⁹

Sudman and Bradburn have suggested guidelines for formatting a questionnaire: (1) Think through the research question before writing specific questions. Keep the research questions before you at all times while writing the specific questions. (2) For each question ask, "Why do I want to know this?" "Interesting to know" is not a sufficient reason. Rather, how will the question help answer the research question? (3) Identify the ethics of question asking, respecting the right of privacy, informed consent, and confidentiality. (4) The wording of the question is "...the crucial element in maximizing the validity of survey data obtained by the question asking process."¹⁰ For thoroughness, the authors suggest peer evaluation of the draft questionnaire; testing revision, and retesting the questionnaire; a pilot test on a small sample, and final revisions before executing the survey.¹¹

Research Instruments

Questionnaire A

Profile of the Life and Growth of the (---) Congregation. What is the current size of the fellowship of Churches in Ontario in terms of its membership and number of congregations? How many is it attracting to its worship services? What was its growth experience over the nine decades of this century? Answers to these questions were sought in Questionnaire A, a copy of which was supplied to representatives of most congregations. (See Appendix I. A.

1.-3.) Included in the information requested are: year of establishment, charter membership, current membership, average Sunday a.m. worship, and optimum decadal attendance levels. Auxiliary investigations¹² were also conducted in order to quantify the size of the church at the beginning of the century and during the intervening decades. The comparison between the figures at the beginning and end of the period studied, along with the enlargement for each decade, contrasted with the population growth for the province and the growth experience of selected Ontario religious bodies, will provide a useful frame of reference for understanding the broad dimensions of the growth of Ontario Churches of Christ.

The attempt to construct the nine decadal growth profile anticipated the inadequacy of firm records. For the purpose of the inquiry, however, a broad brush picture was deemed adequate. Thus, the decadal attendance levels are accumulated from (1) the generalized reports of the respondents to the questionnaire¹³ and (2) projections by the author based on auxiliary records.

What is the leadership profile of the church? How many congregations work with fulltime ministers? What is the training and nationality of these workers? How many congregations are served by elders and deacons? How long has the leadership been in place? How long has it been since the most recent appointments have been made? How many elderships and diaconates, once in place, have discontinued? The questionnaire inquires into each of these matters. The

importance of the three-fold ministry has been emphasized above. It is submitted that the presence of these servant leaders in proportion to the number and sizes of the churches is a critical factor in the potential for growth.

What occasioned the plantings of the various churches in existence? Did members or a preacher take the initiative? Was it the intentional action of a preaching team or a group of members targeting an area? Was it a spawning or a split that multiplied the churches? Was the church planting supported by outside funding? Was such funding continued? Is it still in place? From Canadian and/or American sources? To what was or is it applied: preaching, work fund, building, program or other? How many congregations have church buildings, meet in rental facilities, or in members' homes? When were church buildings acquired? Have they been renovated, extended, or replaced? Did the replacement include relocation?

What is the profile of churches established by year? Over and against this picture is the number of churches which have disbanded. How many pre-1900 congregations continue to be in existence, or have disbanded? Of those both established and discontinued in this century, how many were there and what was their average tenure? Were they located rurally, in towns, or in cities? The growth of the fellowship of Churches of Christ in Ontario is multi-faceted. Church planting intentionality, the experience of success and failure, the move to some degree of rootedness in terms of facilities are all indices of

importance in understanding the nature of its enlargement.

Questionnaire B

A Decadal Growth Rate (DGR) Profile of the (---) Congregation. While it is important to establish a historical overview of the growth experience of Churches of Christ in Ontario, 1900-1989, as the past is the foundation of the future, a more detailed examination of the most recent decade is desirable. A more focused awareness of the growth experience is possible based, hopefully, on the existence of more complete records. Such a study has a diagnostic value for the present and near future. "Much experience has indicated that 10 years is a useful diagnostic period."¹⁴ A sample of 17 churches representing 25% of the study group was selected. The aim of the selection was to secure a variety of churches representing the following conditions: (1) Age: Middle (Mi), 10 to 20 years; Older (O), over 20 years. (2) Size: Small (S), under 50; Medium (Me), 50-100; Larger (L), over 100. (3) Location: Rural (R), Town (T), City (C). (4) Growth (perceived): Growing (G), Plateaued (P), Declining (D). The configurations of the churches selected are as follows: OLRG, OSRP, OLTG, MiSTP(2) OMeCG(3), OMECD, OLCp, OLCG(4), OLCD, OSCG, MiMeCP. (See Appendix I. B. 1.-5.)

The questionnaire requested the same information for each year of the decade 1979-1989 and focused upon membership rather than attendance or Sunday school records. Two questions were asked respecting 1979: did the

congregation have its largest membership prior to 1979, and what was the membership total for 1979? If the answer to the first question was Yes, a judgment was requested regarding the conditions affecting the growth experience. Then for 1980 and each year following, the additions and subtractions of members were requested; these were detailed in several sub-sections, and the resulting net increased or decreased membership were totalled.

Additions were subdivided between baptisms and transfers-in. Baptisms, in turn, were subdivided between baptism of members of church families and those of non-church families. Transfers-in were categorized as membership placements with or without change of residence. Subtractions were subdivided between transfers-out and removals. Again, the transfers-out were distinguished as with or without change of residence. Removals included: for unfaithfulness (whether through formal church action, or personal initiative in withdrawing), or death.

The tendency to ask only for the end result of membership increase or decline is patently inadequate for the purpose of serious analysis. In 1970, Kunz and Brinkerhoff explored the three means by which churches add members: (1) reaffiliation, (2) birth, (3) conversions.¹⁵

With respect to "reaffiliation," which would be comparable to "transfers-in" above, "...given the sheer fact of geographic mobility among continental North Americans, it should hardly be surprising that religious membership reaffiliation should be a common phenomenon."¹⁶

Concerning "birth," as a means of adding members, the reference distinguishes between converts from members' families and outsiders. "Surprisingly, religious writers and churchmen, when speaking of new converts, seldom differentiate between children of members and other new additions."¹⁷ More specifically, the "birth" designation could subdivide between paedo-baptist churches and believer-baptist churches. Retention through confirmation is the concern of the former, and addition through conversion the concern of the latter, in keeping in or bringing into the churches children of the age of accountability. "Many are drawn to religion through family socialization."¹⁸ Churches of Christ practice believer's baptism, and in this regard parallel a number of conservative evangelical groups. "In his discussion of conversionist sects, Wilson (1959:11) states that the recruitment of the second generation is also an important aspect of evangelism."¹⁹ The importance of gaining or retaining the children of church member families is readily evident: "Birthrate variations may have a direct influence on the number of candidates for membership."²⁰ At the same time too much attention to "birth" growth, or "biological" growth in McGavran's term, could be a "weak reed" in this age of minus population growth rates in the Western world: "Since the non-Christian part of the world's population is growing faster than the Christian...this type of growth will never bring the nations to faith and obedience."²¹

Regarding "conversion," Bibby uses the term

"proselyting" and further distinguishes between those converted having previous association with a Christian church and those who are essentially "unchurched" in their previous experience. Bibby observes that while it is the purpose of evangelical churches to convert "sinners," and that while there are few social science studies into the actual incidence of proselytism, the few studies "suggest that alleged proselytes usually have a church background and that actual proselytism is negligible."²² The focus and effectiveness of a church's outreach is very much an issue here:

...it may be true that when membership reaches a certain level, proselyting attempts decrease largely because it is possible for a congregation or a denomination to carry out its 'commission to reach the lost' (and hence legitimize its ministry) in much easier ways, namely reaffiliation and birth-type evangelism.²³

Yet, the issue is not black and white. In Canada where secularization is advancing, and where, nevertheless, traditional religious forms continue to hold and color culture, nominal church attachment is often religionless. The distance between claimed church affiliation and the "no religion" position is shrinking: the distinction between the religious and non-religious convert becomes increasingly blurred.

The inquiry would be more useful if this three-fold classification had the third subdivision, namely the church-affiliate and non-church affiliate background. However, Questionnaire B does not attempt this refinement. The "non-church family" category for baptism implies those

whose family was not of a Church of Christ connection. Future inquiries could well seek out this information, provided the churches are educated toward making such a distinction in their record keeping. The more conscious targeting of people of the latter group, namely the truly unchurched, is, of course, advocated.

An important distinction with respect to transfer growth, whether transfers-in or -out, is the matter of change of residence at the time of transfer. Reflected in the change of congregational membership without change of residence is relocation possibly because of dissatisfaction, e.g. whether social, doctrinal, or spiritual problems. The incidence of this membership change should be a point of concern both for the receiver church and the remainder church. Arrivals and departures in quantity should signal the need for investigation. "Transfers-out" implies those who do place membership elsewhere. Alert churches will distinguish between those who, upon leaving, relocate ("transfers-out") and those who do not ("unfaithful"), and shape their ministries to those persons accordingly. Records are kept, in other words, as action guides and not merely as fuel for statistical studies. In reporting or analyzing growth due in part to transfer activity, caution must be maintained that such not be equated to conversion growth. Transfer growth can have the coloration of "increase of certain congregations at the expense of others."²⁴ At the same time, transfer-in growth could well include those who were temporarily dissociated from a previous church

relationship, or "restoration" in Church of Christ parlance. Once again, while Questionnaire B does not attempt this refinement, future studies will hopefully have the data base from which to assess this phase of "transfer growth."

Two specific means of removal, at least from the temporal church, are disfellowshipping and death. With regard to the latter, a telling study would be to determine the median age of the church. Is the church greying? As this statistical information might relate more directly to strategical thinking for the future, it was not solicited in this inquiry. The questionnaire does inquire as to the drop of membership because of faithlessness. It does leave open the question of severance, whether at the churches' bequest, or as the result of the flagging member's initiative. The "drift-away" is perhaps the biggest problem in a church where attentiveness, in both relationships and record keeping, is low.

Thus, while hopeful of an improved availability of records, the questionnaire strikes middle ground, calling for statistical responses in the broader categories, while not assuming that refined records are in place to support a more indepth approach.

Questionnaire B was designed to provide both statistical and analytical insight. Respondents were invited to include for each year their assessments and explanations of the growth experienced: "Please comment on factors which might be identified as contributing to the overall rise, levelling, decline of the membership totals during the

current year." Upon completion of the ten-year survey, the researchers were invited to plot membership levels for each year on a graph supplied. This was intended, in providing a visual delineation of the growth curve, to reward their personal accomplishment through research. It was intended, as well, to be the basis for a final overview and assessment of the growth experience for the decade of the church studied. Finally, the respondents were invited (1) to comment on the availability of records, (2) to identify others who had assisted in the research, and (3) to note any aspect of the questionnaire which was unclear.

Questionnaire C

Perceptions of Members of Churches of Christ, Ontario:
A Telephone Interview. To gain some understanding of the state of the collective theological mind of the community which comprises Churches of Christ in Ontario, a telephone interview was used. (See Appendix I C. 1.-3.) The advantages of this approach are several. The personal approach secures an almost total response by those contacted in contrast to an often low numbered return of a mailed questionnaire. The unpredictable response of the mailed questionnaire can skew the randomness of the original selection. The thrust of the mailed questionnaire, or the action involved in responding to the questionnaire, may be more attractive to one type of respondent than to another. The telephone interview sample can be much smaller. While refraining from coaching or leading the subject, the interviewer is able to clarify the

inevitable uncertainties which arise when questions are asked. No inherent difficulties attach to the use of the telephone interview in contrast to others: "In an extensive review of the literature comparing response effects by method of administration (Sudman and Bradburn, 1974), we observed only small differences between methods of administration."²⁵ The length of the interview can be longer than the mailed questionnaire. And the direct approach can be used in informing the screening criteria.²⁶ "Many questions that are asked in face-to-face interviews can be asked in an identical fashion on the telephone."²⁷ A variety of question types can be utilized: yes/no; response selection with up to three choices; using a numerical scale with up to 10 levels on the scale; and using a ranking procedure that can prioritize a list of items by pairing the items, asking "which is more important," and then pairing earlier responses, until the most important item of all, in the respondent's mind, surfaces.²⁸ All of these response options were used in Questionnaire C.

In the telephone questionnaire developed, forty-five responses in twenty questions were invited. The purpose of the exercise is to gain some indication of the understanding of the target membership relative to their (1) theological perceptions, (2) social awareness, and (3) involvement in the mission of the church. Thus, the questionnaire does not seek to establish a test of wide-ranging theological understanding. Rather, it seeks to tag certain selected areas for insights which are relevant to the purpose of God,

the social context of the church, and its mission. The questions include a number of references to specific conditions with requests for a response based on the respondent's understanding of the conditions. Questions reflecting any of the three broad categories listed above are scattered throughout the interview so that responses will not be shaped by a sensed movement of the questions to some inferred conclusion. While the categories given are general, the slant of the inquiry is toward growth, mission, and evangelism. The respondent is offered the option of responding with: "I am unable/unwilling to answer." In one question, i.e. #17 which invites responses to a series of four "either/or" questions, a third option, "both/and," is offered by the interviewer if the respondent first objects to having to make the choice between two items which appear to be equal in value.

The interview was directed to 40 respondents, or approximately 1.3% of the target group. The 40 respondents were selected from a church membership list maintained by Great Lakes Christian College. This list is not necessarily a complete listing of all members of Churches of Christ in Ontario, but it is extensive and representative. The 40 selections were made according to a computer numerical randomizing program.²⁹ Because the GLCC list included names of alumni and parents who are not necessarily members of the Churches of Christ, as well as some public relations contacts, the interviewer began by confirming that the interviewee was in fact a member of a Church of Christ.

Interviews were conducted by four volunteers who covered ten interviews each.

The questions asked are spread over the following three major divisions and their subsections:

1. Theological: inquiries concerning (1) the grace and intention of God, (2) the teachings of Christ, and (3) the nature of the church.

2. Social: inquiries concerning (1) the church's awareness of the outside world, (2) its perception of the social aspect of the church, and (3) an external influence upon the Ontario church.

3. Mission: inquiries concerning (1) how effective the church sees itself in fulfilling its mission, (2) the church's perception of its responsibility in mission, and (3) the church's view of its actual involvement in mission.

Questionnaire D

Preachers' Perceptions of their Priorities. The telephone interview was conducted with a random sampling of members of Churches of Christ in Ontario. However, inquiring into the insights of a group of preachers regarding their special areas of interest has potential for advancing the objectives of this study. Preachers are the dominant leaders within Churches of Christ in Ontario. Gaining some insight into attitudes and perceptions of their preaching force is deemed desirable. Thus, at a regular gathering for fellowship and mutual encouragement of Church of Christ preachers in Ontario in the Fall of 1989, a questionnaire

was circulated and completed. (See Appendix I. D.) The twenty men who responded to the questionnaire minister in the southern region of the province. While regional views may vary, the thrust of the questionnaire is not oriented to geographical considerations. The assumption of this study is, therefore, that the men responding reflect typically the attitudes of preachers of Churches of Christ throughout the province.

The brief questionnaire requests a ranking of five items in each of three major areas: (1) emphases in the life of the church, (2) functions in the minister's work, and (3) contributors to the actual progress of Ontario Churches of Christ. The five items in each of three sections reflect five general categories of involvement for the preacher: doctrine, nurture, program, evangelism, and the social dimension. However, the presence of this parallelism and the identity of these five categories were not made known to the preachers. The respondents were requested to identify their preaching tenure (i.e. 1-5 years, 6-10, 11-20, over 20 years) and to indicate whether preaching is their primary or secondary work. This permits a grouping of the responses so that variabilities³⁰ due to experience and/or vocational focus might be factored into the total response.

In assigning each of the five items in the three general areas to a category, the possibility of some bias³¹ due to wording is recognized. The wording, in an effort not to be too obvious in the matter of lodging the parallelism, is certainly open to interpretations which might differ from

those intended by the framer of the questionnaire. However, for the purpose of the overall result, the degree of generality and the possibility of some variant understandings are not considered to be serious detractors.

The items provided for ranking are listed as follows (each is numbered according to its location in the three major areas listed above):

1. Doctrine:

Adhering to the truth of the Gospel.(1)

Preparation and delivery of sermons.(2)

Able preachers, strong preaching.(3)

2. Nurture:

Fostering fellowship.(1)

Equipping the members for soul winning.(2)

Active elders, trained disciples.(3)

3. Program:

Praising God.(1)

Leading the church in its planned activities.(2)

Gospel meetings, personal work, campaigning.(3)

4. Evangelism:

Multiplying members.(1)

Soul winning.(2)

Planting new churches.(3)

5. Social Dimension:

Healing human hurts.(1)

Counseling persons in their distress.(2)

Friendly Christians.(3)

An identification of the priorities in the mind of the

preaching force among Ontario Churches of Christ, attitudes which necessarily must be influential in shaping the perceptions of the general membership, is valuable for the purpose of this inquiry. Specifically, to rank the five categories of involvement in each of the three main areas selected, i.e. emphases in the life of the church, functions in the minister's work, and contributors to the progress of the churches, has specific benefit. More generally, to prioritize these categories of function in an overarching order of importance can supply an understanding that is particularly significant, especially when such can be viewed as a backdrop for the viewpoints emerging from the responses of the general membership.

Questionnaire E

A Group Interview With Selected Preachers. As the shape of the thinking of the membership and the growth curve of Churches of Christ, during the 20th century and more particularly during the past decade, began to emerge from the research findings, it became possible for reflection and assessment to begin to be made. Once again, the insights of those who have been professionally involved in working with and leading the churches--its preachers--were sought out. Rather than opting for a series of individual interviews with a number of preachers, a group discussion interview was selected as a useful alternative. It was felt that the interaction between a limited number of participants would be beneficial in clarifying and expanding ideas. Under the

dynamics of the group, the influence of the interviewer would diminish and the real convictions of the persons involved would come to the fore.

Three preachers were selected. Each has several decades of preaching experience in the province. They work with three congregations, all in larger cities, and are distinctly different from each other in their style of church life. The three men are known for having firm views in the matter of how the church ought to express itself and to grow. They agreed to a meeting which would entail a two-hour period of taped discussion. They agreed to the use of their views for the purposes of the inquiry. And it was understood that they should remain anonymous. For the purposes of this report they shall be identified as participants A, B, and C. (See Appendix I. E. 1.-3.)

The stated purpose of the discussion was to examine the growth experience of the Churches of Christ in Ontario in this century, to consider causes for the growth curve in place, and to suggest requirements for growth in the future. The participants were invited to respond out of their experience in the life of the church so as to reflect both their own and the church community's thinking. Following the statement of a condition reported, a principle stated, or a premise advanced, the participants were invited to give a brief response followed by a discussion in which each had opportunity to expand his views or to respond to each other.

The identification of the discussion statements and questions will be reserved for the following chapter so that

question and response can appear together. A summary of the topics examined is included here:

1. Century growth, 2. '80s growth, 3. Post World War II growth, 4. Church building, 5. Preachers' priorities, 6. Elders' leadership, 7. Deacons' service, 9. Preacher preparation, 10. Theological insight, 11. Doctrinal posture, 12. Isolation, 13. Intentionality, 14. Receptivity, 15. Projections, 16. Prime need, 17. Future investigations.

Five instruments for profiling and assessing the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario have been examined. The following chapter will detail the results gained through their use.

NOTES

¹McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, p. 94.

²Ibid., p. 81.

³W. E. Kalbach and W. W. McVey, "Religious Composition of the Canadian Population," Religion in Canadian Society, Stewart Crysedale and Les Wheatcroft, eds. (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1976), p. 224.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Reginald W. Bibby and Merlin Brinkerhoff, "The Circulation of the Saints," Canadian Society, p. 347.

⁶G. W. H. Lampe and D. M. Paton, eds., The Old and the New in the Church (SCM Press, 1961), p. 15; quoted by Goldwin French, "The People Called Methodist in Canada," The Churches and the Canadian Experience, John Webster Grant, ed. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963), p. 69.

⁷Crysedale and Wheatcroft, Canadian Society, p. 41.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Seymour Sudman and Norman M. Bradburn, Asking Questions (San Francisco: Jersey Bass Publishers, 1982), p. 14.

¹¹Ibid., p. 281.

¹²Auxiliary sources for data: Geoffrey H. Ellis and E. Dan Wieb, eds., Centennial Yearbook: Churches of Christ in Canada (Beamsville, Ont.: Rannie Publications, 1967); Jerry Gardner, ed., Eastern Canada Directory of Churches of Christ, 1979-1980 (Ice Lake, Ont.: Jerry Gardner, Publisher, 1980); surveys of church membership for years 1956, 1966, 1981, by the Gospel Herald 47 (September 1981): pp. 2-3, 6-8, 14.

¹³See Appendix I. A. 1., for the three options offered the correspondent for determining a decadal attendance level.

¹⁴C. Peter Wagner, Strategies for Church Growth (Ventura, Cal.: Regal Books, 1987), p. 170.

¹⁵Bibby, "Circulation," Canadian Society, p. 347.

¹⁶Demereth and Hammon (1969), quoted by Bibby, ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 349.

¹⁸Yinger (1970), quoted by Bibby, ibid., p. 348.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 348.

²⁰Ibid., p. 349.

²¹McGavran, Understanding, p. 98.

²²Bibby, "Circulation," Canadian Society, p. 349.

²³Ibid., p. 356.

²⁴C. Peter Wagner, ed. Church Growth: State of the Art (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 300.

²⁵Sudman and Bradburn, Asking Questions, p. 274.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 267.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 267-271.

²⁹Lotus 1-2-3.

³⁰Sudman and Bradburn, Asking Questions, p. 18.

³¹Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The Growth Experience

The Overview, 1900-1989

The response rate to the mailed Questionnaire B: "Profile of the Life and Growth of the (---) Congregation," to Ontario Churches of Christ was 72%.¹ As expected, reports were frequently based on scanty records, even though several churches demonstrated careful records in place. The earlier in the century, the more generalized the reporting becomes. The dates of plantings and closings and the membership in the first two decades are quite obscure. However, where projections and estimates are included, a careful effort to table moderate levels was made. For the purpose of the inquiry, which seeks the shape of the growth experience rather than a census record, the emerging profile is sufficiently accurate as to be useful for analysis. (See Appendix II. A. 1.-4.)

The year 1900 saw 22 congregations of Churches of Christ functioning.² This is not to imply that in 1900 all congregations now included would see themselves as belonging to a new distinct group reformulated within the Restoration Movement on a conservative platform in Ontario. Some vacillated; some ultimately returned to the instrumental

grouping.³ The churches listed are viewed in this study as those believed to have determined finally to follow the more conservative course becoming identified as Churches of Christ (non-instrumental). These churches had by 1900 an average 30 years of life, and thus they constituted a solid base of church experience on which to build in the 20th century. However, 12 of these churches would disband, some in the near future, others later in the century. Together the non-surviving churches would last an average of 26 more years. The 10 pre-1900 churches functioning today have an average 1989 membership of 62, and collectively hold 20% of the total membership of Churches of Christ in Ontario.

In 1900, the 22 churches had an approximate attendance level of 925. Today, there are 69 congregations with a 1989 attendance level of 3,940. Thus, there has been a net four-fold increase of attenders and a three-fold increase in congregations. Eighty-nine congregations have been established in this century. (See Table 1.) (See Appendix III. A.)

TABLE I
CONGREGATIONAL BEGINNINGS AND CLOSINGS BY DECADE

Decade	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s
Begin	9	3	5	4	10	13	19	7	19
Close	2	6	5	1	5	2	8	5	8

Forty-two congregations have disbanded in this century,

including the 12 pre-1900 churches. The average life of the 42 disbanded churches was 24 years. (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2
AVERAGE LIFE SPAN OF CLOSED CHURCHES BY DECADE

P/1900	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s
Yrs 48	26	29	42	15	15	9	5	5	2.5
Chs 12	6	3	2	2	3	1	5	3	5

Figures for attendance levels in the decade of the '80s and the attendance level for 1989 are about even, i.e. 3,940 and 3,938 respectively, reflecting a plateaued condition which will be detailed in the findings of Questionnaire B. Current membership is 3,100 as compared with attendance levels at Sunday a.m. worship services of 3,940, or 79%.

The growth rate for the nine decades, taking an average of the growth for each decade, as detailed in Table 3, is 20% per decade.

TABLE 3
GROWTH RATE BY DECADE, ALL CONGREGATIONS

YEAR	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Mem.	1003	1101	1149	1185	1583	1827	2952	3087	3940
% Increase		10	4	3	34	15	62	5	28

Totals for those currently providing leadership in the three service areas, presented in Table 4, show seven of 10 churches with fulltime preachers, two of 10 with elders, and 1.7 of 10 with deacons.

TABLE 4
CURRENT LEADERSHIP: ELDERS, DEACONS, PREACHERS

	Churches With	Churches Without	Total
Elders	14 (20%)	55 (80%)	69
Deacons	12 (17%)	57 (83%)	69
Preachers	48 (70%)	21 (30%)	69

The decades of the '70s and the '80s show a slight net gain in the fluctuations of the total number of leaders in each of these categories. (See Table 5.)

TABLE 5
FLUCTUATIONS IN LEADERSHIP NUMBERS, TWO DECADES

	1970s		1980s		
Preachers(FT)	2	?	6	?	-8 + ?
Elderships	1	4	6	4	1
Diaconates	1	3	3	4	3
	Dropping Gaining		Dropping Gaining		Net

The means by which the existing congregations were

established include: over half of the church plantings as the result of initiative taken by members in the area, over a quarter through the work of the preacher solo or with a team, and the balance through church spawning or merging. One in ten experienced some church trouble as a factor in the new church planting. (See Table 6.)

TABLE 6
INITIATIVES IN ESTABLISHING NEW CHURCHES

Members	Preacher	Pr.+Team	Mem.Target	Spawn	Merge	Trouble
38	11	8	3	8	2	7
55%	16%	11%	4%	11%	3%	10%

The question of funding new and continuing works was raised. Table 7 shows that 41 (59%) of the congregations reported receiving outside funding. The majority of those not reporting outside assistance evidently have not received financial assistance. (Whether assistance was received for cooperative ventures was a question not included in the questionnaire.) Twenty reported the receipt of financial help currently, of which 12 indicated the percentage of their total budgets the help constituted.* Table 8 details the source and application of the financial assistance received by various congregations.

Of the 69 congregations in Ontario, as indicated in Table 9, 56 have the use of church buildings, eight use rented facilities, and five meet in homes. Almost one-third

of the congregations have acquired new facilities in the past two decades.

TABLE 7
CHURCHES RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

# Reporting	Initially	Subsequently	Currently	% Budget
41	32	21	20	Of 12 Rptg
59%	46%	30%	29%	40%

TABLE 8
SOURCE AND APPLICATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

SOURCE	Reporting	Canadian	American	Canadian/American	
	29 (71%)	9	6	14	
APPLICATION	Rptg	Preaching	Work Fund	Building	Program
	28 (68%)	25	7	12	2

Finally, the 69 congregations of Churches of Christ averaged 45 members each in 1989. They ranged from four to 199 members in size. The median position was 32 members. Seven of the churches were rural, 25 located in towns, and 37 in cities. Of those forty-two which had disbanded, eight were rural, 13 in towns, and 21 in cities. (See Table 10.)

The Closer Focus, 1979-1989

Moving from an overview of the growth experience of the

Churches of Christ in Ontario during the nine decades of this century, a focus on the most recent decade is gained

TABLE 9

PLACES OF WORSHIP AND RECENT ACQUISITIONS

FACILITIES	Church Building	Rental	Homes
	55 (81%)	8 (12%)	5 (7%)
NEW BLDGS Acquired	'70s	'80s	Total
	11 (20%)	6 (11%)	17 (31%)

TABLE 10

SIZE AND LOCATION OF CONGREGATIONS

SIZE: Members	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-200
Active 69	27 (39%)	21 (30%)	15 (22%)	6 (9%)
LOCATION	Rural	Town	City	
Active 69	7 (10%)	25 (36%)	37 (54%)	
Disbanded 42	8 (19%)	13 (31%)	21 (50%)	

with the help of a selected sample of congregations. Copies of Questionnaire B: "A Decadal Growth Rate (DGR), 1979-1989, Profile of the (---) Congregation" were sent to 18 of the 69 churches. A representative configuration was sought according to age, location, size, and perceived growth

condition. Fifteen were returned, and of these two were limited in the statistical information supplied. Thus, while a 25% sample was attempted, the returns provide a helpful 20% coverage of the whole. The profile of the sample is contained in Table 11. (See Appendix II. B. 1.-2.)

TABLE 11
PROFILE OF SAMPLE CHURCHES, DECADAL GROWTH STUDY

Church #	Age			Size			Location			Growth		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1.		x			x				x	x		
2.			x	x					x	x		
3.			x		x				x	x		
4.			x	x			x				x	
5.			x			x			x	x		
6.			x		x				x	x		
7.			x		x				x	x		
8.			x			x			x	x		
9.		x		x				x			x	
10.			x		x				x			x
11.			x			x			x		x	
12.			x			x		x		x		
13.			x		x				x			x
14.			x			x			x	x		
15.			x			x	x			x		

AGE: 1-Younger (under 10 yrs), 2-Middle (10-20 yrs), 3-Older (over 20 yrs). SIZE: 1-Smaller (under 50 mem), 2-Medium (50-100 mem), 3-Larger (over 100 mem). LOCATION: 1-Rural, 2-Town, 3-City. GROWTH: 1-Growing, 2-Plateaued, 3-Declining.

The expectation prior to mailing the questionnaires was that of the churches selected, nine were growing, four were plateaued, and two were declining. The returns, in fact, indicate that ten are growing moderately, three are plateaued, and two are declining. Table 12 examines the 1979

and the 1989 membership totals and determines the average Decadal Growth Rate (DGR).

TABLE 12
SAMPLE CONGREGATIONS DECADAL GROWTH RATE

Membership Totals of Congregations															
Ch.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
1979	30	27	87	47	101	62	63	80	40	110	98	141	85	136	80
1989	42	41	126	36	146	79	71	90	34	85	113	104	100	199	143
+/*/-	+	+	+	-	+	+	*	*	-	-	+	-	+	+	+
DGR %	40	52	45	-23	45	27	13	13	-15	-23	15	-26	18	46	79
DGR-Decadal Growth Rate: + Growing, * Plateaued, - Declining															

The reported average membership in 1989 for this sample of 15 churches is 94. As the 1989 average membership of all 69 congregations reported in Questionnaire A is 45, it is evident that the sample, while drawn from a configuration representing the group as a whole, reflects the more successful upper section in terms of growth and size. If the nine growing churches of the sample were isolated, their average DGR would be 41%. The declining churches average a decline rate of -22% DGR. Of encouraging note, six of the nine growing churches sustained their greater growth in the last third of the decade; conversely, the four declining churches all experienced their greater decline in the last third of the decade. Taking the entire sample together, the

growth line is virtually flat until the last two years.

Feeding the growth and decline reported by our sample churches were baptisms, transfer activity, and withdrawals due to unfaithfulness and reductions due to death. Five hundred and eighty-two baptisms were reported by our sample. Added to this are 544 transfers-in, less 535 transfers-out, less 161 who were removed or who removed themselves because of unfaithfulness, less 80 deaths, for a net improvement of 350. This compares with the 222 net improvement reported in the actual membership totals. The difference, 8.5 members per church of the sample, is accounted for, apart from less than precise records, by those who drifted away and eventually were recognized no longer as members. Several of the respondents identified this lacuna in the records.

Baptisms were subgrouped among those (1) from church families and (2) from non-church families. The respondents understood this to mean candidates who were not from families belonging to Churches of Christ. No attempt was made to further refine the converts into groups that were either among the literal "unchurched" or those having previous "church" experience. Each church of the sample baptized an average 1.46 persons per year from church families and an average 2.42 persons per year from non-church families for a total average of 3.88 baptisms per year per church.

When added to transfers-in, baptisms accounted for 52% of the increase. Total transfers-in for the period/sample were 544. Twenty-three percent of these did not change place

of residence when they transferred their congregational membership. Transfers-out, 535 in total, had 31% who did change residence when leaving congregations. The possibility is that some of these may not have taken up membership elsewhere; the questionnaire did not explore that further question. Churches receiving and losing transfers were, no doubt, exchanging members in some instances. Thus, to report "growth" statistics based on this type of increase can be misleading--both to those reporting net growth figures and to those receiving the reports. Those who had died faithful to their Lord were .5 per church per year in the sample.

Given that the transfers-in and -out were approximately even, comparisons of Increase by baptisms and Decrease by unfaithfulness, death, and dropping out is significant:

Baptisms 582 + Transfers differential 9 - Unfaithfulness 161 - Death 80 - Drop Outs 128 = net improvement for the 15 churches for the decade 222.

As this represents a net gain of 1.48 members per church per year, it is clear that the sample group is plateaued. It is noted that this figure approximates the average baptisms per church per year of church family converts. The above is pictured in Table 13.

Respondents to Questionnaire B were invited to comment on causes for growth curve fluctuations experienced in their respective churches throughout the decade. Comments of this kind were infrequently found in the returned questionnaires. This may be explained in part by (1) the flatness of the graph line in much of the experience reported, (2) the

respondent's lack of personal exposure to the circumstances of the changes experienced, and (3) the lack of a consistent practice among the congregations both to record changes and to reflect upon them. Several did make comments year by

TABLE 13

FACTORS AFFECTING NET GROWTH FOR SAMPLE CHURCHES

Baptisms		Transfers-In		Transfers-Out		Removals*		Net
Cf	NCF	CRes	NCRes	CRes	NCRes	Uft	Dth	Gain
19	363	421	123	369	166	161	80	(for
	(38%)(62%)	(77%)	(23%)	(69%)	(31%)			decade)
Totals	582		544		535		241	350

Membership totals reported: 1979-1,187; 1989-1,409; Diff:222
 *Drop Outs not reported.

year: recounting baptismal gains versus drop-offs, reflecting on effects of church troubles, or detailing the coming and going of preachers. One identified fluctuations due to employment problems, e.g. social, economic, or demographic. Most comments came at the end as overview assessments. A sampling of this is instructive. (See Appendix III. B. 1.-2.)

The Emerging Perception

The Members Reflect

Forty members of Churches of Christ in Ontario were

selected at random for the interviews of Questionnaire C: "Perceptions of Members of Churches of Christ, Ontario: a Telephone Interview," from a list which contained 2,800 addresses.² The list, given its source, appeared to be weighted toward older families in the churches. As this study is investigating the history of growth up to the present, the understanding and involvement of this segment is appropriate for the investigation. (If the thrust of the paper were more prescriptive and future oriented, the sample would be less satisfactory.) The interviews were conducted by four volunteers, including three preachers and one elder. The telephone calls were made to household telephone numbers: anyone answering who was a member of a Church of Christ was invited to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 20 questions with subsections for a total of 44 units. These units reflected four main concerns, i.e. demographics, theology, social dimension, and mission, which were intermixed throughout the length of the questionnaire. The report on the results of the telephone interviews will follow the four-fold order of the concerns listed above. (See Appendix II. C. 1.-4.)

Demographics. Those interviewed were:

male, 14; female, 26; these were grouped: under 20 years, 2; between 20-30 years, 5; between 30-50 years, 13; and over 50 years, 20.

The respondents had an average 31 years of membership in a Church of Christ. These are subdivided according to their years of experience: under 5 years, 3; between 6-15

years, 6; between 16-30 years, 10; and over 30 years, 21.

These were further subdivided into:

female: (a) 3, (b) 6, (c) 4, (d) 13;

male: (c) 6, (d) 8.

(When "subgroups" are identified in the data below, the years of experience within Churches of Christ is referred to.)

The size of the churches of which they are members, according to their knowledge of the size, as they reported, averaged 102 members. These are subdivided: under 40 members, 6; between 41-70 members, 7; between 71-120 members, 13, and over 120 members, 13.^e

Did they have relatives in Churches of Christ?

Yes, 30 (75%); no, 10 (25%).

Their relatives in the church were:

fewer than 5, 7; as many as 10, 7; more than 10, 16.

Were the respondents native to Ontario?

Yes, 34 (85%); no, 5 (12.5%); unanswered, 1 (2.5%).

Were there those of an ethnic minority in their congregation?

Yes, 25 (62.5%); no, 15 (37.5%).

Where minorities were present, their numbers were:

few, 19; several, 4; quite a few, 2.

Theology. (1) Several questions sought the interviewees' perception of the grace and intention of God.

Who are more valuable in the sight of God?

Christians, 5 (12.5%); sinners, 2 (5%); both/and, 33 (82.5%)

In doing God's work day to day, does God expect us to?
 plan our action, 2 (5%); follow his will, 23
 (57.5%); both/and, 15 (37.5%).

In living our daily lives, should we concentrate on?
 the here (this world), 5 (12.5%); the hereafter, 2
 (5%); both/and, 32 (80%); unanswered, 1 (2.5%).

Do you believe God is actively involved in world affairs
 today?

Yes, 36 (90%); no, 4 (10%).

If "Yes", do you believe God has a supreme purpose in
 the world today?

Yes, 35 (87.5%); no, 0; unanswered, 5 (12.5%).

The respondents who answered "Yes" were invited to state
 what that supreme purpose is. See Appendix III. C. for
 the list of their responses.

(2) Several questions concerned the teachings of
 Christ.

How well do you understand the Gospel plan of salvation?

Rated on a scale of 1-10, 8.7; as scaled by the
 subgroups (i.e. years of experience in the church):

female: (a) 7.0, (b) 8.5, (c) 9.3, (d) 8.6;

male: (c) 9.2, (d) 8.3.

How near do you feel your congregation is in living out
 the teachings of Jesus?

1-10 scale: 7.2; as scaled by the subgroups:

female: (a) 6.3, (b) 6.7, (c) 7.0, (d) 7.5;

male: (c) 7.2, (d) 7.8.

(3) The nature of the church was the focus of several

questions.

Does going to church feel for you like a welcome escape from a threatening world?

Yes, 35 (87.5%); no, 5 (12.5%).

If you had to label the Church of Christ, which one of the following would you use?

Legalistic, 2 (5%); conservative, 28 (70%);
progressive, 6 (15%); liberalistic, 3 (7.5%);
unanswered, 1 (2.5%).

Have you ever had an elder visit you in your home for the purpose of spiritual counseling?

Yes, 9 (22.5%); no, 31 (77.5%).

Social Dimension. (1) The awareness of and the relationship with the outside world by both the interviewees and their congregations were the interest of several inquiries.

Do you personally feel knowledgeable of and a part of the general life of the province?

Yes, 35 (87.5%); no, 5 (12.5%).

How aware is your congregation of current conditions in the surrounding society?

Scale 1-10, 7.6; scaled by the subgroups:

female: (a) 8.3, (b) 7.2, (c) 7.5, (d) 7.7:

male: (c) 8.0, (d) 7.0.

How friendly is your congregation to the outsider who visits your service?

Scale 1-10, 7.9; scaled by the subgroups:

female: (a) 6.7, (b) 8.5, (c) 8.8, (d) 8.0:

male:

(c) 8.0, (d) 7.1.

Three items of eight which were ranked by the interviewees as to their relative importance have a social concern and are included here.

Feeding the hungry: ranked 4 of 8.

Counseling the broken hearted: ranked 6 of 8.

Solving today's social problems: ranked 8 of 8.

(2) The interviewees' perception of several social aspects of congregational life was examined.

Do you feel that the plans and goals of your congregation are communicated to the members?

Well and clearly, 16 (40%); adequately, 17 (42.5%); poorly, 7 (17.5%).

Would you describe the preaching which you regularly hear at your church as moving and life-changing?

Yes, 31 (77.5%); no, 9 (22.5%).

Two of the eight ranking items were included in this section.

Encouraging Christian fellowship: ranked 5 of 8.

Nurturing the Christian family: ranked 2 of 8.

(3) External influence on the life of the church was explored.

In your judgment, has there been much influence by American Churches on Churches of Christ in Ontario?

Yes, 22 (55%); no, 16 (40%); unanswered, 2 (5%).

If "Yes," has this influence been?

Positive, 19 (48%); negative, 4 (10%); both/and, 3 (7.5%).

Mission. (1) How effective does the church see itself in fulfilling its mission?

Is the church where you are a member committed to growing?

Yes, 40 (100%); no, 0.

How successful is your congregation in winning and holding new converts?

Scale 1-10, 5.5; scaled by the subgroups:

female: (a) 4.7, (b) 7.2, (c) 5.3, (d) 5.5;

male: (c) 6.0, (d) 5.9.

How receptive are the people in your area to the church?

Very receptive, 7 (17.5%); little interest, 27

(67.5%); highly resistant, 5 (12.5%); unanswered, 1 (2.5%).

Are the preachers with whom you are acquainted helpful examples and encouragers to you in the work of soul winning?

Yes, 35 (87.5%); no, 4 (10%); unanswered, 1 (2.5%).

(2) What is the church's perception of its responsibility in mission?

With regard to evangelism, is it our responsibility to?

spread the Gospel, 28 (70%); baptize converts, 0; both/and, 12 (30%).

Who does God expect to convert the lost?

preachers, 5 (12.5%); average church members, 2 (5%); both/and, 32 (80%); unanswered, 1 (2.5%).

Four of the ranking items were contained in this section.

Spreading the Gospel: ranked 3 of 8.

Encouraging Christian fellowship: ranked 5 of 8.

Building up the church: ranked 1 of 8.

Attending worship services: ranked 7 of 8.

(3) What is the church's view of its actual involvement in mission?

During 1989, were there, as you can recall, any classes or training programs on personal evangelism offered in your congregation?

Yes, 18 (45%); no, 21 (52.5%); unanswered, 1 (2.5%).

How active do you consider yourself to be in telling others about Jesus?

Scale 1-10, 6.1; scaled by subgroup:

female: (a) 6.7, (b) 6.5, (c) 6.0, (d) 5.6:

male: (c) 6.3, (d) 6.4.

Does your home congregation have a realistic plan for reaching out to the community with the Gospel?

Yes, 26 (65%); no, 14 (35%).

What percentage of the members of your congregation would you think is actively engaged in Bible studies with outsiders?

Fewer than 5%, 18 (45%); as many as 10%, 11 (27.5%):

more than 10%, 9 (22.5%); unanswered, 2 (5%).

The Preachers' Priorities.

The group of twenty preachers gathered from throughout south central Ontario who responded to Questionnaire D: "Preachers' Perceptions of their Priorities," reflected

their view of the priorities of their ministries in three areas: (1) emphases in the life of the church, (2) functions in the minister's work, and (3) contributors to the actual progress of Ontario Churches of Christ. The questionnaire was introduced by the statement: "According to God's priorities, rank (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc.) the following in their order of importance, as you understand it." Those responding were asked to identify their tenure in preaching: (a) 1 to 5 years, (b) 6 to 10 years, (c) 11 to 20 years, (d) over 20 years. (See Appendix II. D.) The sample was grouped as to their years of experience as follows:

(a) 6 (30%), (b) 3 (15%), (c) 2 (10%), (d) 9 (45%).

The sample was further divided between: (a) those whose preaching is their primary work, and (b) those for whom it is secondary: the returns showed (a) 15 (75%), (b) 5 (25%). The 15 represent 30% of the fulltime preaching force among Churches of Christ in Ontario.

1. Emphases in the life of the church. In order of priority among the five items offered, the preachers gave "praising God" first place. The ranking of the "emphasis" division by the entire group, and according to tenure groupings, is contained in Table 14.

2. Functions in the minister's work. In order of priority the preachers responded with "equipping members for soul winning" given priority. The ranking of the "functions" division by the entire group, and according to tenure grouping, is contained in Table 15.

3. Contributors to the progress of the church. In

TABLE 14
EMPHASES IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

ITEM:	RANKING: Full Group	TENURE: (a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Adhering to the truth of the Gospel	2	2	2	3	2
Fostering fellowship	4	3	4	2	5
Praising God	1	1	1	1	1
Multipling members	5	5	5	5	4
Healing human hurts	3	4	3	4	3

TABLE 15
FUNCTIONS IN THE PREACHER'S WORK

ITEM:	RANKING: Full Group	TENURE: (a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Soul Winning	3	2	5	5	2
Preparation and delivery of sermons	2	3	1	2	3
Leading the church in its planned activities	5	5	5	3	5
Counseling persons in their distress	4	4	5	1	4
Equipping the members for soul winning	1	1	2	4	1

order of priority, the preachers viewed the number one contributor to the progress of Churches of Christ in Ontario as being "able preachers, strong preaching." The ranking of the "contributors" division by the entire group, and according to tenure groupings, is contained in Table 16.

TABLE 16
CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH

ITEM:	RANKING: Full Group	TENURE: (a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Planting new churches	4	5	4	3	3
Gospel meetings, personal work, campaigning	5	4	5	5	5
Able preachers, strong preaching	1	2	1	2	2
Active elders, trained disciples	3	3	2	4	4
Friendly Christians	2	2	4	2	2

The five items each within the three divisions were grouped in five topical categories. The parallels among the 15 items were not pointed out to the preachers prior to their responding to the questionnaire. The five topical categories in the life and work of the preacher which were chosen are: (a) doctrine, (b) nurture, (c) program, (d) evangelism, and (e) social dimension. The preachers gave primacy of place to "doctrine" and relegated "evangelism" to fifth place. The ranking of the topical categories by the entire group, and according to age grouping, is contained in Table 17.

Three Men's Assessments

In Questionnaire E: "A Group Interview with Selected Preachers," a response was sought to the picture emerging from Questionnaires A-D from three preachers regarding the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario. The three men were chosen because of their identified extended experience in

preaching in Ontario and their acknowledged commitment to

TABLE 17

TOPICAL CATEGORIES IN THE PREACHER'S LIFE & WORK

CATEGORY	RANKING: Full Group	TENURE: (a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Doctrine	1	2	1	2	1
Nurture	2	1	2	4	5
Program	4	4	3	3	4
Evangelism	5	3	5	5	2
Social Dimension	3	5	4	1	3

pursuing the advance of the church in approaches distinctive to themselves. The group interview was employed with the objective of stimulating an interactive response. The perception of these men of the Ontario churches' actual progress in this century, and during the most recent decade, and their appraisal of the membership's role in the accomplishment, are important to this inquiry. Their assessment of the use and applicability of church growth principles in this process is particularly important. Both where the men perceive the church to be and where they reveal themselves to be are pertinent to our study. The following summary of the interview will (1) identify the series of questions/observations/premises presented to the participants, (2) give their initial collective response, and (3) follow with a sample comment given in response in each section. The participants are identified as A, B, and

C, and the moderator as E. The discussion lasted for two hours and was taped.

1. E. Our surveys are confirming what you probably recognize regarding the growth of the church in this century: a three-fold increase of congregations, a four-fold increase in attendance levels. Are you encouraged or discouraged by this growth development?

Response: A. Encouraged. B. Not certain. C. Encouraged.

Comments: A. I am impressed with the vacillation in growth patterns: periods of growth followed by valleys while stabilization takes place. As maturity advances, a sense of the comfortable sets in, with even resentment to new challenges and new blood arising. The new people will bring future growth.

B. These statistics are detached from reality, and are not easily linked with the present situation.

C. I am impressed with staying power of the non-church converts I have known. A new situation exists today: the multicultural situation. Our ethnic groups (identified) sit segregated in our services. How do we encourage the Body feeling?

2. E. The '80s reflect a plateaued condition for our congregations. Does this match your experience?

Response: A. Plateaued or declining. B. Growth earlier in the decade, now plateaued. C. Yes.

Comments: C. Ours are older congregations. Perhaps this is the reason. A telephone call came recently from one who wanted to attend services, but she wanted to meet a member

first so she would not be a stranger when she came.

A. My research for this decade uncovered rapid growth and high loss rates in the early part of the decade, e.g. '81-'82, 37 baptisms, a 93% fatality rate; '83-'84, 46 baptisms, 97% loss. More recently a better retention: e.g. '87, 12 baptisms, 87% retention; '88, 12 baptisms, 99% retention. The earlier growth exceeded the congregation's capability for dealing with growth. Identification by the converts with the congregation did not happen. Evangelism alone cannot bring sustained growth.

B. We have worked hard to develop a body concept. But now it is difficult for newcomers to break in and not feel like an outsider.

3. E. Our major increase in church planting followed World War II, but the last two decades have seen a restricted activity in this regard. How would you account for this?

Response: A. The view has arisen in recent times that megachurches should be developed rather than seeking to plant new works. B. Growing affluence, with the younger having high concern for security. C. Planting another church will threaten the stability of the existing one.

Comments: A. Churches today are struggling for identity. To focus on a congregation elsewhere which may have fixed on a defined but radical identity can become a preoccupation of the local church resulting in inactivity.

B. But were not the churches side-tracked in the '50s and '60s as well?

C. Church planting is not either/or and it should not be looked at as primarily a financial question. People working--but that is the hitch.

4. E. Three established churches in the Niagara Peninsula recently completed new church buildings. Does this hint that the '90s will be a decade of accelerated growth, or are we entering the cathedral stage?

Response: A. The buildings do not obliterate issues, group personality difference, or make up for lack of zeal. B. Yes, for growth, provided new buildings do not become ends in themselves. C. Yes, for growth, provided the building is a tool for evangelism.

Comments: C. The buildings in your reference are designed to be functional, not as cathedrals.

A. It is interesting how each building reflects a different concern for each group. Whether buildings are new or old, we all struggle with the common misperception that the auditorium is where God is.

5. E. The questionnaire completed at the Milton preachers' meeting placed "evangelism" in fifth place in a ranking of five items. Has the Ontario preaching force contributed to the growth of the church?

Response: A. Yes, from experience and observation. B. Yes, but to the neglect of other things. C. Yes. Generally the preachers are concerned and involved.

Comments: B. In my preaching years, most of the baptisms have been the result of my initiative. I am not sure that's right. I know how to evangelize, but I don't

know as well how to activate the body so that it is leaven in the community.

C. We spend a lot of time in pastoral activities. Yet through the fruit of this attention others are being reached. Never has there been a time when it was more necessary to "teach them to observe all things." Growth and development are high on the list.

B. The stress of the preacher's work can result in his not liking people. If I can see the wonder of another human being, perhaps I can transfer that to the group.

A. At my lowest ebb as an evangelist, just finding one who is not a member and watching a relationship grow to the point that God brings him to conversion is my salvation.

6. E. Our findings indicate that the ratio of elders to churches in Ontario is one in five. Is the presence or absence of elders a factor in our growth experience?

Response: A. Hesitate to respond. B. Generally not a positive influence. C. If there are elders who truly understand their work.

Comments: C. Enthusiasm is also the key for the elder. I have worked with elders who understood the nature of their work.

B. I have known very few who I felt had a shepherd's heart. Too few times where men really spend time with people, nurturing, feeding, praying, caring. In spite of major efforts to develop spiritual leaders, I have experienced how easy it is for men to click into an administration role.

A. Good men are not necessarily good elders.

Expectations can destroy an elder, e.g. why aren't the light bulbs changed? They are put down if they cannot solve all the problems. It is necessary to re-educate the church that eldering is not an administrative office, but a function for service.

C. I heard it said a man selected to be an elder should already have a flock. Some who have been like that turned into administrators when they were appointed. This says something about expectations.

B. How can we teach our people to function independently, to be responsible for their own faith?

A. Do we, subconsciously, not want to teach them because we like feeling indispensable?

7. E. Again our reports indicate that one church in six has deacons. Is the presence or absence of deacons a factor in our growth experience?

Response: A. Misunderstanding of their role and unwise assignments have contributed to weakness. B. If the appointment of deacons represents a better functioning community of believers, then the answer is Yes. C. We appoint deacons but find elders doing their job.

Comments: E. Our question is, historically, have our deacons contributed to the growth or lack of growth of the church?

A. Yes. Their work has been necessary. They have contributed. I speak congregationally. I cannot speak regionally.

8. E. Currently, three out of ten of our fulltime preachers are American. One out of 2.4 churches has received or is receiving outside financial help; and of these two of three have drawn support from the U.S. (i.e. two of every seven churches overall). In balance has our drawing on U.S. support and personnel been positive or negative in the matter of church growth?

Response: A. Positive. B. Yes, with obvious exceptions. C. Yes.

Comment: A. I recognize the cultural problems. But native Canadian preachers have created as many firefights. The U.S. financial involvement is positive. Across Ontario it has been positive.

9. E. Preacher preparation is evenly divided between, (a) self-trained (33%), (b) Bible college or schools of preaching (32%), college or universities (35%). Has the level of training received by our preachers supported or hindered our growth progress?

Response: A. Yes, the quality and level have hindered. B. Low, and it has hindered. C. Professional training low and a hindrance.

Comment: C. Education opens one up to investigation, better habits of study, research. Better to do this early. But schooling alone is not the answer. The ability to relate with people comes through being with people, not through being in college.

B. Do not discount the secular university. Our short-cut routes to preparing for preaching has left a lot

of casualties.

A. Education which develops the ability to think is valuable. But schools can shape its students to think the way instructors think.

10. E. A premise of this inquiry is that theological awareness among our people generally, including an understanding of a mandate for growth, will affect our progress in enlargement. Do you agree with the premise, and if so is the awareness level of our people high or low?

Response: A. Yes to the premise. In recent times that awareness has been declining. B. Yes. A shift from Biblical knowledge to brotherhood positions is noted. C. Yes. Our people are not generally a people of the Book today.

Comments: A. In the '30s and '40s our people learned blocks of scriptures like Romans 8 and 12. We have moved from that, closed ranks, and no longer have an outward look. Our people have shown an interest in the fundamentals of Christianity lately. We may have become so infatuated with the profound we have tripped over the simple.

B. We may be preserving something instead of letting the Word control us.

11. E. Our premise is that a distorted doctrinal posture will impede growth. Has legalism or liberalism characterized our position? Has either extreme inhibited our growth?

Response: A. More liberal today and that is hurting. B. Legalism has had a negative influence. C. We grew where we were inclined toward legalism.

Comments: A. We grew more rapidly in numbers when legalism was more pronounced. But I am not sure that the growth in spirituality came as well.

C. To be liberal (small l) is not be liberalistic. We have moved to the former. It can be healthy. We must be prepared to meet the needs of today.

B. Lack of present growth is the fruit of liberalistic mentality. Yesterday's simple answers will not suffice for today.

A. I am not saying legalism is right. But people are looking for definite answers for definite questions. The "I believe that..." response may be a good response psychologically, but distressed people want a sure word from the Lord.

12. E. Our people may be isolated from Ontario society because of such restrictions as (a) doctrinal exclusiveness, (b) American orientation (support and training), and (c) a lower socio-economic level. To what degree are we isolated from society and how has this affected our growth? With respect to the sociological sect-church continuum, are we in the process of moving from sect to church, or have we made it to the latter?

Response: A. I do not see our people isolated at the moment. B. Our people are plugged into present society. C. I agree with that.

Comment: A. There was a time when we were isolated, but not today, not politically, economically, or educationally. We haven't made it completely and probably should not.

B. We may not be plugged in politically.

13. E. Intentionality is a prerequisite for growth.

Out of considered commitment comes both strategies for growth and people involvement in task performance. Is this an accurate observation? And if so what is the level of the church's current commitment to grow?

Response: A. Presently there is insufficient time and energy in developing strategy. B. Insufficient strategy. C. We talk about growing but do not plan for it.

Comments: A. Churches go through the exercise of goals setting thinking that the effort alone will produce results. Plans must be based on practical observations of what the congregation is capable of doing. What destroys an evangelist is when a congregation suddenly becomes conscious of numbers. So you live and die on the basis of the attendance. A fixation with numbers following a crash course on church growth can kill a congregation. It may work in Tennessee or Texas, but will it work in Ontario?

B. Yes, there is insufficient planning taking place among us. Yet, it may be that the whole church growth movement is the biggest detriment to church growth. Consider that it is pretty organizational, pretty turned inward. Jesus never kept score. The church growth movement is scorekeeping.

14. E. Levels of receptivity can vary from place to place in the world, even from community to community within a region, e.g., within Ontario. Is Ontario a hard place for the church to grow in?

Response: A. In my area receptivity is not good.

B. Yes. C. Yes, it is a hard area.

Comment: A. It is decidedly hostile. Reactions three and four generations away from a division in the church in our area are still surfacing.

C. In my area receptivity varies from nationality to nationality.

B. Yes, the fields are different. A definite difference exists, for example, between the American mind and the Canadian mind. We have assumed some things we should not have assumed.

15. E. What future do you hold for the church in Ontario in the '90s?

Response: A. Excellent. B. Exciting. C. Good.

Comments: A. I see a lot of younger men really starting to take hold of things in the church. They are fresh, not biased, very Canadian, in their culture and their concept. I think we will see steady, healthy growth. Prayer is becoming important to many.

B. That is what I am excited about--turning this thing over to God.

C. There is much positive feeling about our need to grow.

16. E. What, in the main, is needed to accelerate the growth of the church in the Nineties?

Response: A. Allowing individuals to discover their own place in the functioning body of Christ. B. Remove the focus from ourselves. Hide ourselves in God.

17. E. If you were to inquire into the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario, what would you want to investigate?

Response: A. I would want to investigate churches which are growing rapidly and inquire as to their concept of the church itself. B. How much time is spend in praying specifically? C. I would want to examine the strategies for growth established by individual congregations.

Comment: A. I would like to look into growth where it has happened. Why has it happened? What is the motivation? Hopefully, not just to keep up a reputation, or to be on the bandwagon; rather, love for people and their souls.

B. Is their growth natural, beautiful, or mechanical?

The Broader Religious Experience

To gain a focus on church growth in general in Ontario, it is appropriate to see the experience of the churches on the national level. Once again, given the large proportionate size of the Ontario population and the dominant numbers of its Protestant denominational portion, there is a reasonable concurrence between the two experiences. In Canada since the mid-century point there has been a peaking of membership growth and a dramatic decline in church attendance. Loyalty of affiliation, regardless of participation indexes, remains remarkably consistent, however. Religiously, Bibby contends, the people have shifted "from religious commitment to religious

consumption."⁷ The churches have seen their ability to influence the country reduced as they have turned to specialization: "The spheres of life over which the churches have authority have diminished in direct relationship to the specialization that has accompanied the industrialization of the nation."⁸

The statistics are clear as to marked reduction in participation in institutional church life in Canada. While the membership of the mainline Protestant churches (here identified as UCC, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Baptist) continued to increase in actual numbers through to 1971, their rate of growth had actually peaked in the mid-'60s; their position as a proportion of the Canadian population according to "preference" expressed in census enumerations had declined with every census since 1941, dropping from 49% in 1941 to 44.5% in 1961 to 39.7% in 1971, and to 35% in 1981.⁹

During the period of "alleged peak expansion," from the mid '50s to the early '60s, "no group increased their proportional share of the national population."¹⁰ The decline in the size of mainline churches in proportion to the Canadian population for the period 1971-1981 is noted: Presbyterian, -7%; Anglican, -4%; Lutheran, -2%; United Church of Canada, -1%.¹¹ Between 1981 and 1986, the mainline churches decreased their share of the population a further 3.0%.¹²

Church attendance drop-off is another indicator. The beginning of this decline was in the '60s although not

necessarily noticed: 61% of Canadians were attending church regularly in '56; this had dropped to 39% in 1974.¹³ Over a longer span, an average two of three Canadians attended church regularly in 1946; by 1986 those numbers had reversed to one in three.¹⁴ The Roman Catholic attendance experience reflects the broader picture as well: from 80% at mass weekly in 1945 and 1965, to 60% in 1975, to 40% presently.¹⁵ Table 18 details the flow and ebb of selected church membership between 1931 and 1985.¹⁶

TABLE 18
MEMBERSHIP OF SELECT DENOMINATIONS IN THOUSANDS

Year	UCC	Ang	Bapt	Pres	Luth	Pent
1931	671	794	132	181	*	*
1941	717	861	134	174	*	*
1951	834	1096	135	177	121	45
1961	1037	1358	138	201	172	60
1971	1017	1109	132	183	200	150
1981	900	922	128	165	218	125
1985	881	856	130	163	208	179

While the perception that the conservative evangelical churches in Canada (such as some Baptists, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Mennonites, Salvation Army, Free Methodists, and others) are making substantial gains, and these at the expense of the mainline churches, their experience is only slightly better

than that described above. Some conservative groups have grown faster than the population, e.g. Pentecostals, Alliance, and Salvation Army, but some have not.¹⁷ During the decade 1971-1981 Pentecostals increased their share of the Canadian population by 54% (to 339,000 from 220,000 members), whereas the Jehovah Witnesses decreased 17% (to 143,000 from 173,000).¹⁸ The conservative Protestant churches are collectively marginal in Canada, constituting only 7% of the population, a level that has been sustained since the '40s but now is receding.

Looking more specifically at Ontario, the mainline Protestant churches in 1981 had a 43% share of the Ontario population, in comparison to their 35% share national population (see Table 19).¹⁹

TABLE 19
POPULATION SHARE OF MAJOR ONTARIO CHURCHES, 1981

	RCC	UCC	ANG	Pres	Luth	Bapt
Can	47.3	15.6	10.1	3.4	2.9	2.9
Ont	35.6	19.4	13.6	6.1		3.4

Reflecting on this century as a backdrop for this inquiry, the census records are of value. It is remembered that:

Census figures do not measure membership or indicate the degree of affiliation with a particular religious body, but rather indicate the one to what each person stated he or she belonged, adhered, or favored.²⁰

To draw some perspective from the 80-year census record, the percentage increase is taken as a quotient of measurement for national totals of church membership compared to national and Ontario populations (see Table 20).²¹

TABLE 20
CHURCH INCREASE QUOTIENT, 1901-1981

	Can	Ont	Ang	UCC*	Pres**
1901	5,371,315	2,182,947	367,937	1,015,847	143,151
1981	24,343,181	8,534,265	1,164,320	1,655,555	517,015
Quotient	3.53	2.90	2.16	.63	2.60

	RCC	Bapt	Disc	Sala	CofC
1901	390,304	116,281	10,514	6,479	1,000
1981	2,986,940	288,465	6,545	45,065	4,000
Quotient	6.65	1.48	-.377	5.96	3.0

*UCC/1901=Methodist, Congregational, 70% of Presbyterians as of 1901. **Presbyterians/1901=30% of Presbyterians as of 1901.

Another growth perspective is supplied by identifying several conservative evangelical churches which did not have a statistical presence in the 1901 census, but which are noted in the 1981 census:

Christian and Missionary Alliance, 7,220

Plymouth Brethren, 3,270

Pentecostals, 119,535

Free Methodist, 8,995

Jehovah's Witnesses, 48,465.²²

The results of the five instruments of inquiry concerning the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario have been detailed, and the broader religious experience in Canada and in Ontario has been surveyed. It now remains to draw such conclusions from this data which are both evident and reasonable, as well as to present suggestions for further studies and strategies for future growth as may appear to be consistent with the findings.

NOTES

¹Sixty-four questionnaires were mailed and 46 returned. Verbal reports were received from an additional nine locations.

²In his research, Tom Blake "documented" 14 Churches of Christ by 1900 and 19 by 1906. "The Establishment of Churches of Christ in Canada: 1900-1918," Gospel Herald 41 (July, 1975): 2 (122).

³In about 1919, the Meaford church changed its sign to the "Church of Christ" from "The Disciples Church" during the tenure of J. L. Hines (1917-1920), an American evangelist; and a "declaration of trust" in that name was drawn up recognizing "what had happened de facto thirty to forty years earlier." Cox, "Disciples Church in Meaford," pp. 34, 35.

⁴Several Ontario Churches of Christ, as a point of doctrine, i.e. autonomy, will not receive funding directly from other churches.

⁵This list was supplied by Great Lakes Christian College. It includes as well as church families the names of non-member alumni and alumni families.

⁶Given the size of the congregations reported in earlier surveys, it appears evident that interviewees consistently overestimated the sizes of their home congregations.

⁷Reginald W. Bibby, "Religion in Canada: A Late Twentieth-Century Reading," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1987, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), p. 264,

⁸Ibid., p. 265.

⁹Henry C. McLeod, "A Comparison in Protestant Church Membership in Canada, 1946-1979," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1982, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), p. 258.

¹⁰Bibby, Fragmented Gods, p. 14.

¹¹Year Book of American and Canadian Churches,

1988, p. 269.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Reginald W. Bibby, "Canadian Commitment: A Preview," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1978, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), p. 246.

¹⁴Bibby, Fragmented Gods, p. 11.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁸"Religious Affiliation in Canada," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1988, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), p. 269.

¹⁹David R. Stone, "Religion in Canada: Findings from the 1981 Census," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1984, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 262.

²⁰Charles A. Tipp, "The Religious Complexion of Canada," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1974, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), p. 254.

²¹Canada Census, 1901, 1981.

²²Canada Census, 1981.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The Growth Considered

Churches of Christ in Ontario are currently a small fellowship of 3,100 members and 4,000 attending. They experienced a modest 4.5 multiplying during the nine decades of the 20th century. Over this period they had a 300% increase as compared to an Ontario population increase of 290%. During the '70s they experienced an arrested growth of 5% while the province increased its population 11.7%.¹ However, during the '80s their growth rate increased to 28%. Their largest growth rate to date was during the decade of the '60s with a 62% increase.

The increase in the number of congregations over the period, from 22 to 69, points to two phases: (1) a period of consolidation following the trauma of separation, 1900-1940: during these four decades, 19 churches closed and 26 churches were established for an average of 6.5 openings and a growth rate of 5.7% per decade; (2) a period of expansion as the churches shared in Ontario's boom times: during these five decades 28 churches closed and 68 churches were begun for an average of 13.6 openings and a growth rate of 28.8% per decade.

One-half of the churches are located in cities, $1/3$ in towns, and $1/6$ are rural. This is approximately the profile of the 42 churches which closed, with $1/2$ in cities, $3/10$ in towns and $1/5$ rural. Thus, the closing of churches does not reflect the results of a strong urban shift for the churches as might be expected. However, of the churches planted since 1950, 29 are in cities, 11 in towns, and 2 in rural settings. This does indicate that the more recent focus has been in centers of population, which is in keeping with the urbanization of Ontario: as reported earlier, "By 1981, two-thirds of the population lived in the province's ten largest metropolitan areas."² Yet, in the largest metropolitan center, Toronto, during this century seven churches have closed, while five continue with only one of these planted in recent years (1968). Only one smaller congregation exists in one of the five boroughs of Metropolitan Toronto. The few congregations with reduced membership are in the core Toronto city. Three large cities between Hamilton and Toronto do not have congregations of Churches of Christ. Thus, while the presence of Churches of Christ in the province is in the main urban, it has failed to secure any commensurate presence in the burgeoning Toronto-centered region.

The congregations presently average 45 members. These range in size from 199 to four, with the median size being 32 members. Only one in ten has over 100 members, two in ten between 50-100 members, and three in ten between 26-50, and four in ten between 4-25 members. Thus, the larger portion

(70%) of the churches are under 50 members. Few (six) have surpassed the 100 mark and only one (199 members) is close to breaking the 200 level. Churches of Christ in Ontario are, therefore, characteristically a band of small groups. The indication is that these are struggling to retain their present level and are having difficulty in realizing significant growth. Only 37% of the increase from the '80s over the '70s came from within the 55 congregations which were in existence prior to the '80s. Sixty-three percent of the growth registered for the '80s was found among the 14 churches which were begun during the '80s and the six which opened and closed during the '80s. Thus, the picture of a plateaued fellowship, apart from church plantings, as uncovered in the decadal growth study of 15 sample churches, is confirmed.

The growth picture of the 15 sample churches, which turned out to be double the size of the average congregation (94 vs. 45) must be viewed as marking a better-than-average experience. These were essentially plateaued during much of the '80s, with an upswing noted in the last two years of the decade. Nine of the 15 churches were identified as "growing," while four were plateaued and two declining. Thus, the net baptismal levels of 3.88 persons and the net gain in membership of 1.48 persons per year per congregation will be high for the averages for the fellowship as a whole. Once again, the conclusion is of a church which is essentially plateaued, barely keeping up with provincial population increases. With the 1.48 per person per year gain

compared to the 1.46 persons per church per year baptized from church families, it would appear that the churches are maintaining a growth rate equivalent to "biological" growth.

In assessing this growth rate, the sample interviewed by telephone indicated that in the main, Ontario is a "hard field." Eighty-nine percent indicated that people in general had "little interest" (67.5%) or were "highly resistant" (12.5%) to the church. The usual reaction to members of Churches of Christ when they bemoan the "hard field," is to question their commitment. However, the emerging picture of religious conditions in Canada in general and in Ontario in particular is of "religious encasement,"³ where over eight out of ten citizens identify a preference for the mainline churches, a ratio that has remained, with only slight recent erosion, throughout the century. Conservative evangelical churches, with which Churches of Christ are identified, have never registered more than 8% of the population in this century; they are presently at 7%, and could possibly shrink to 4% by the end of the century.⁴ In contrast to a widespread perception of vigorous, exceptional growth of conservative evangelical churches in the latter half of the century, Bibby has demonstrated that the "successes" are actually a recycling of "saints" from other evangelical churches. They are not attracting numbers from the mainline churches nor from the growing number of "no religion" preferenced people. "The highly publicized proselyting image of groups like the Pentecostals and Nazarenes is not borne out by the data..."⁵ Thus, Churches of Christ share the same

difficulties that other evangelical groups are experiencing. Their increase, modest as it has been, is thus not unimpressive. Those who "compare themselves with themselves...are not wise" (II Cor. 10: 12b) when comparisons are made to elevate one over another. However, to examine the experience of others functioning in the same environment while sharing some similar presuppositions and objectives is a useful means of gauging one's own performance.

MacLeod reflects on the common view that liberal churches are losing members to the conservative churches. It appears rather that the former are not keeping their young people nearly as well as the latter and have lower birth rates.⁶

The Baptists offer an interesting comparison. The Baptists are found in Canada in several fellowships that range in classification from conservative to mainline. Collectively they ranked 6th largest among the Protestants in Canada in 1971. Their growth rate was the lowest of all the larger denominations: they held 5.9% of the population in 1901, 3.1% in 1971. Their growth rate in Ontario for the period 1901-1981 was 148%. "The Canadian Baptist community, except in Nova Scotia, has not so far experienced any period of growth comparable to that which took place in the U.S."⁷ A Canadian Baptist explains their growth experience in comparative terms maintaining that there have been no combination of religious, political, or social factors to provide such an opportunity:

In Canada, the vast majority of immigrants had some acknowledged church affiliation...There had been no great vacuum created by massive breaking away from the historical churches such as characterized American society in the period culminating in the rationalism of Jefferson and Paine...By 1850, 16% of the people of the U.S. were members of any church or synagogue...Thus there was a vast field, 84%, for evangelism. The percentage had grown only to 36% by 1900...Whereas in Canada in 1900, four major denominations, the Roman Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans included 85% of the entire population...In Canada, where the people are of a stable, conservative nature, they do not readily change their religious affiliation. When they do they tend to move toward churches that have accommodated themselves to the mores of the community at large...Religious groups whose doctrines and practices sharply differentiate them may produce outstanding individuals, but they are unlikely to increase members so rapidly as others...Churches where first steps toward membership are taken by proxy during infancy seem to be preferred by most Canadians...Most people in Canada have been reared in traditions that made them members of a national church...Only a small minority of immigrants bring a tradition of the gathered church...When Southern Baptists come amongst us, they seldom display an unusual talent or have any novel contribution to make to our church life.⁹

While this comment is patently a rationalization of a slow growth experience, it does reflect certain realities in the Canadian religious scene.

Further, in light of all of the above, it is instructive to examine the growth statistics of three conservative evangelical churches, two of which did not find a place in the 1901 census (i.e. the Adventists, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Free Methodist; see Table 21).⁹

The growth experience of Churches of Christ in comparison to the other heirs of the Restoration Movement in Canada is noted in Table 22.¹⁰

Finally, some general assessment of the growth experience of the Churches of Christ in Ontario in this

century is needed. Those 40 responding to the telephone interview when asked for the size of their home congregation

TABLE 21
GROWTH OF SELECTED CONSERVATIVE CHURCHES

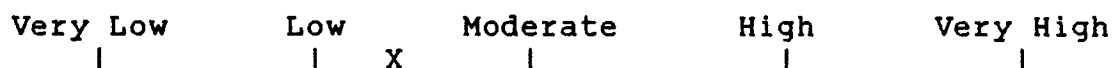
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
Adven	8,092	10,462	14,200	16,058	18,485	21,398	25,999	28,585
Chtn Miss All	128	283	3,560	4,440	6,396	18,006	23,630	
Free Methodist			7,740	8,805	8,921	14,245	19,245	

TABLE 22
CANADIAN RESTORATION CHURCHES

	Year	No. of Reported Churches	Inclus Mmbrship	Full Mmbers	No. of Ministers
Christian Church/ Disc of Christ	1987	37	4,209	2,526	28
Christian Church/ Chch of Christ	1987	70	5,946	5,946	75
Churches of Christ in Canada	1985	149	9,962		113

responded with estimates that average 102 members. Yet, only six congregations out of the 69 surpass the 100 mark. The 15 congregations in the DGR sample averaged 94 members. The average size church across the province is 45. The telephone sample was randomized so that congregations represented would represent a cross section. Therefore, it can be concluded that the interviewees had a more optimistic view

of the sizes of their respective churches than reality would support. Again, in the group interview of three preachers, to the question, "Are you encouraged or discouraged with this growth development?" two responded "Encouraged," and one "Not certain." Whereas, the analysis above, given the difficulty of the field, would require the assessment of the growth rate of Churches of Christ in Ontario if ranked to be placed below "moderate" in the judgment of this inquiry.



The Force of the Idea

Does theology drive action? And what is the level of theological awareness of the membership of Churches of Christ in Ontario? Some question whether theology necessarily regulates activity. And perhaps only highly subjective glimpses of the condition of the latter question can be deduced. Nevertheless, believing that what drives people is their theology, regardless of what they might postulate in formal statement, and believing that outlines of such basic convictions, however shadowy, are detectable, the inquiry attempts to gauge the thinking of the membership.

But do ideas indeed drive people? Marx, repulsed by the sterility of German theologians, was stirred to center his theory in action, rather than vice versa. He borrowed the term, *praxis*, from a contemporary philosopher who shared a like aversion to lifeless reasoning. For them action

drives ideas.¹¹ Through the more recent attempt to merge Marxist thought with Christian practice, praxis became a term in vogue within contemporary liberation theology: the will of God is more evident in the vortex of revolution than in the revelation of vital Scripture.¹² In this activist 20th century even the evangelical is impatient with ideas in isolation: the starting point of the theology for this inquiry is Anderson's dictum "ministry precedes theology."¹³

Turning to Canada, Bibby's nationwide religious surveys explored the relationship between religion and compassion among Canadian people. He concluded from the empirical evidence that religious Canadians were no more compassionate than the non-religious.¹⁴ He also investigated whether Canadian religion supplies an integrative force in unifying their life structure and value systems. He claims to have found little connection.¹⁵ Spokesmen for mainline churches, in offering explanation for their churches' decline, discount the negative impact of liberal theology and identify the failure to hold their own children as the major factor.¹⁶ From these references, many would conclude that ideas, even theological ideas, do not drive people. A sea of human experience would say otherwise, however. In an article, "How the Upstart Sects Won American," Finke and Stark establish the premise that mainline church decline is not just a current phenomenon. Rather, it started in the 18th century when these churches began to shift their theology. In their place, the sects, vigorous in their conviction of historic Christian traditions, have carried

the day in America.¹⁷ Both groups were driven by their respective theologies. In the Canadian scene, the failure of religion to produce a compassionate people and for whom religion does not serve as a strong integrative force does not reflect so much on the impotency of theology as it points to the impoverished condition of the theology held. This is a very real possibility, given the dominant population having only a nominal connection with their churches of preference. The saying holds true, "What I do is my faith; all else is religious talk." It also holds true, "When I do my faith, my religion is talking." In the final analysis, theology drives people. Two instances of implausible success are cited: today's "true believers," the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, commonly called Mormons, and the Jehovah's Witnesses, who are increasing rapidly around the world, driven by their religious ideas.¹⁸

To the question "Who is more valuable in the sight of God, Christian or sinner?" the respondents in 82% of the cases refused the "either/or" option, and requested a third not previously identified option, namely, "both/and." The same refusal to accept an either/or response was made to the question, "In living our daily lives should we concentrate on (1) the here, (this world), or (2) the hereafter (heaven)?" and 80% opted for the both/and answer. The labels legalistic, liberal, conservative, and progressive, are imprecisely used by most, and have varying valuations for each. Yet to the question regarding the theological stance of the church, it is interesting to note the sample's

settling in the main for "conservative" (70%). This reflects to some degree, no doubt, their personal preference as well as describing their perception of the church. And with responses grouped in this way, both an awareness and a collectivity are suggested. The preachers in group discussion also assessed the churches in terms of liberal/legal tendencies. Their perception was that the churches grew earlier because of legalistic leanings, i.e. the result of sectarian zeal, but they were split as to whether a more liberal posture today is hindering or helping growth.

Ninety percent believed that God is involved in world affairs, and 87.5% of those agreed that he has a supreme purpose in the world. Of the 35 who believed he does, 33 identified in their own words what that purpose is. Seventeen expressed the supreme purpose in terms which were God-centered: "Have people come to Him," or "to do his will," "to worship" or "glorify" God, and similar expressions; nine stated it in salvation terms; five framed it as "coming to Christ;" and two indicated "making the world a better place." It is acknowledged that the responses, coming at the end of a series of questions regarding the church and preaching, no doubt included echoes of what preceded in the questionnaire. And as well, these latter questions might be viewed as "motherhood" type questions anticipating a predictable response of a rote quality. The fact is the responses were made; the perceptions were present; and together they constitute a

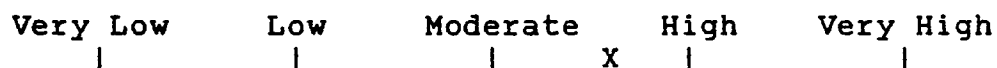
strong and perceptive statement of position. (See Appendix III. C. for a complete list of the statements given to question 20. c.)

A high percentage (87.5%) felt that church-going was like "a welcome escape from a threatening world." Does this reflect a fortress mentality? Only 37.5% felt compelled to say both/and to God's expectation of us in, "doing his will day to day": only two (5%) said, "plan our action"; 23 (57.5%) said, "follow his will," giving the expected response. Does this reflect a possible passivity? On the other hand, the respondents claimed a good personal understanding of the Gospel plan of salvation (but then who would not) with an average rating of 8.7 out of ten; the older female respondents (over 50 years) and middle age male respondents (between 30 and 50) claimed an 8.6 and 9.2 rating respectively. In contrast, at the same time the respondents' perception of how well their congregations were living out the teachings of Christ, ranked 7.2 out of 10, with youngest females (under 20), giving a 6.3 ranking. Is there an uncertainty showing up here: more confidence in self than in brethren?

In the "Preachers' Priorities" survey, the preachers were invited to rank five items in the section, "Emphases in the Life of the Church." Primacy was given, collectively and in each age grouping, to "praising God." At the same time, back to the telephone interviews, in response to the ranking request, the respondents ranked, "attending worship services" in seventh place out of eight. An unevenness

between the preaching fraternity and the membership may be reflected here. Further, in response to the direct question to the three men in group interview, "...is the (theological) awareness of our people high or low?" the assessment came: "Declining," "Shifting away from Biblical knowledge," and "Not generally people of the Book today." Additional comments lamented the move from being a Bible-centered people to being a group more concerned with brotherhood position.

In total the responses reflect a mixture of perceptions which range from the strong to the not so strong. There is a tendency to be more confident in oneself than in others. For example, while being unhappy with the members declining Bible focus, the preachers in "Priorities," ranked as number one in "Contributors to the Progress of the Church," the selection of "Able preachers, strong preaching." Collectively, however, the conclusion reached by the inquiry of the theological awareness position on a comprehension continuum is better than merely moderate.



The question remains, is there a correlation between theological perception and growth experience, the latter somewhat below a moderate level, the former somewhat above? While the inquiry admits the extreme subjectivity of the exercise, general experience confirms the results: people tend to conceptualize somewhat better than they actualize.

The inquiry concludes, Yes, there is a correlation demonstrated here between perception and practice.

The Strength of Practice

In addition to the question of the receptivity of the community at large and the theological perspectives of the church community, the inquiry's hypothesis proposes that the growth of the church is affected by the factors of its social awareness and the level of its involvement in the work of God. With regard to involvement, the thesis is that the whole church in wholesome interaction with its servant leaders is to imitate God's purposeful action in revelation, reconciliation, and relationship. With respect to social awareness, the proposal is that the church will improve its growth rate by making every effort: (1) to understand the target community and its responses, employing even the behavioral sciences; and (2) to understand its own social dynamics as an extended family. In this section, the matters of the social awareness and Christian involvement of the Ontario Churches of Christ as are reflected in the various research instruments will be examined.

The membership sample interviewed by telephone reflected a profile of a greying church with females in predominance, with a considerable degree (75%) of kinship ties within the fellowship, the majority of the members (85%) native to Ontario, and including "few" members that would be identified as from ethnic minorities of Ontario. Joined with the findings of Questionnaire A, the church

further emerges as well settled with 81% having access to church buildings. It is well equipped with a preaching force serving seven of every ten churches. Three of every ten preachers are American; and the preachers are evenly divided in their preparation between being self-trained, trained in Bible college or church operated preacher schools, or university prepared. Its commitment to a Biblical polity centered in elders and deacons has only a limited expression with 20% and 17% of the churches being served by these leaders respectively, and reflecting a trend in the '80s toward dissolving leadership teams in place. This limited leadership base is a factor, no doubt, in the report given in the sample, that 78% had never had an elder visit them for the purpose of spiritual counseling. They are a cooperative people helping each other in funding church plantings in almost half of the instances, and with three out of ten churches being assisted on an ongoing basis.

The self-perception of the sample was that they (87.5%) felt knowledgeable of and a part of the general life of the province, and that their congregations are well aware of current conditions in the community (rating 7.6 out of 10). They perceived themselves to be friendly to visitors in their services (rating 7.9 out of 10). They are reasonably satisfied with communication levels within their churches: 82.5 percent indicate that plans are communicated either well and clearly or at least adequately. And they are generally pleased with the preaching they receive, 78 percent affirming satisfaction with the preaching as being

moving and life changing.

The profile of the Churches of Christ in Ontario reflected in these responses indicates a largely unicultural church, a group that is well served in the preaching, but poorly served in the pastoral area and service areas. They feel connected with their social environment. Yet several contradictions begin to emerge, and these particularly in the area of evangelism. A confident 100% affirmative response was given to the question, "Is your church committed to growing?" Whereas a low 5.5 (on a scale of ten) appraisal was given to the success of their congregations "in winning and holding new converts." The respondents scaled their own activeness in telling others about Jesus at a moderate 6.1 out of ten, but they estimated that the members of their respective congregations included "fewer than 5%" (45%) or "as many as 10%" (27.5%) who were actively engaged in Bible studies with outsiders. They were satisfied with their home congregations' "realistic plans for reaching out to the community with the Gospel" in 65% of the cases. Yet, over half reported that no classes or training programs for personal work and evangelism were conducted in the congregation in the past year. Again, a strong position, 80%, was taken regarding evangelism being the responsibility of both preachers and church members rather than either one of these choices separately. Yet to the question "With regard to evangelism, is it our responsibility to spread the Gospel or baptize converts?" a zero response was given to the latter in spite of the Great Commission which commands,

"...make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..." (Mt. 28:19; although 30% responded both/and to the two functions). The sample of members did rank "spreading the Gospel" three out of eight in the ranking exercise. Yet, the preachers ranked evangelism in fifth place out of the five significant areas of their functioning. As the group discussion between the three preachers progressed, a strong aversion to "church growth" thinking emerged. Added to this contrasting picture was the conviction by the sample that the receptivity level of their respective areas was at a "little interest" level for 67.5% or "highly resistant" for 12.5%, which may say that little success was being realized in reaching their communities. The average annual baptismal rate of 2.42 per church from non-church families indicated this to be so. At the same time it is to be remembered that 69% of the congregations planted was at the initiative of the members themselves in contrast to 16% of the plantings accomplished through the initiative of preachers, or 12% with preachers and members in team efforts. Against the sample's view that their home congregations had "a realistic plan for reaching out to the community with the Gospel" in 65% of the cases, the preachers in conversation felt that inadequate attention was being given to planning, strategy development, and goal setting by the churches.

Thus, in conclusion, it seems clear that, within the fellowship examined by this study, the verbalizing about evangelism exceeds somewhat its practice. In fact, evangelism appears not to be the primary preoccupation of

the group. The preaching force expresses reluctance to view itself as having the primary responsibility in this area even though they consider that the growth realized is largely the results of their efforts. There is some evidence that a dichotomy has developed between the membership and the preachers, even though the membership expresses considerable confidence in its preachers, with each side holding the other accountable for the growth rate, rather than recognizing that, as family, all share together in the achievements and failures. This ambivalence toward evangelism and church growth suggests that the intentionality of God in his quest for reconciliation and relationship with his people is only partially shared by the group. The growth rate and growth achieved during the period examined appears to be commensurate with the moderate level of intensity regarding evangelism reflected in this study.

Suggestions

It remains to draw from the foregoing examinations and assessments several suggestions which might point to further investigation and contribute to an increased growth rate for Churches of Christ in Ontario in the decade ahead.

Distinguishing Roots

The study has attempted to see the churches active within the given historical, social, and religious setting of the province of Ontario. Their emergence as a distinct conservative group from the Disciples' 19th Century

Restoration Movement was identified. The early influences of British and American religious movements were alluded to, as well as the shaping effect of 19th century philosophy on its current hermeneutic. The impact of these influences must be carefully appraised, for the present is the child of the past.

Yet, it is necessary to establish that the churches' rootage is in spiritual realities which transcend the historical and the social. The trap that one can fall into when sociological evaluations of religious phenomena are attempted is concluding that the social dimension gives the total explanation. Religion is a faith issue and in its pure form is highly resistant to empirical examination. Nineteenth century Restoration leaders captured a vision of a Christianity rooted in the spiritual reality of the Kingdom of God come to earth and depicted clearly in the New Testament. Their aspiration was to find an actual Christian existence which would move beyond human formulations, the accretions of history, and the divisions flowing out of men's pettiness to the pure and simple ways of Christ. To consign such ambitions to the realm of the naive, the status of the "true believer," and the reactionism of "sect" mentality is to deny the possibility of entering into the realm of the presence and the work of God. It is to deny that the Kingdom of God is working among men and women and is open to them. It is significant that the Canadian sociologist, Reginald Bibby, having surveyed Canadian religious life in depth for two decades, has concluded that

Canadian churches for the most part have accommodated the social at the expense of the spiritual: "Religion instead of standing against culture, has become a neatly packaged consumer item."¹⁹ They serve a clientele which wants to select bits and pieces of religious activity from a shopping cart of religious offerings. His urging is that the churches return to the "numinous," which echoes the viewpoint stated above.²⁰

Therefore, the first suggestion for the churches in order that growth might accelerate is carefully to distinguish its cardinal rootage, namely in the spiritual realities of the Kingdom of God as explicated in the New Testament Scriptures. Supporting this, and that they not be tripped up by forces to which they are oblivious, is that they also carefully detail, on the secondary level, the cultural and religious influences which have historically worked and are contemporaneously working upon them in the social sphere.

An example of this latter point is the American influence. Most Canadian churches have their roots outside of Canada, and most have to deal with the issue of their American connection.²¹ The Methodists, for example, came to Canada, in the main, via America. They became very Canadian in their outlook.²² The largest body in the United Church formation, the Methodists won for the United Church the distinction that it is "as Canadian as the maple leaf and the beaver..." and has become in a real sense Canada's indigenous church.²³ Becoming distinctively Canadian in

outlook is difficult, for Canadians themselves are still in a quest for their own identity. In Bruce Hutchinson's memorable words, "No one knows my country, neither the stranger nor its sons."²⁴ Diffidence in attitude and irony in literature are characteristically Canadian.²⁵ Ontario members of Churches of Christ must struggle with the question of identity, especially in view of the rapidly shifting demographics in the province. Rather than approaching its religious tasks through the mindset of the American Churches of Christ, it has to identify the realities of its own setting and the requirements for suitable approaches in its own area.²⁶ George Gallop, Jr., made this assessment, highlighting differences: "Canadians appear somewhat less enthusiastic about religion, somewhat more tolerant than Americans of religious and moral diversity, and less interested in evangelism."²⁷

Knowing Yourself

Related to apprehending one's spiritual and social rootage is the challenge of understanding one's position relative to the current culture. Are Churches of Christ a church or a sect, in sociological terms, and where do they stand in relation to surrounding culture? In the past, historians and sociologists have agreed that the Disciples were part of the sectarian phenomenon in Canada.²⁸ Boden identifies Ontario Churches of Christ as "sectarian protest movement among the Disciples in Ontario" prompted by a similar "southern sect of the Disciples," i.e. Tennessee.²⁹

However, the 20th century Disciples have made the transition to "church" in this century,³⁰ and the preachers in the inquiry's group interview wonder if Churches of Christ are not moving in that direction as well. However, Churches of Christ in Ontario are, presently, neither clearly a sect, nor a church. The sect is "in angry revolt against the traditional churches";³¹ or again, it is the church of "the disinherited, the economically inferior, the socially uprooted, hence frequently of the lower class."³² On the other hand, the church is "bureaucratic in organization, either individually or corporately hierarchically structured, accommodated to society, latitudinarian in ideology...more or less traditionalist."³³

Churches of Christ in Ontario did form originally as a protest against what they considered digressive moves made by the larger body. They may continue to feel somewhat dispossessed in terms not of being central to the Ontario scene. Minuscule in size relative to the Ontario population, they feel limited in the ability to influence the broader culture. And while the preachers in group discussion reflected on the upward mobility of the membership and tendencies toward accommodation with the surrounding community, judgment would consign Churches of Christ to the sect position even today.

The progress of secularism in Canadian society, however, is dispossessing even the mainline churches: "...it is readily apparent that religion has little influence when it comes to political and economic decision making, higher

education, and even personal morality."³⁴ Rather than shaping culture, they are being shaped by culture: "Religion has become little more than a cultural product and is coming precariously close to acknowledging that culture creates the Gods."³⁵

Thus, it follows that the second suggestion for the churches, in order that they might fulfill their mandate to grow, is that outreach flow out of a clear self-understanding, first of spiritual conditions and also of social conditions. With respect to the former they must see the church as ambassadors who implore on Christ's behalf: "Be reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20). With respect to the latter, and to be proactive, theirs must be neither merely a reactive response to the "churches," i.e. to their latitudinarian positions, nor to the "sects," i.e. to their separatist doctrine. Assessing themselves culturally and spiritually, they will be able to minister coherently to a population which has been ravaged by the impact of industrialization.³⁶

Gospel Polity

The third suggestion for the growth of the churches is that they share more deeply the intentionality of God in redemption. Evangelism must be seen as a prime mandate from heaven, and the churches must become frankly evangelistic. The Restoration principle requires it. Historically the 19th century Restoration Movement focused on two emphases: truth of doctrine, which corresponds to the "revelation" of the

three-fold premise of this inquiry, i.e. revelation, reconciliation, relationship; and unity of all believers, which corresponds to the "relationship" emphasis of that premise. A good beginning was made in the second area, "reconciliation." Evangelism was high on the agenda of the early leaders. Controversy embroiled the fellowship, however, over the "how" of arranging for the support and supervision of evangelists. This ended in division. The conservative Churches of Christ, defeated on the "unity" issue and ineffectual in the evangelism mandate, retreated to the "truth" emphasis, and risked succumbing to legalism as they moved into the 20th century. Churches of Christ must return to a strong and balanced three-fold emphasis on truth, unity, and evangelism. This is consistent with "restoring" the order of primitive Christianity, which points to reviving the whole system of Christ.

The churches need to be sensitive to the fact that contemporary culture in Canada both conditions them to tone down their evangelism and resists, as well, their evangelistic overtures. Bibby points out that current views feature "the paramount value of positive co-existence of diversity..." and that in Canada it is inappropriate to "recruit aggressively people who bear other groups' labels." "Evangelism borders on imperialism." And, "Inter-group protocol calls for mutual respect."³⁷ "The pluralism of the bilingual, multicultural nation renders any critiquing of its component parts risky."³⁸

The general pluralistic ideal has only solidified

religious affiliational loyalty in Canada. In such a cultural milieu, in which recruitment is in questionable taste and where claims of truth are virtually unacceptable outside the group in which they are made, people would not be expected to move in random fashion from one group to another.³⁹

Churches of Christ have seen the "truth" of New Testament church organization, i.e. autonomous congregations with elders, deacons, and preachers leading. More recently they have seen the beauty of "relationship" within congregations as they return to the "unity" emphasis. It remains for them to see the potential of this simply organized body bound in loving relationship to support explosive growth. With this further insight they must move to a more purposeful involvement in the work of God in the redemption of humanity. God constituted the church so that it might have great power in its ability to fill the world to the uttermost.

Getting Along

The fourth suggestion for the growth of the churches is that they carefully appraise their congregational fellowship as reflecting the dynamics of the extended family. They will learn to appreciate more completely that the church as an open family can be a ready welcomer of incoming "adoptees." Or, as a closed family it can be an inhibitor to growth in the very tightness of its relational life. One of the preachers in the group interview observed, "We have worked hard to develop the body concept. But now it's difficult for newcomers to break in and not feel like an outsider." The churches will cherish both their

fellowship with God and their relationships with each other. They will also know that the horizontal relationship operates in a social context, and they will be careful to learn the principles of human interaction and apply them for the sake of the Gospel.⁴⁰

Another member of the preachers' group interview related several years of high success in baptisms only to be followed by a high loss rate. The church's challenge is (1) to disciple the nations and (2) to teach the disciples to observe the commandments of Jesus (Mt. 28: 19-20). The church's objective is to see all converts integrated as active participants in the life of a local congregation.⁴¹ It is not enough merely "to preach the Gospel and leave the rest up to God." Thus, the church is seen as a powerful agent of God's redemptive purpose in its ability to reach, convict, enfold, equip, and send out those who are hearing the call of the Gospel. Relationships within the church become balanced when they are merged with the evangelistic perspective.

World Class

A fifth suggestion for the growth of the churches is that they target a multicultural society, and that a beginning be made by their becoming aware of the new demographics of the province. This is highly appropriate in that its chief city, Toronto, has become a polyglot. Throughout the total region the English proportion of the population is falling while the French population stands at

only 4%.

It will be difficult for Churches of Christ to accomplish this redirection given their traditional English roots and, according to the telephone sample, the minimal presence of ethnic minorities in their fellowship presently. However, applying the homogeneous unity principle, as a practical consideration at least, the strategy would not call for the greying congregations to "lose their spots" and struggle to become tricultural for the purposes of evangelism. Rather the effort would be twofold: (1) to become more culturally sensitive to ethnic minority people within their immediate fellowship, and (2) to encourage church plantings and support evangelistic teams within various cultural settings.

The growing church will be a church-planting church. One of the preachers in the group interview offered an explanation for the slow growth by identifying the arrival of the view that megachurches were to be preferred over multiple church plantings. It may be coincidence that Churches of Christ stopped growing when this conviction was catching on. Yet, it is interesting to note again that among Churches of Christ in Ontario 63 percent of the numerical growth in the '80s came in newly planted churches representing only 29 percent of the total membership of the churches. For Churches of Christ to be busy planting in Ontario they must do it among many of the "nations, tribes, peoples, and languages" of the world now living in this province.

Counting

A sixth suggestion which can help to improve the growth of the churches is that they determine to be serious about counting the flock. Jesus was concerned about numbers, and he was also concerned about what those numbers meant.⁴² His parable indicated the calculated risk taken by the shepherd who left the 99 in order to rescue the one (Lk. 15: 3-7). Of the one leper he asked, "Where are the nine?" (Lk. 17:17). He chose twelve apostles, knowing the special significance of numbers for Israel, and for God who returned repeatedly to the dozen (cf. Lk. 22:30). He not only counted the sheep but he knew them by name (Jn. 10:3). John records the large scale turning away from Jesus by certain disciples at one point in his ministry: Jesus was aware of this and concerned about the decisions of those who remained (Jn. 6:66, 67). Jesus lamented the loss of one of his twelve (Jn. 17:12). He frequently addressed large crowds (Mt. 15:20). He offered the open invitation, "Come to me, all..." (Mt. 11:28). His commission was to disciple all nations (Mt. 28:19). Inasmuch as numbers identified persons, Jesus was interested in numbers: "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to myself" (Jn. 12:32). Luke felt it significant to indicate the size of the faithful band in Jerusalem, 120 men and women, awaiting the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15); and he reported on the size of the growing church subsequently (Acts 1:4; 4:4).

It may verge on the slanderous to accuse church growth

practitioners as being interested only in a "numbers game." Not counting and showing little analytical interest in the changing size of the church are no reflection of special piety, namely, "I leave all that to God's accounting." Record keeping is not for the purpose of doing God's accounting for him as though everyone recorded is automatically added to heaven's rolls. Whatever records are kept whether in ledger books or on computer files is a present day parallel to the ancient shepherd who stood by the gate to the sheepfold evening and morning counting his sheep as they entered and left. The more precious the sheep the more careful the counting will be.

Classifying and counting support analysis; analysis supports goal setting and strategy formulation; such careful planning supports growth;⁴³ and growth causes rejoicing in heaven. The entire process demonstrates an intentionality that reflects God's desire that "none should perish but everyone should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). Christian stewards will carefully attend to record keeping.

Although small in size and loosely associated in congregational fellowship, Churches of Christ in Ontario can benefit themselves and each other by amplifying their record keeping activity.

NOTES

¹David R. Stone, "Religion in Canada: Findings from the 1981 Census," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1984, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 263.

²Randall White, Ontario 1610-1985: A Political and Economic History (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1985), p. 245.

³Reginald W. Bibby, "Religious Encasement in Canada: An Argument for Protestant and Catholic Entrenchment," Social Compass: International Review of Sociology in Religion 32 (2-3, 1985): 287-303. Also from Bibby: "Canadians are not abandoning their historical denominational groups...In the midst of the attendance bedlam, changes of affiliation have been relatively minor...almost 90% of Canadians retain their parents' religious ties...only 1% affiliate with a different religious tradition." Fragmented Gods, pp. 48, 49.

⁴Ibid., p. 27. "It appears that these [conservtive] churches evangelize outsiders almost as a last resort, pursuing them vigorously only when reaffiliation and birth pathways fail." p. 31.

⁵Bibby, "Circulation of Saints," Canadian Society, pp. 349-351..

⁶MacLeod, "Comparison," Yearbook, p. 261.

⁷Stuart Ivison, "Is there a Canadian Baptist Tradition?" The Churches and the Canadian Experience, John Webster Grant, ed. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963), p. 65.

⁸Ibid., pp. 66-67.

⁹W. E. Kalbach and W. W. McVey, "Religious Composition of the Canadian Population," Religion In Canadian Society, Stewart Crysedale and Les Wheatcroft, eds. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, McClelland and Hunter Press, 1976), p. 228.

¹⁰Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1989, p. 246.

¹¹Carl E. Braaten, The Apostolic Imperative: Nature and Aim of the Church's Mission and Ministry (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), pp. 95, 96.

¹²"What specially characterizes liberation theologians is their insistence that theological reflection must begin with the historical situation rather than with biblical revelation, and thus becomes directed toward a prestipulated social reconstruction." Carl F. H. Henry, "Liberation Theology and the Scriptures," On Liberation Theology, Ronald H. Nash, ed. (Milford, Mass.: Mott Media, Inc., Publishers, 1984), p. 196.

¹³Anderson, Foundations, p. 7.

¹⁴Bibby, Fragmented Gods, p. 200.

¹⁵Bibby, "Religion in Canada," Yearbook, 1984, p. 266.

¹⁶MacLeod, "Comparison," Yearbook, 1982, p. 261.

¹⁷Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, "How the Upstart Sects Won American: 1776-1850," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 28 (January 1989): 27-44.

¹⁸Stone, "Findings, 1981 Census," Yearbook, 1984, p. 263.

¹⁹Bibby, Fragmented Gods, p. 1.

²⁰Ibid., p. 262.

²¹The American and British connections are the starting point for the descriptions of Canadian denominations in: John Webster Grant, ed., The Churches and the Canadian Experience (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963).

²²Goldwin French, "The People Called Methodist in Canada," Grant, Canadian Experience, p. 69.

²³A. C. Forest, "The Present," Religion in Canada, William Kilbourn, ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1968), p. 71.

²⁴Iverson, "Canadian Baptist," Canadian Experience, p. 60.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶The American connection is judged as being productive of a "cultural sectarianism and a consequent problem of identity" in the opinion of one student of the history of Churches of Christ in Ontario. Cox, "Disciples Church at Meaford," p. 36.

²⁷Quoted in Bibby, Fragmented Gods, p. ix.

²⁸Robert T. Handy, A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 372.

²⁹Boden, "Origins of Disciples," p. 44.

³⁰Harold Fallding, "An Overview of Mainline Protestantism in Canada and the United States of America," Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1980, Constant H. Jacquet, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), p. 252.

³¹Walsh, "Christian Tradition," Canadian Experience, p. 152.

³²John S. Moir, "Sectarian Tradition in Canada," The Churches and the Canadian Experience, John Webster Grant, ed. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963), p. 120.

³³Ibid., p. 121.

³⁴Bibby, Fragmented Gods, p. 5.

³⁵Ibid., p. 2.

³⁶Rodney M. Booth, The Winds of God: The Canadian Church Faces the 1980s (Winfield, B.C.: Wood Lake Books, Inc., published by the World Council of Churches, 1982), p. 83.

³⁷Bibby, Fragmented Gods, pp. 57-59.

³⁸Ibid., p. 61.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰W. Charles Arn, "Evangelism or Disciple Making," Church Growth: State of the Art, C. Peter Wagner, ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 61.

⁴¹Wagner, Strategies, p. 52.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 40-45.

⁴³Joe S. Ellis, The Church on Purpose (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1982), pp. 159-175.

APPENDIX I. A. 1.

Questionnaire A

PROJECT: An Inquiry into the Growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario

Profile of the Life and Growth of the _____ Congregation
 _____ Respondee

Comment: Please note that the information supplied will be combined with the responses of all other congregations which respond; the data you give will not be identified with your congregation by name. You will see that the inquiry moves from the more general to the more particular. You are encouraged to supply data on as many items as possible. Please code your responses as follows:

- (sample) 36 Response with no code indicates that the information is based on a reliable source.
36* Response with asterisk indicates that a reasonable estimate has been made where sources are limited.
-- A dash indicates that no source has been found and an estimate is not possible.
 _____ A blank without code indicates that no research was attempted.

Please mail the results of your work, at whatever level of completeness, not later than October 31, 1989. Thank you for your efforts.

Geoffrey Ellis

A. Founding and Growth:

1. In what year was the congregation established? _____
2. What was the membership of the church at the time of its establishment (ie. charter members)? _____
3. What is the current membership ("member" is here defined as one who has been baptized and is active in the life of the church)? _____
4. What is the average Sunday am worship service attendance currently (including visitors and children)? _____
5. At ten year intervals, eg. 1980, 1970, 1960, etc., what was the Sunday am attendance? Response may be made in any of the following ways, depending on the information available:
 - [] Average for the year
 - [] An identified attendance figure on a particular Sunday during the year selected
 - [] An attendance figure identified for a particular Sunday during the preceeding decade.

(Please indicate which of the above you have selected on page two.)

Appendix I. A. 2.

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Your response:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Year or Decade</u>	<u>Sunday or Average</u>
1980			
1970			
1960			
1950			
1940			
1930			
1920			
1910			
1900			

B. Leadership:

1. Preachers: identify preachers who have served with years of service, training, and nationality:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Nationality</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

(Use back of page if required.)

2. Elders: a. An eldership is presently serving: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 If yes, the number: _____; when first appointed: _____;
 when were elders last added _____?

b. An eldership served previously but is not presently serving: ☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, the number: _____; when first appointed: _____; when discontinued: _____?

3. Deacons: a. Deacons are presently serving: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 If yes, the number: _____; when first appointed: _____;
 when were deacons last added _____?

b. Deacons served previously but are not presently serving: ☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, the number: _____; when first appointed: _____; when discontinued: _____?

Appendix I. A. 3.

3

C. Circumstances of Church Planting and Funding:

1. Planting: The church was established as the result of (choose one):
 - ☐ Members living in the area took the initiative
 - ☐ A church planting initiative came from elsewhere (choose one): ☐ by a preacher, ☐ a preaching team, ☐ a group of members moved in from elsewhere, ☐ a nearby congregation supplied members,
 - ☐ A portion of a congregation moved to establish a new work because of some tension or disagreement.
 - ☐ Other: _____
2. Funding: a. Outside assistance was/is received (indicate any applicable): ☐ initially, ☐ subsequently, ☐ presently.
If "presently", indicate percentage (%) of current budget: ____
 - b. Application of the assistance received (indicate any applicable): ☐ preaching, ☐ work fund, ☐ building, ☐ specific program, ☐ other: _____.
 - c. Source of assistance (indicate any applicable): ☐ Canadian, ☐ American, ☐ other: _____.
3. Place of Meeting: Where do you assemble for worship?
 - ☐ church building, ☐ rented facilities (type: _____)
 - ☐ members homes. If "church building", do you own the building? ☐ Yes, ☐ No. If "yes", when did you first gain the use of the building? _____ Did this building replace a previous meeting house(s) you owned? Details: _____
 - Have you ☐ extensively renovated, ☐ extended this building?
 - Date: _____ Signature: _____

APPENDIX I. B. 1.

Questionnaire B

Project: An Inquiry into the Growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario
 A Decadal Growth Rate (DGR) (1979-89) Profile of the

_____ Congregation

_____ Respondee(s)

Comment: You are encouraged to enlist the assistance of others in the congregation so that the research effort will not be overwhelming. Adequate records may be difficult to come by. You might check with present and former preachers for baptismal records, with treasurers for membership lists, with secretaries for their records, and in old bulletins for reports of people coming and going. Please note the the information supplied will be combined with the responses of all other congregations which respond; the data you give will not be identified with your congregation by name. Depending on the records available, some responses may need to be informed estimates. Thus, please code your responses as follows:

- (sample) 36 Response with no code indicates that the information is based on a reliable source.
- 36* Response with an asterisk indicates that a reasonable estimate has been made where sources are limited.
- A dash indicates that no source was found and an estimate is not possible.
- A blank without number or code indicates that no research was attempted.

Please mail the results of your work, at whatever level of your completeness, not later than December 15, 1989. Thank you for your efforts.

Geoffrey Ellis

- - -

1. Total membership in 1979: _____

Did the congregation have its largest total membership prior to 1979?

Yes [] No [] If Yes, When? _____ and how many? _____

Can you suggest a reason for the membership peak if such is reported above?

Comment:

Appendix I. B. 2.

-2-

2. For the year 1980:
- a. Number of baptisms during the year:
 - i. Those from church families: _____
 - ii. Those not from church families: _____
 - Total number of baptisms: _____
 - b. The number of transfers-in during the year:
 - i. Those who changed place of residence at the time of placing membership: _____
 - ii. Those who did not change residence at the time of placing membership: _____
 - Total number of transfers-ins: _____
 - c. The number of transfers-out during the year:
 - i. Those who changed place of residence at the time of withdrawing membership: _____
 - ii. Those who did not change residence at the time of withdrawing membership: _____
 - Total number of transfers-out: _____
 - d. The number of members who were removed from the membership list because of unfaithfulness: _____
 - e. The number of members who died: _____
 - f. Total membership for 1980 _____
 - g. Please comment on factors which might be identified as contributing to the overall rise, levelling, or decline of the membership totals during the current year.
- Comment: _____

(Use back of page)

Note: Please use the format of #2 for each of the following years.

3. Year 1981:
- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Baptisms: | d. Removed: _____ |
| i. _____ | e. Died: _____ |
| ii. _____ | f. Total membership |
| Total _____ | for <u>1981</u> _____ |
| b. Transfers-in: | g. Comment: |
| i. _____ | |
| ii. _____ | |
| Total _____ | |
| c. Transfers-out | |
| i. _____ | |
| ii. _____ | |
| Total _____ | |

Appendix I. B. 3.

-3-

5. Year 1982:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1982 _____

g. Comment: _____

6. Year 1983:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1983 _____

g. Comment: _____

(Use back of page)

6. Year 1984:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1984 _____

g. Comment: _____

7. Year 1985:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1985 _____

g. Comment: _____

(Use back of page)

Appendix I. B. 4.

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8. Year 1986:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1986 _____

g. Comment: _____

9. Year 1987:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1987 _____

g. Comment: _____

(Use back of page)

10. Year 1988:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1988 _____

g. Comment: _____

11. Year 1989:

a. Baptisms:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

b. Transfers-in:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

c. Transfers-out:

i. _____

ii. _____

Total _____

d. Removed: _____

e. Died: _____

f. Total membership
for 1989 _____

g. Comment: _____

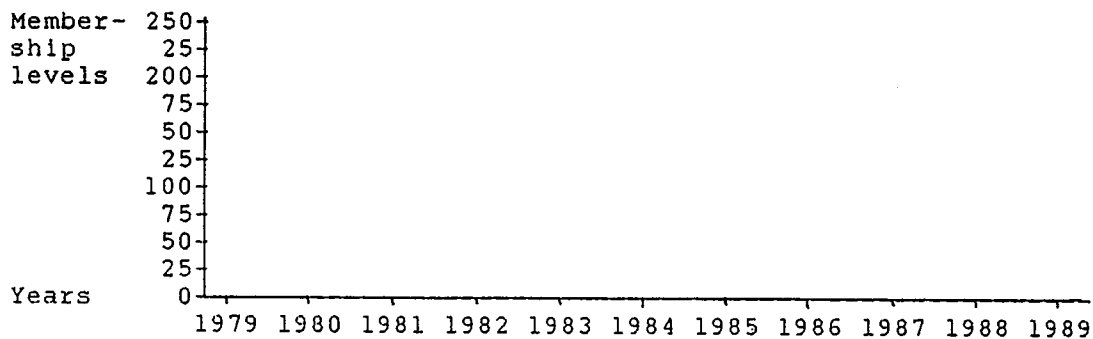
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Appendix I. B. 5.

-5-

12. Ten year growth pattern plotted graphically:

On the graph below plot the membership levels for each year as given in the report above. Draw a line connecting each point.



Taking an overview, please comment on any factors which might be identified as contributing to the rise, levelling, or decline of the membership growth curve over the ten year period.

Comment:

13. You are invited (1) to comment on the availability of records, (2) to indicate others who may have assisted you in your research, and (3) to note any aspect of the questionnaire which was not clear to you.

(1)

(2)

(3)

Date: _____ Signature: _____

APPENDIX I. C. 1.

Questionnaire CQuestionnaire: InquiryResponses

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. ("First, you might help me with some demographic information.") | 1. |
| a. In what age bracket are you? Under 20 | a. Under 20 _____ |
| Between 20 and 30 | 20-30 _____ |
| Between 30 and 50 | 30-50 _____ |
| Over 50 | Over 50 _____ |
| b. How long have you been a member of the Church of Christ? Years | b. Years _____ |
| c. (Determine by sound of voice, and indicate.) Male | c. Male _____ |
| Female | Female _____ |
| d. Are you a native of the Province of Ontario? Yes | d. Yes _____ |
| No | No _____ |
| e. What is the approximate size of the congregation of which you are a member? Size | e. Size _____ |
| 2. a. Do you have <u>relatives</u> who are also members of a Church of Christ somewhere in Ontario? Yes | 2. a. Yes _____ |
| No | No _____ |
| b. If "Yes," would the <u>number</u> of relatives be..? Fewer than 5 | b. Fewer than 5 _____ |
| As many as 10 | As many as 10 _____ |
| More than 10 | More than 10 _____ |
| 3. Are most preachers with whom you are acquainted helpful examples and encouragers to you in the work of <u>soul-winning</u> ? Yes | 3. Yes _____ |
| No | No _____ |
| 4. a. Thinking about the people who make up your congregation, are there those who might be identified as being of an <u>ethnic minority group</u> in Ontario? Yes | 4. a. Yes _____ |
| No | No _____ |
| b. If "Yes," would you estimate their numbers to be..? Few | b. Few _____ |
| Several | Several _____ |
| Quite a Few | Quite a Few _____ |
| 5. Have you ever had an elder <u>visit</u> you in your home for the purpose of spiritual counselling? Yes | 5. Yes _____ |
| No | No _____ |
| 6. During 1989, were there, as you can recall, any classes or training programs on <u>personal evangelism</u> offered in your congregation? Yes | 6. Yes _____ |
| No | No _____ |
| 7. Is the church where you are a member committed to <u>growing</u> ? Yes | 7. Yes _____ |
| No | No _____ |

Appendix I. C. 2.

2

8. Does going to church feel for you like a welcome escape from a threatening world? Yes ☐ No ☐
9. How receptive are the people in your area to the Church? Very Receptive ☐ Very Receptive ☐
Little Interest ☐ Little Interest ☐
Highly Resistant ☐ Highly Resistant ☐
10. Do you feel that the plans and goals of your congregation are communicated to the members..? Well & clearly ☐
Adequately ☐ Adequately ☐
Poorly ☐ Poorly ☐
11. Do you personally feel knowledgable of and a part of the general life of the Province? Yes ☐ No ☐
12. Would you describe the preaching which you regularly hear at your church as moving and lifechanging? Yes ☐ No ☐
13. If you had to apply a label to the Church of Christ, which one of the following would you use? Legalistic ☐
Conservative ☐ Conservative ☐
Progressive ☐ Progressive ☐
Liberalistic ☐ Liberalistic ☐
14. What percentage of the members of your congregation would you think is actively engaged in Bible studies with outsiders? Fewer than 5% ☐
As many as 10% ☐ As many as 10% ☐
More than 10% ☐ More than 10% ☐
15. a. In your judgment, has there been much influence by American Churches of Christ in Ontario? Yes ☐ No ☐
- b. If "Yes," has this influence been... Positive ☐ Negative ☐
16. (Instruct the respondent to give a rating to the following series of questions on a one-to-ten scale with one being the lowest and ten the highest rating.)
- a. How friendly is your congregation to the outsider who visits your service? 1 ☐ 10
- b. How well do you understand the Gospel plan of salvation? 1 ☐ 10
8. Yes ☐ No ☐
9. Very Receptive ☐ Very Receptive ☐
Little Interest ☐ Little Interest ☐
Highly Resistant ☐ Highly Resistant ☐
10. Well & clearly ☐
Adequately ☐ Adequately ☐
Poorly ☐ Poorly ☐
11. Yes ☐ No ☐
12. Yes ☐ No ☐
13. Legalistic ☐
Conservative ☐ Conservative ☐
Progressive ☐ Progressive ☐
Liberalistic ☐ Liberalistic ☐
14. Fewer than 5% ☐
As many as 10% ☐ As many as 10% ☐
More than 10% ☐ More than 10% ☐
15. a. Yes ☐ No ☐
- b. Positive ☐ Negative ☐
16. (A number value from one to ten.)
- a. ☐
- b. ☐

Appendix I. C. 3.

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- c. How successful is your congregation in winning and holding new converts? 1 _____ 10
- d. How near do you feel your congregation is in living out the teachings of Jesus? 1 _____ 10
- e. How aware is your congregation of current conditions in the surrounding society? 1 _____ 10
- f. How active do you consider yourself to be in telling others about Jesus? 1 _____ 10
17. (Explain to your respondent that the following series of questions are to be answered as EITHER/OR responses. However, if the respondent objects in any given selection on the grounds that both responses appear to be equal to him/her, then offer a third choice, BOTH/AND (B/A).)
- a. Who are more valuable in the sight of God..?
(1) Christians
or (2) Sinners
B/A
- b. With regard to evangelism, is it our responsibility to..?
(1) Spread the Gospel
or (2) Baptize converts
B/A
- c. In doing God's work day to day, does God expect us to..?
(1) Plan our action
or (2) Follow his Will
B/A
- d. In living our daily Christian lives, should we concentrate on..? (1) the Here (this world)
or (2) the Hereafter (heaven)
B/A
- e. Who does God expect to convert the lost..?
Preachers
or (2) Average church members
B/A
18. (To the interviewer: the following series of comparisons is organized in such a way as to give a ranking for eight items. When a response has been made to Comparison a., for example, choice (2), place that choice in Comparison e. (1). Place the answer to Comparison c., for example choice (1), in Comparison e. (2). When you come to Comparison e., the comparison is between a. (2) and c. (1). For e., ask, "Which is more important, and then read the items in a. (2) and c. (1). Comparison f. is between the answers in b. and d. And the comparison in g. is between the answers in e. and f. In other words, item a. (2), "Spreading the Gospel" could be read by you three times if that choice was selected at each comparison. Now say to the respondent, "The following is a series of comparisons. For each comparison, indicate which,
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
17. EITHER/OR
- a. (1) _____
(2) _____
B/A _____
- b. (1) _____
(2) _____
B/A _____
- c. (1) _____
(2) _____
B/A _____
- d. (1) _____
(2) _____
B/A _____
- e. (1) _____
(2) _____
B/A _____
18. Ranking eight items

Appendix I. C 4.

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in your estimation, is the more important.")

a. Which is more important..?

- (1) Feeding the hungry, OR
(2) Spreading the Gospel.

a.

Choice for a. is (_)
(Place this choice in e.(1).)

a. (_)

b. Which is more important..?

- (1) Encouraging Christian fellowship, OR
(2) Counselling the broken hearted.

b.

Choice for b. is (_)
(Place this choice in f.(1).)

b. (_)

c. Which is more important..?

- (1) Building up the church, OR
(2) Solving today's social problems.

c.

Choice for c. is (_)
(Place this choice in e.(2).)

c. (_)

d. Which is more important..?

- (1) Nurturing the Christian family, OR
(2) Attending worship services.

d.

Choice for d. is (_)
(Place this choice in f.(2).)

d. (_)

e. Which is more important..?

e.

- (1) (Read the item which was selected in a.) (Choice of a. is (_))
OR
(2) (Read the item which was selected in c.) (Choice of c. is (_))
Choice for e. is _ . (_)
(Place this choice in g.(1).)

e. = _ . (_)

f. Which is more important..?

f.

- (1) (Read the item which was selected in b.) (Choice of b. is (_))
OR
(2) (Read the item which was selected in d.) (Choice of d. is (_))
Choice for f. is _ . (_)
(Place this choice in g.(2).)

f. = _ . (_)

g. Which is more important..?

g.

- (1) (Read the item which was selected in e.) (Chce of e. = _ . (_))
OR
(2) (Read the item which was selected in f.) (Chce of f. = _ . (_))
Choice for g. is _ . (_)

g. = _ . (_)

19. Does your home congregation have a realistic
plan for reaching out to the community with the
Gospel?

Yes
No

Yes ____
No ____

20. a. Do you believe that God is actively involved
in world affairs today?

Yes
No

20. a.

Yes ____
No ____

b. If "Yes," do you believe that God has a
supreme purpose in the world today?

Yes
No

Yes ____
No ____

c. If "Yes," what would you say is that supreme
purpose?

Answer _____

(Interviewer to the Respondent: "Thank you.")

APPENDIX I. D.

Questionnaire DQUESTIONNAIRE

According to God's priorities, rank (eg. 1, 2, 3, etc.) the following in their order of importance, as you understand it:

1. Emphases in the life of the church:

- ☐ adhering to the truth of the Gospel
- ☐ fostering fellowship
- ☐ praising God
- ☐ multiplying members
- ☐ healing human hurts

2. Functions in the minister's work:

- ☐ soul winning
- ☐ preparation and delivery of sermons
- ☐ leading the church in its planned activities
- ☐ counselling persons in their distress
- ☐ equipping the members for soul winning

3. Contributors to the actual progress of Ontario Churches of Christ:

- ☐ planting new churches
- ☐ Gospel meetings, personal work, campaigning
- ☐ able preachers, strong preaching
- ☐ active elders, trained disciples
- ☐ friendly Christians

* I have been preaching:

- ☐ 1 to 5 years
- ☐ 6 to 10 years
- ☐ 11 to 20 years
- ☐ over 20 years

* Preaching is my ☐ primary work ☐ secondary work.

(Do not sign)

APPENDIX I. E. 1.

Questionnaire E

Questionnaire E: "Preachers' Group Discussion: Exploring the Growth of Churches of Christ, Ontario"

Preamble:

Purpose: In examining the growth of the churches of Christ in Ontario in this century, (1) to evaluate the growth and growth rates, (2) to consider conditions and causes, and (3) to suggest future requirements.

Benefit: the interaction between the participants will aid in the expansion and clarification of ideas.

Participants: you are representative of three distinctive approaches to church life. Having extensive preaching experience, your perceptions of the growth overall and of the mind of the church will be sought.

Procedure: following a statistic reported, a premise stated or an opinion expressed, (1) a brief response to a specific question will be invited, (2) followed by a discussion of each other's response.

Discussion:

1. Our surveys are confirming, what you probably recognize, over nine decades a three-fold increase (22 to 69) in congregations, and a four-fold increase (925 to 3,900) in attendance.
Ques. Are you encouraged or discouraged by this growth experience?
2. Our major increase in church planting, over one-half since 1950, followed WWII. The past two decades saw first limited activity and then some improvement in church planting.
Ques. How would you account for this growth activity?
3. Our study indicates that the growth curve for the decade of the '80s is almost flat.
Ques. What are your perceptions and experiences of the church in its growth during this period?
4. Three new church buildings have been constructed this past year by established congregations in the Niagara Peninsula.
Ques. Is this a sign that the church has turned around? Will the '90s be a decade of accelerated growth?
5. The Milton preachers' gathering in December, 1989, rated evangelism fifth of five items.
Ques. Has the preaching force contributed to the growth experience?
6. Our findings indicate that the ratio of elders to congregations is one in five.

Appendix I. E. 2.

- Ques. Is the presence or absence of elders a significant factor in the growth rate?
7. Our findings indicate that the ratio of deacons to congregations is one in six.
Ques. Is the presence or absence of deacons a significant factor in the growth rate?
8. Our current preaching force includes three of 10 preachers who are American; two of seven churches receive financial assistance from US sources.
Ques. In balance, has our dependence upon US support and personnel been positive or negative?
9. Preacher preparation is evenly divided between (1) self prepared, (2) Bible college/preacher school, (3) university.
Ques. Has the level of training supported or hindered our growth progress?
10. Theological awareness among our people, including an understanding of a mandate for growth, will affect our progress in enlargement.
Ques. Do you agree with the statement? Is the awareness level of our people high or low?
11. Doctrinal posture, if distorted, will impede growth.
Ques. Has legalism or liberalism characterized our position? Has this possible extreme been an inhibitor to growth?
12. By virtue of (1) doctrinal exclusiveness, (2) US orientation (e.g. support, training, personnel), (3) low socioeconomic levels, our churches are in danger of being isolated from Ontario society.
Ques. Is this an accurate observation? And if Yes, what is the level of isolation?
13. Intentionality is a prerequisite to growth. Out of such considered commitment come both strategies for growth and people involvement in task performance.
Ques. Is this an accurate observation? And if Yes, what is the current level of the church's intention to grow? Are most churches planning for growth?
14. Levels of receptivity can vary from region to region in the world and even from community to community, e.g. within Ontario.
Ques. Is Ontario a hard field for the church to grow in?
15. Ques. What future do you hold for Churches of Christ in Ontario in the '90s?

Appendix I. E. 3.

16. Ques. What, in the main, is needed to accelerate the growth of the church in the '90s?

17. Ques. If you were to inquire into the growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario, what would you want to investigate?

Appendix II. A. 1. b.

Cong #	YEAR	YEAR	OPENING		CURRENT		SUNDAY		CHURCH ATTENDANCE RECORD PER DECADE								
			EST.	DIS.	RPT. EST.	RPT. EST.	RPT. EST.	RPT. EST.	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
53	1974		6		9		10									16	10
54	1974				25		30									35	30
55	1975		11		70		85									20	100
56	1980		4		6		5										5
57	1981		9		26		35										35
58	1983		6		4		5										5
59	1983		2		30		35										35
60	1984		6		35		35										35
61	1985		6		15		15										15
62	1985		4		20		26										26
63	1986		9		13		27										27
64	1987				19		35										35
65	1987		12		8		6										6
66	1987		12		37		64										60
67	1988		8		11		20										20
68	1988			4		8		10									8
69	1989		3		6		11										11
69			708	80	3062	43	3896	42	497	435	525	691	1110	1536	2633	3025	3784
			14	11						-12%	21%	32%	61%	38%	71%	15%	25%
					3105		3938										
										-62	90	166	419	426	1097	392	759

Appendix II. A. 1. c.

Cong#	YEAR YEAR		OPENING	CURRENT	SUNDAY	CHURCH ATTENDANCE RECORD PER DECADE									
	EST.	DIS.	MBRSHPT.	EST.	MBRSHPT.	A.M.	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
101	1890	1905					10								
102	1890	1905					10								
103	1859	1915					10	10							
104	1862	1915					10	10							
105	1882	1915	28				26	15							
106	1904	1915	17				10	10							
107	1904	1915					10	10							
108	1908	1917	5				5	6							
109	1890	1920					20	20							
110	1915	1920						10							
111	1902	1922					20	20	10						
112	1890	1924					10	10	10						
113	1885	1925					35	25	15						
114	1910	1936						40	30	20					
115	1900	1940					10	15	20	20					
116	1938	1941	12							12					
117	1848	1942					30	25	20	20	15				
118	1889	1942					200	225	170	125	100				
119	1861	1945					10	10	10	10	10				
120	1947	1954									20	20			
121	1949	1959									6				
122	1934	1960								12	12	6			
123	1951	1960	12									12			
124	1897	1962					60	50	40	55	75				
125	1928	1962	34						34	45	50	53	65		
126	1907	1965					20	30	125	50	50	50			
127	1910	1965	50					125	100	75	75	60			
128	1965	1969											98		
129	1966	1969	1										6		
130	1920	1970							40	50	60	65	65		
131	1966	1971	6										10		
132	1967	1971	10										13		
133	1965	1972	6										22	20	
134	1972	1976	6											12	
135	1975	1980													10
136	1976	1980	2											5	
137	1980	1982													8
138	1981	1982	3												10
139	1980	1983													40
140	1981	1983													15
141	1957	1984										25	40	25	13
142	1980	1984													60

42

506 666 624 494 473 291 319 62 156

1003 1101 1149 1185 1583 1827 2952 3087 3940
10% 4% 3% 34% 15% 62% 5% 28%

98 48 36 398 244 1125 135 853

Appendix II. A. 2. a.

Cong#	PRCH Y--N	STRT PRCH (YR)	END PRCH (YR)	PREACHER TRAINING			PREACHER NATIONAL			NO YES YR. DISC.	ELDER YES YR. DISC.	YR #OF LAST ELD + 'd	NO YES YR. DISC.	DEACONS YES YR. DISC.	YR #OF LAST DEA + 'd
				S	B	U	C	A	O						
1	y	1989				y		y			1974	3 1984		1974	4 1984
2	y	1989		y			y			n	1989		n	1989	
3	y	1988			y			y		n			n		
4	y	1988	1989			y	y			n			n		
5	y	1989				y	y			n			n		
6	n									n			n		
7	y	1984		y			y			n	1986	2	n		
8	n									n			n		
9	y	1979				y	y			n	1956	3 1986		1960	8 1986
10	y	1989			y			y		n			n		
11	y	1983		y			y			n			n		
12	n									n			n		
13	n	1984	1989		y		y			n	1980 1988	4	n	1980 1988	6 1986
14	y	1988		y				y		n	1976	2		1976	2
15	y									n	1925	3 1971		1925	4 1985
16	n	1985	1989		y		y			n	1971	2 1983		1972	3 1987
17	n	1984	1986			y		y		n			n		
18	y	1989			y		y			n			n		
19	y									n	1986	2		1986	4
20	y			y			y		*	n	1942	3		1942	4
21	n									n			n		
22	n									n	1980 1981	2	n		
23	y									n			n		
24	n									n			n		
25	y	1988			y			y		n			n		
26	n									n			n		
27	y	1963		y			y			n			n		
28	y			y				y		n			n		
29	n	1987	1989			y		y		n	1960	2 1980		1960	6 1980
30	y	1988				y	y			n			n		
31	y	1988			y		y			n	1955 1987	2	n	1960 1970	2
32	y	1982			y		y			n	1986 1988	2	n		
33	y									n			n		
34	y	1988			y			y		n			n		
35	n									n			n		
36	y	1980			y		y			n			n		
37	y	1983				y	y			n	1982 1985	2	n	1982 1985	2
38	n									n			n		
39	y	1961			y		y			n			n		
40	y	1978				y	y			n	1977	4		1980	5
41	y			y			y			n	1980	2	n		
42	y	1985				y	y			n			n		
43	y	1972		y			y			n	1963	2 1985		1963	5 1985
44	y	1984		y			y			n	1975 1983	2	n		
45	n									n			n		
46	y			y			y			n			n		
47	y	1985				y	y			n			n		
48	n	1968	1973			y		y		n	1970 1974	3	n		
49	y	1983			y		y			n			n		
50	y	1989			y		y			n	1989	4		1989	4
51	n	1969	1984		y		y			n			n		
52	y	1989				y	y			n			n		

Appendix II. A. 2. b.

Cong#	Y--N	STRT PRCH (YR)	END PRCH (YR)	PREACHER TRAINING			PREACHER NATIONAL			NO YES YR. DISC.	ELDERS YES #OF LAST ELD + 'd	YR NO YES YR. DISC.	DEACONS YES #OF LAST DEA + 'd	YR NO YES YR. DISC.
				S	B	U	C	A	O					
53	n	1976	1988	y			y			n			n	
54	y	1974			y		y			n			n	
55	y	1984				y	y			1988	3		1988	4
56	n									n			n	
57	y	1981				y		y		n			n	
58	y	1983		y			y			n			n	
59	y			y				y		n			n	
60	y	1984		y			y			n			n	
61	y	1984		y						n			n	
62	y	1985			y		y			n			n	
63	n									n			n	
64	n	1988	1989			y		y		n			n	
65	n									n			n	
66	y	1988			y		y			n			n	
67	y	1988				y		y		n			n	
68	y				y			y		n			n	
69	y	1989		y			y			n			n	
48 21		46	9	17	18	17	36	15	0	55			57	
		y	n											
				33%	35%	33%	69%	29%	0%					

Appendix II. A. 3. a.

CHURCH PLANTING							FUNDING:			% APPLICATION OF FUNDS:						
Cong#	PLANTERS:			GRP	SPAW	TRUB	OTH	INIT	SUB	PRES	BUD	PRE	WF	BLD	PRG	OTH
1			y													
2	y															
3	y															
4	y								y			y				
5	y															
6	y															
7	y															
8	y															
9	y															
10	y															
11	y															
12	y															
13				y												
14	y									y	10	y				
15					y											
16			y						y			y				
17				y				y	y			y			y	
18	y															
19	y															
20					y											
21	y															
22	y							y							y	
23					y				y			y	y		y	
24	y								y							y
25	y							y								
26	y															
27					y											
28					y											
29				y				y				y			y	
30		y						y	y	y	48	y	y			
31	y					y										
32					y			y	y	y	8	y				
33	y															
34		y						y	y			y	y		y	
35	y															
36	y							y		y		y				y
37					y			y				y				
38	y							y							y	
39		y						y	y	y	5	y				
40	y							y				y			y	
41		y						y	y	y						
42		y						y				y	y		y	y
43							y									
44	y							y								
45			y					y	y							
46		y						y								
47			y					y		y	60					
48			y			y										
49	y									y		y				
50	y							y	y			y			y	
51		y						y	y			y	y		y	
52					y					y	45	y				

Appendix II. A. 3. b.

CHURCH PLANTING																
PLANTERS:								FUNDING:			%	APPLICATION OF FUNDS:				
Cong#	MEMB	PREA	TEAM	GRP	SPAW	TRUB	OTH	INIT	SUB	PRES	BUD	PRE	WF	BLD	PRG	OTH
53	y							y	y			y				
54		y				y										
55	y							y	y	y	25	y	y	y		
56	y							y								
57	y							y		y		y		y		
58	y									y	50		y			
59		y						y	y	y						
60			y					y	y	y						
61		y						y	y	y						
62			y					y	y	y	77	y				
63	y					y										
64	y							y		y	40	y				
65	y					y										
66	y					y				y	20	y				
67	y					y										
68			y					y	y	y						
69			y					y	y	y	100	y				
	38	11	8	3	8	7	1	31	21	20	41%	25	7	12	2	1
	50%	14%	11%	4%	11%	9%	1%	43%	29%	28%		53%	15%	26%	4%	2%

Appendix II. A. 4. a.

Cong#	SOURCE OF FUNDS			MEETING PLACE:			OWNED FACILITIES:				
	CDN	US	OTH	BLDG	YEAR	RENT	HOME	REPL	RELO	RENO	EXT
1				y	1989				y		
2				y					y		
3				y	1887				y	y	y
4		y		y					y		
5				y	1851					y	y
6				y							
7				y	1942			y	y	y	y
8				y	1942						
9				y	1989			y			
10				y	1903					y	y
11				y	1961				y		y
12				y							
13				y	1979				y		
14	y	y		y	1924						y
15				y	1971				y		
16	y	y		y	1982				y		
17	y	y		y	1971				y		
18				y	1954					y	y
19				y	1965				y		
20				y	1942				y		
21				y							
22	y			y	1967				y		
23		y		y	1947				y		
24	y			y	1964					y	y
25		y		y	1966				y		
26				y							
27				y	1963						
28				y							
29	y			y	1952						y
30	y	y		y	1959					y	
31				y	1956					y	
32	y			y	1962				y		
33				y	1966					y	
34	y	y		y	1960						
35				y	1976						
36	y	y		y	1964						
37	y			y	1962						
38	y			y	1965						
39		y		y	1978						
40	y	y		y	1979						
41				y	1962				y		
42	y	y		y	1963						
43				y	1963						y
44				y	1968						
45				y	1965						
46				y							
47				y	1970						
48				y							
49	y			y	1971					y	
50	y	y		y	1977						
51		y		y	1974					y	
52	y			y	1982					y	

Appendix II. A. 4. b.

Cong#	SOURCE OF FUNDS			MEETING PLACE:			OWNED FACILITIES:				
	CDN	US	OTH	BLDG	YEAR	RENT	HOME	REPL	RELO	RENO	EXT
53	y	y					y				
54				y	1975						
55	y	y		y	1982						
56							y				
57	y	y		y	1985				y		
58	y	y		y	1984						
59							y				
60							y				
61								y			
62	y	y					y				
63							y				
64	y						y				
65								y			
66							y				
67							y				
68								y			
69		y						y			
	23	20	0	56	47	8	5	2	18	12	10
	49%	43%	0%*	117%	100%	17%	11%*	4%	38%	26%	21%

APPENDIX II. B. 1. a.

Tabulation: Questionnaire B: "A Decadal Growth Rate (DGR)
1979-1989 Profile of the (---) Congregation"

YEAR - 1980									
BAPTISMS	TRANS-IN	TRANS-OUT	REMOVALS	1980					
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
	7			1	1			35	
	8	2	3	8		1		31	
3	3	10		5				94	
	2	4		3			1	103	
	5	7		12	4			58	
4	6			3		4	2	62	
	2					8		90	
	4			3				41	
3		6	2			1	2	118	
2	2	8	6	9	2		1	106	
6									
1	2	7						92	
7	10	0	0	1	0	0	1	153	
4	3			1			1	85	
30	47 *	44	11 *	45	6 *	14	8 *	1033	

CHCM - Church Family

CHRES - Change of Residence UNFT - Unfaithful

NONCF - Non-Church Family

NOCR - Non-Change of Residence

YEAR - 1981									
BAPTISMS	TRANS-IN	TRANS-OUT	REMOVALS	1981					
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
2	1	2				1		39	
1	5			4		4		29	
3	5	6		3				105	
	4	2		3			4	102	
	9	11		7		4	3	64	
	12			6	7	2	1	58	
	3							80	
3	3	2		2		3		44	
3				4		6	2	109	
1	2	4	4	13			1	110	
1		6	1	3				122	
6									
8	18	2	1	1		12		169	
	1	2		1				87	
26	62 *	35	6 *	47	7 *	31	11 *	1079	

Appendix II. B. 1. b.

YEAR - 1982									
BAPTISMS		TRANS-IN		TRANS-OUT		REMOVALS		1982	
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
2	16			2	4	2		49	
3	4			1		4		31	
1	3	4	1	3	2			109	
10		1		3				110	
	8	4		1	8	2	1	63	
1	9			2	6	3	1	56	
	2							70	
1		3		4		2	1	41	
2	1	2						114	
2	1	7	3	9			1	103	
2	2	1	2	3	4	3		117	
5									
5	8				2	12		168	
2		1	1					91	
0	34	38 *	23	7 *	26	22 *	26	4 *	1073

YEAR - 1983									
BAPTISMS		TRANS-IN		TRANS-OUT		REMOVALS		1983	
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
1	17			10	7			50	
2	3	2		1		2		35	
2	1	4	2		1			117	
3		1		6				108	
	4	6		10		4		62	
	8			2	5	2		55	
	1							65	
1	1			4		2		37	
2	2	1	3		4	2		112	
	2	6	8	3	2			116	
	3	1	2	1	3	1	3	112	
5									
	6		4			12		166	
1	4		2		5		1	92	
0	16	35 *	21	21 *	27	20 *	25	4 *	1077

Appendix II. B. 1. d.

YEAR - 1986									
BAPTISMS		TRANS-IN		TRANS-OUT		REMOVALS		1986	
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
2	7	3	3	7	4			49	
1		1	4	8	2	1		35	
1		5						130	
1		2					4		
	8	6		6				131	
1	3	3		4				56	
	1			3				50	
	3							85	
3	2	2			3			37	
2			1	10	14	2	1	88	
	2	7		3	7		1	87	
1		10							
4	2			2		4		186	
6	3	5	2	4	2		1	116	
0	20	24 *	41	7 *	40	28 *	7	7 *	1001

YEAR - 1987									
BAPTISMS		TRANS-IN		TRANS-OUT		REMOVALS		1987	
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
6	2	2	1	7	5	6		42	
	1	4	2	2		4		36	
4		17		6				105	
		2							
	7	6		5			2	135	
3	4	8		5			1	65	
2	8			2	1	2		53	
	4							90	
	1				2			36	
2		3			5	1		87	
	2	15	2	3				94	
	1	8		4			2	112	
4									
3	3			3			3	174	
1	4	4	1	2			11	123	
0	19	35 *	67	5 *	32	8 *	7	19 *	1110

Appendix II. B. 1. e.

YEAR - 1988									
BAPTISMS		TRANS-IN		TRANS-OUT		REMOVALS		1988	
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
	1	2	1	6				40	
	1	3	3	2		1		40	
		13	2	3			1	116	
2	1			8			1		
1	7	4	5	4			1	145	
		9		5				70	
	15		4		3	5		64	
2	4							100	
	1	5		9		1	1	31	
	1	1		2	10	1	1	70	
1	1	5	9	2	5	1	1	110	
2	3	1	4	7		1		115	
2		5							
6	3	6	11	4			2	194	
3	1							127	
19	38 *	52	38 *	46	18 *	10	8 *	1182	0

YEAR - 1989									
BAPTISMS		TRANS-IN		TRANS-OUT		REMOVALS		1989	
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED	MEMB	
1	4			3				42	
	6	2		2	2	3		41	
5	1	8		4				126	
								36	
	3	2	4	7			1	146	
3	1	6					1	79	
	8				1			71	
								90	
		3						34	
	2	8		7	15	3		113	
2	1	6		4		1	1	104	
1	5	10		7	6			199	
9	5	4	1	3				143	
20	32 *	49	5 *	34	24 *	7	3 *	1182	0

Appendix II. B. 1. f.

TOTALS							
BAPTISMS		TRANS-IN		TRANS-OUT		REMOVALS	
CHFM	NONCF	CHRES	NOCR	CHRES	NOCR	UNFT	DIED
17	77	12	7	43	31	13	4
9	29	19	21	30	8	26	
19	16	75	5	28	3		1
3	1	6		9		1	5
20	32	38	10	40			11
7	40	63		60	12	12	6
9	75		4	25	25	20	6
3	22					8	
8	13	17		28	6	8	2
21	9	20	11	20	44	20	7
6	22	77	37	68	44	4	6
13	12	24	9	29	9	6	9
31	2	27					
41	68	26	19	19	8	56	12
29	22	29	7	13	7		15
219	363	421	123	369	166	161	80
	582		544		535		241
	62%		23%		31%		33%

APPENDIX II. C. 1. a.

Tabulation: Questionnaire C: "Perceptions of Members of Churches of
Christ, Ontario: A Telephone Interview"

DEMOGRAPHIC:

1	2	3	4	4	5	6	7	9	10	12						
DEMOGRAPHIC:	RELATIVE			B												
AGE YRS GEN NAT SIZ REL # Y/N MIN # Y/N Y/N Y/N A-C A-C Y/N FEMALE																
A	A	F	Y	A	Y	C	Y	N	UA	N	Y	Y	B	A	Y	(a)
A	A	F	Y	D	Y	C	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	B	B	Y	
B	A	F	Y	C	Y	A	Y	N	UA	N	N	Y	B	B	Y	

B	B	F	Y	C	N	O	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	A	A	Y	(b)
C	B	F	Y	B	Y	A	Y	N	UA	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	
B	B	F	Y	C	Y	C	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	A	A	N	
C	B	F	Y	C	Y	C	Y	Y	A	N	N	Y	B	A	Y	
B	B	F	N	D	Y	C	Y	Y	C	N	N	Y	B	A	Y	
C	B	F	Y	A	Y	B	N	N	UA	N	N	Y	B	C	N	

B	C	F	N	D	Y	A	Y	N	UA	Y	N	Y	B	B	N	(c)
C	C	F	Y	D	Y	A	Y	N	UA	N	Y	Y	A	B	Y	
C	C	F	Y	C	Y	C	Y	Y	A	Y	N	Y	B	A	Y	
D	C	F	Y	C	N	O	Y	Y	B	Y	Y	Y	B	B	Y	

D	D	F	Y	B	Y	B	Y	Y	A	N	N	Y	B	C	Y	(d)
D	D	F	Y	D	Y	B	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	C	A	Y	
C	D	F	N	B	N	O	UA	Y	A	N	N	Y	A	B	N	
D	D	F	Y	C	Y	A	Y	Y	A	N	N	Y	C	A	Y	
D	D	F	Y	A	Y	B	Y	N	UA	Y	N	Y	B	B	Y	
D	D	F	UA	D	Y	C	Y	N	A	N	N	Y	B	B	Y	
D	D	F	Y	B	Y	C	Y	Y	B	N	N	Y	B	B	N	
D	D	F	Y	UA	Y	A	Y	N	UA	N	Y	Y	UA	B	Y	
D	D	F	Y	C	Y	C	Y	Y	A	N	N	Y	B	B	Y	
D	D	F	Y	D	Y	A	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	B	C	Y	
D	D	F	Y	B	Y	C	N	Y	A	N	Y	Y	B	A	Y	
D	D	F	Y	B	N	O	Y	N	UA	N	Y	Y	C	B	Y	
D	D	F	Y	D	Y	C	Y	N	UA	N	N	Y	A	A	Y	

*

*
Years
in a
C of C

Appendix II. C. 1. b.

DEMOGRAPHIC:

1	2	3	4	4	5	6	7	9	10	12						
DEMOGRAPHIC:	RELATIVE			B												
AGE	YRS	GEN	NAT	SIZ	REL	#	Y/N	MIN	#	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	A-C	A-C	Y/N	MALE

C	C	M	Y	D	Y	C	N	Y	A	N	Y	Y	B	C	N	(c)
C	C	M	Y	C	Y	C	Y	Y	B	N	N	Y	B	B	Y	
D	C	M	N	C	N	O	Y	N	UA	N	Y	Y	B	C	N	
C	C	M	Y	A	N	B	Y	Y	A	N	N	Y	B	B	Y	
C	C	M	Y	D	Y	C	N	Y	A	N	N	Y	B	C	N	
C	C	M	Y	C	N	O	Y	Y	A	Y	N	Y	A	C	Y	

D	D	M	Y	C	Y	B	Y	N	UA	N	Y	Y	C	A	Y	(d)
D	D	M	Y	D	N	O	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	B	B	Y	
D	D	M	Y	B	N	O	Y	Y	A	Y	UA	Y	B	B	N	
C	D	M	N	D	Y	C	Y	Y	C	Y	Y	Y	B	B	Y	
D	D	M	Y	A	N	O	Y	N	UA	N	N	Y	B	A	Y	
C	D	M	Y	D	Y	B	Y	Y	B	N	N	Y	B	A	Y	
D	D	M	Y	A	Y	B	Y	N	UA	N	N	Y	B	A	Y	
D	D	M	Y	C	Y	C	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	C	A	Y	

*
Years
in a
C of C

Appendix II. C. 1. c.

DEMOGRAPHICS cont . . .

13	14	15	15	16	16	16	
		AMN	B	1-10			
A-D	A-C	Y/N	P/N	A	C	E	FEMALE
B	B	Y	P	7	5	7	(a)
B	B	N	UA	8	6	9	
A	A	Y	P	5	3	9	

B	A	Y	P	9	8	9	(b)
D	B	Y	P	10	7	8	
C	B	Y	P	7	8	9	
C	C	N	UA	8	7	6	
B	B	N	UA	8	7	8	
B	A	N	UA	9	6	3	

B	B	N	P	8	4	5	(c)
B	C	Y	P	9	5	8	
B	A	Y	P	10	5	9	
B	C	N	UA	8	7	8	

B	C	N	P	8	5	7	(d)
B	UA	Y	P	7	10	9	
UA	A	UA	UA	9	4	8	
B	A	N	UA	8	6	6	
B	A	Y	P	5	1	8	
C	B	N	UA	8	5	5	
D	B	Y	N	10	5	8	
C	A	N	P	9	UA	8	
B	B	N	UA	9	5	8	
B	B	Y	P	5	4	7	
B	C	N	UA	9	7	8	
B	A	Y	N	9	5	8	
B	A	Y	P	8	9	10	

Appendix II. C. 1. d.

DEMOGRAPHICS cont . . .

13	14	15	15	16	16	16	
			AMN	B	1-10		
A-D	A-C	Y/N	P/N	A	C	E	MALE

B	A	Y	P	6	4	8	(c)
B	A	Y	3	9	8	9	
B	A	Y	P	7	7	6	
B	C	N	UA	9	6	8	
A	B	Y	3	8	3	8	
B	C	Y	N	9	8	9	

C	A	N	UA	7	4	6	(d)
C	A	Y	P	8	3	6	
D	C	Y	P	5	4	4	
B	A	N	UA	4	9	8	
B	A	Y	P	8	6	8	
B	A	Y	3	7	7	5	
B	C	N	N	9	UA	9	
B	UA	UA	UA	9	8	10	

Appendix II. C. 2. a.

THEOLOGY

5	8	13	16	16	17	17	17	20	20B	
					1-3					
Y/N	Y/N	A-D	B	D	A	C	D	Y/N	FEMALE	
N	Y	B	7	8	3	2	2	Y	Y	(a)
Y	Y	B	6	7	3	2	3	Y	Y	
N	N	A	8	4	1	2	2	Y	Y	

N	Y	B	9	9	3	3	2	Y	Y	(b)
Y	Y	D	7	8	1	2	2	Y	Y	
N	N	C	9	4	UA	2	3	Y	Y	
N	Y	C	7	7	3	2	2	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	9	7	3	2	2	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	10	5	3	2	2	Y	Y	

Y	Y	B	10	5	3	2	3	Y	Y	(c)
N	Y	B	10	7	3	3	3	Y	Y	
Y	Y	B	10	8	3	3	3	Y	Y	
Y	Y	B	7	8	3	2	2	N	UA	

N	Y	B	8	6	3	2	1	N	UA	(d)
N	Y	B	10	9	3	3	3	Y	Y	
N	Y	UA	10	7	3	3	3	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	10	8	3	3	3	Y	Y	
Y	Y	B	10	6	3	2	3	Y	Y	
N	Y	C	8	7	3	3	1	Y	UA	
N	Y	D	10	5	3	3	2	Y	Y	
N	N	C	8	9	1	3	2	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	9	8	3	2	1	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	9	10	3	3	2	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	9	6	1	2	1	N	UA	
N	Y	B	10	7	3	2	3	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	10	9	3	2	2	Y	Y	

Appendix II. C. 2. b.

THEOLOGY

	5	8	13	16	16	17	17	17	20	20B	
						1-3					
Y/N	Y/N	A-D	B	D	A	C	D	Y/N	MALE		

N	Y	B	8	7	2	2	2	Y	Y	(c)
N	Y	B	10	8	3	2	1	Y	Y	
N	N	B	8	6	3	2	2	N	UA	
N	Y	B	9	7	1	2	2	Y	Y	
N	Y	A	10	7	3	3	3	Y	Y	
Y	Y	B	10	8	3	3	1	Y	Y	

N	Y	C	5	9	3	1	3	Y	Y	(d)
N	Y	C	6	7	3	2	3	Y	Y	
Y	N	D	10	5	3	2	1	Y	Y	
Y	Y	B	10	10	3	3	2	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	7	6	3	1	1	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	10	8	3	3	3	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	8	9	3	3	3	Y	Y	
N	Y	B	10	8	2	2	2	Y	Y	

Appendix II. C. 3. a.

SOCIAL

4	4B	8	9	10	11	12	15	15B	16	16	18	18	18	18	
AMN									1-10		RANKING:				
MIN #	Y/N	A-C	A-C	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	P/N	A	E	A	B	C	D	FEMALE	
N	UA	Y	B	A	Y	Y	Y	P	7	7	1	1	2	1	(a)
Y	A	Y	B	B	Y	Y	N	UA	8	9	1	2	1	1	
N	UA	N	B	B	Y	Y	Y	P	5	9	1	2	1	1	

Y	A	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	P	9	9	2	1	1	1	(b)
N	UA	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	P	10	8	1	2	1	2	
Y	A	N	A	A	Y	N	Y	P	7	9	UW	UW	UW	UW	
Y	A	Y	B	A	N	Y	N	UA	8	6	2	1	1	1	
Y	C	Y	B	A	Y	Y	N	UA	8	8	2	1	1	1	
N	UA	Y	B	C	Y	N	N	UA	9	3	2	1	1	2	

N	UA	Y	B	B	Y	N	N	P	8	5	1	1	1	1	(c)
N	UA	Y	A	B	Y	Y	Y	P	9	8	2	1	1	2	
Y	A	Y	B	A	Y	Y	Y	P	10	9	2	2	1	2	
Y	B	Y	B	B	Y	Y	N	UA	8	8	1	1	1	1	

Y	A	Y	B	C	Y	Y	N	P	8	7	2	2	2	1	(d)
Y	A	Y	C	A	Y	Y	Y	P	7	9	2	3	1	3	
Y	A	Y	A	B	Y	N	UA	UA	9	8	2	3	1	3	
Y	A	Y	C	A	Y	Y	N	UA	8	6	2	1	1	2	
N	UA	Y	B	B	N	Y	Y	P	5	8	2	1	1	1	
N	A	Y	B	B	N	Y	N	UA	8	5	1	1	1	1	
Y	B	Y	B	B	Y	N	Y	N	10	8	2	2	1	2	
N	UA	N	UA	B	Y	Y	N	P	9	8	1	2	1	1	
Y	A	Y	B	B	Y	Y	N	UA	9	8	1	2	1	1	
Y	A	Y	B	C	N	Y	Y	P	5	7	2	1	1	1	
Y	A	Y	B	A	Y	Y	N	UA	9	8	1	2	1	1	
N	UA	Y	C	B	Y	Y	Y	N	9	8	1	2	1	1	
N	UA	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	P	8	10	1	1	1	2	

Appendix II. C. 3. b.

SOCIAL

4	4B	8	9	10	11	12	15	15B	16	16	18	18	18	18	
MIN #	Y/N	A-C	A-C	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	P/N	A	E	A	B	C	D	MALE

Y	A	Y	B	C	Y	N	Y	P	6	8	1	2	1	1	(c)
Y	B	Y	B	B	Y	Y	Y	3	9	9	2	1	1	1	
N	UA	N	B	C	N	N	Y	P	7	6	2	1	1	1	
Y	A	Y	B	B	Y	Y	N	UA	9	8	1	2	1	1	
Y	A	Y	B	C	Y	N	Y	3	8	8	2	1	1	1	
Y	A	Y	A	C	Y	Y	Y	N	9	9	2	2	1	1	

N	UA	Y	C	A	Y	Y	N	UA	7	6	1	2	1	2	(d)
Y	A	Y	B	B	Y	Y	Y	P	8	6	1	2	2	1	
Y	A	N	B	B	Y	N	Y	P	5	4	1	2	1	1	
Y	C	Y	B	B	Y	Y	N	UA	4	8	2	2	1	1	
N	UA	Y	B	A	Y	Y	Y	P	8	8	1	1	1	1	
Y	B	Y	B	A	Y	Y	Y	3	7	5	2	3	1	1	
N	UA	Y	B	A	Y	Y	N	N	9	9	2	3	3	3	
Y	A	Y	C	A	Y	Y	UA	UA	9	10	2	2	1	2	

Appendix II. C. 4. a.

MISSION:

3	6	7	9	14	16	16	17	17	18	18	18	18	19	
RANKING:														
Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	A-C	A-C	C	F	B	E	A	B	C	D	Y/N	FEMALE
Y	Y	Y	B	B	5	6	1	2	1	1	2	1	Y	(a)
Y	Y	Y	B	B	6	7	1	2	1	2	1	1	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	A	3	7	1	2	1	2	1	1	Y	

Y	Y	Y	A	A	8	8	3	2	2	1	1	1	Y	(b)
Y	Y	Y	A	B	7	6	1	2	1	2	1	2	Y	
Y	Y	Y	A	B	8	5	1	3	UW	UW	UW	UW	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	C	7	6	1	2	2	1	1	1	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	B	7	6	1	2	2	1	1	1	Y	
N	N	Y	B	A	6	8	1	3	2	1	1	2	N	

Y	N	Y	B	B	4	7	1	2	1	1	1	1	Y	(c)
Y	Y	Y	A	C	5	5	3	3	2	1	1	2	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	A	5	7	1	3	2	2	1	2	Y	
Y	Y	Y	B	C	7	5	1	3	1	1	1	1	Y	

Y	N	Y	B	C	5	5	1	3	2	2	2	1	Y	(d)
Y	Y	Y	C	UA	10	7	3	3	2	3	1	3	N	
UA	N	Y	A	A	4	5	3	3	2	3	1	3	N	
Y	N	Y	C	A	6	5	3	2	2	1	1	2	N	
Y	N	Y	B	A	1	5	3	2	2	1	1	1	N	
Y	N	Y	B	B	5	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	B	5	6	1	2	2	2	1	2	Y	
Y	Y	Y	UA	A	UA	4	1	3	1	2	1	1	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	B	5	5	1	2	1	2	1	1	N	
Y	Y	Y	B	B	4	5	3	3	2	1	1	1	N	
N	Y	Y	B	C	7	6	1	3	1	2	1	1	N	
Y	Y	Y	C	A	5	9	1	3	1	2	1	1	N	
Y	N	Y	A	A	9	8	1	3	1	1	1	2	Y	

Appendix II. C. 4. b.

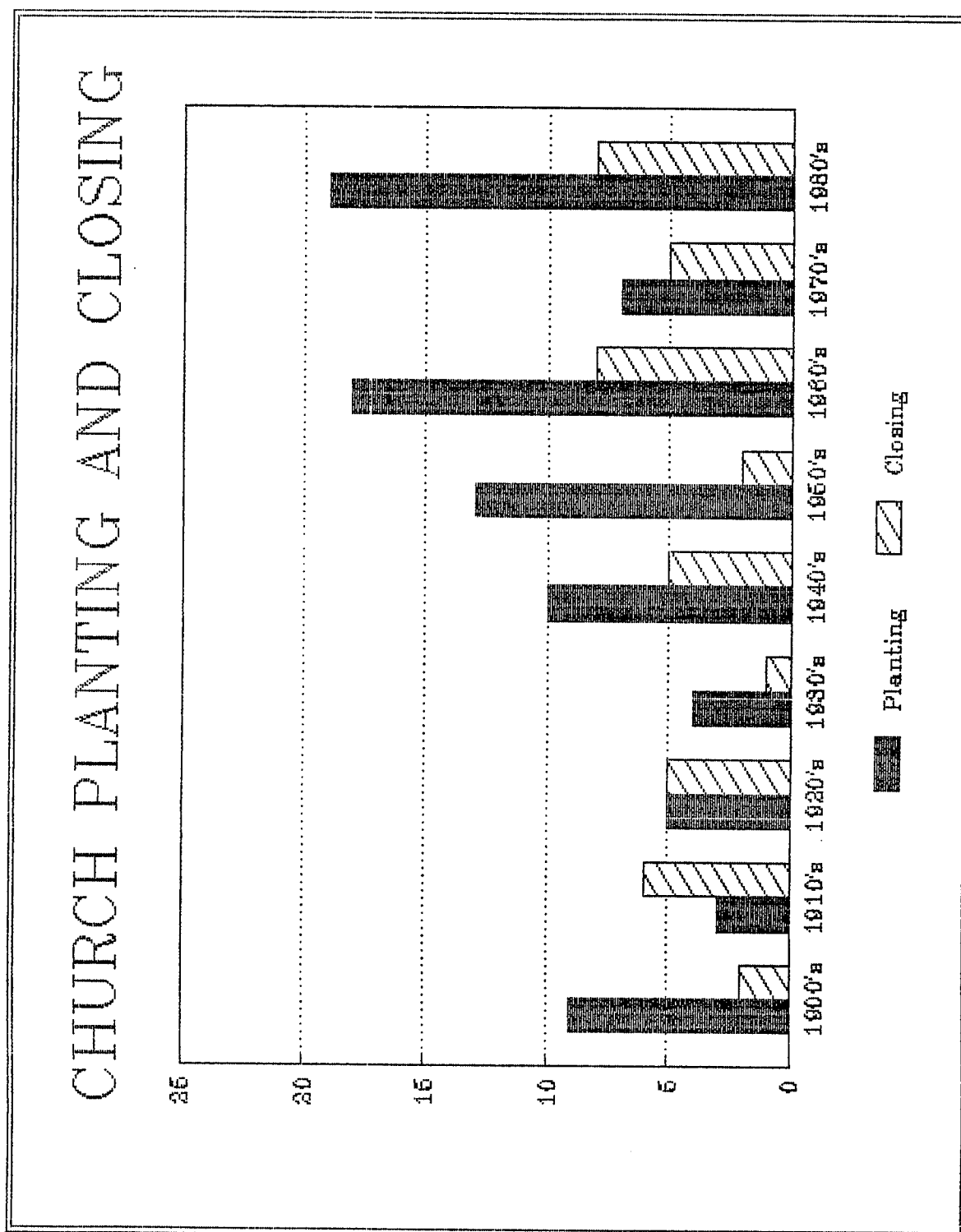
MISSION:

3 6 7 9 14 16 16 17 17 18 18 18 18 19
RANKING:
Y/N Y/N Y/N A-C A-C C F B E A B C D Y/N MALE

N	Y	Y	B	A	4	5	1	2	1	2	1	1	N	(c)
Y	N	Y	B	A	8	7	3	2	2	1	1	1	Y	
Y	Y	Y	B	A	7	5	1	3	2	1	1	1	N	
Y	N	Y	B	C	6	8	1	2	1	2	1	1	Y	
N	N	Y	B	B	3	6	3	3	2	1	1	1	N	
Y	N	Y	A	C	8	7	1	2	2	2	1	1	Y	

Y	Y	Y	C	A	4	4	3	3	1	2	1	2	Y	(d)
Y	Y	Y	B	A	3	4	1	2	1	2	2	1	N	
Y	UA	Y	B	C	4	UA	1	3	1	2	1	1	Y	
Y	Y	Y	B	A	9	10	3	3	2	2	1	1	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	A	6	6	1	3	1	1	1	1	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	A	7	8	1	2	2	3	1	1	Y	
Y	N	Y	B	C	UA	5	3	3	2	3	3	3	N	
Y	Y	Y	C	UA	8	8	1	2	2	2	1	2	Y	

APPENDIX III. A.

Church Plantings and Closings: Ontario Churches of Christ, 1900-1990

APPENDIX III. B. 1.

Comments received to Questionnaire B: "A Decadal Growth Rate (DGR), 1979-1989, Profile of the (---) Congregation."

Comments:

1. "Slow gradual growth due to church family baptisms, community baptisms, and members moving in...Those fallen away, not officially withdrawn from, and transfers-out were not recognized in records."
2. "A register has been kept for baptisms and deaths, but no complete record of transfers-in and -out has been kept... The church here has not withdrawn from anyone...Yet many people have dropped into inactivity...I understand... there were a great many baptisms in the '80s who immediately fell away...Congregation has grown to 80-90% of seating capacity (resulting in) levelling...Rises in the '70s and '80s attributable to (the preacher) who cared for the people (pastorally)...Levelling due to understaffing, greying of the leadership, younger members on the fringe...In spite of high baptisms, we don't know how to evangelize, and are not too concerned about it either."
3. "...drop in evangelism: we are concerned about our salvation, not that of others...New converts have the most zeal for winning others."
4. "...small but constant turnover of members moving in and out...because of business."
5. "A (earlier) campaign produced many converts...We were not professionally able to help their (emotional) need... only one remains...Having been burned out (by earlier campaign experience) a growing tendency is to avoid major evangelism...Fear of financial risk taking squelched (growth)...A growing trend toward conservatism that came close to being 'anti'...an unwillingness to change customs...drove many members away, especially in the last few years."
6. "There were quite a few baptisms between ____ and ____ with 90% of them leaving the church within one or two years... Within a three year period 40-45 people left...A split in ____ resulted in the loss of around 40 people...many returned. Activity was pretty chaotic during this time and was not recorded accurately."
7. "Only seven of 31 baptized in the last three years have become unfaithful...Greater involvement in each other's lives has (supported) an increase over the past three years."

Appendix III. B. 2.

8. "An ethnic work was begun in ____."
9. "Membership has remained near 120 since 1984...Preachers preaching to believers...Inadequate room for growth...Lack of aggressive evangelism."
10. "In spite of eight baptisms, only one remained with the congregation...Baptisms because of scare tactics...Of seven baptisms one was the wife of a member, one the son of a member, one a nephew of a member...We changed preachers this year, no baptisms..."
11. "I have been working with attendance and growth figures for about 11 years...Looking at my figures it is kind of interesting to note during (a three year period) we had a total of 27 move on to other places...many remained faithful."

APPENDIX III. C.

Responses to Questionnaire C: "Perceptions of Members of Churches of Christ, Ontario: A Telephone Interview," to question 20. c.: "If God is actively engaged in world affairs today, and has a supreme purpose in the world, what would you say is that supreme purpose?"

Responses:

1. God-centered responses:

A plan for all	Bring nations to him
He is in control	Bring as many people to know him
Have people come to him	Force knowledge of God
His will have man come to him	Bring people back to God
To bring people to a knowledge of his will	
Carry out his plan	Bring people to him eternally
That all will come to recognize God as God	
To worship him	Bring everyone to him (2)
All to knowledge of his will	Glorify his name

2. Salvation directed responses:

Convert the world	Saving souls
All that hear him should be saved	Saving the world
Gospel preached and save souls	To save the lost
Win the world	Save as many as possible
Spread the Gospel	

3. Christ associated responses:

Bring people to knowledge of Jesus as Savior	
Establish his church	People become Christians
People follow him	Leading to the 2nd coming of Jesus

4. The "World a better place" responses:

Peace in the world	Make world a better place
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5. Unanswered: seven.

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