

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING
OF THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION IN
THE LOCAL CHURCH

WILLIAM B. ELLIOTT

MALCOLM RODNEY POTTS

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
AVONDALE CAMPUS

ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH
AND ITS MISSION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

by

Malcolm Rodney Potts

Chairman: Alwyn P. Salom

82063

AVONDALE COLLEGE LIBRARY

~~NOT FOR CIRCULATION~~

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies
Avondale Campus

Title: DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH AND ITS
MISSION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Name of researcher: Malcolm R. Potts

Name and degree of faculty advisor: Alwyn P. Salom, Ph.D.

Date completed: November 1985

Problem

Christ has commissioned the church to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world. However, the basic concepts of the church and its mission held by the membership will determine the type of outreach program that it will operate. If this concept of mission is limited or deficient, little will be done that is really effective. This project seeks to discover what attitudes are the norm in the local church, and whether these attitudes can be changed in a short period of time.

Method

The areas of Biblical studies and church growth were researched as part of this study. An instrument was formulated and

data was collected from both the leadership group and church members regarding their attitudes to the church and its mission. A one-day training program was developed and operated in a selected local church. The instrument was administered before and after the training session, and again three months later to determine if a greater understanding had developed, and how permanent any changes in understanding were.

Results

The results of this study indicate that it is possible to change attitudes in the short term, but that this change is not always permanent. There is a need for ongoing instruction or confusion will result.

Conclusion

The attitudes of members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the church and its mission are basically healthy. There are however some areas that require urgent attention. Instruction by conference personnel should be carried out on a longer term basis than is done at present, and requires the co-operation and support of the local minister to have any permanent and lasting effect.

Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies
Avondale Campus

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH
AND ITS MISSION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
Malcolm Rodney Potts
November 1985

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH
AND ITS MISSION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

A project report
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
Malcolm Rodney Potts

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Alwyn P. Salom
Alwyn P. Salom, Ph.D., Chairman

Austen G. Fletcher
Austen G. Fletcher, B.A.

Kerry H. Hortop
Kerry H. Hortop, D.Min.

November 8, 1985
Date approved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. CONCEPTS OF MISSION IN THE EARLY CHURCH	6
Introduction	6
The Jerusalem Church and its Mission	7
The Church at Antioch	14
The Ministry of Barnabas	17
Characteristics of the Antioch Church	20
Conclusion	23
III. BASIC ATTITUDES TO THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION	24
Introduction	24
Factors that Affect Mission	26
The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Mission	34
General Observations	36
Comparisons Between Leadership and Average Member	37
Results of the Church Survey	38
Conclusion	48
IV. MINISTRY DESIGN	50
Basic Concerns	50
Background Matters	51
Sabbath Visit to Church	52
Recommendations	53
V. IMPLEMENTATION OF MINISTRY	54
Selection of the Church	54
The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Muswellbrook	54
Growth History of the Muswellbrook Church	56
What the Figures say	56
Observations from the Figures	58
Growth Rate	58
Transfers	59
Biological Growth	60
Convert Growth	60
Inactive Members	61
Implementation of Ministry	61

Analysis of Survey Results	64
First Survey	64
General Observations	65
Detailed Comment	65
Conclusion	67
Second Survey	68
Can Thinking and Attitudes be Changed	68
Conclusion	70
Third Survey	70
Survey Responses	70
Conclusion	72
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	74
Recommendations	76
APPENDICES	78
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	152

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

God has committed to mankind the task of presenting the saving message of Jesus Christ to the world. The acceptance of this task is at the one time both a wonderful privilege and a tremendous responsibility, for the issues that are at stake are matters of eternal consequence. The scriptures tell us that there are two ways that are set before mankind--the way of life and the way of death.¹ Since this is the case, it is of the utmost importance that the Gospel commission be carried out effectively and well.

God has chosen the church as the prime agency to carry forth this task of communicating the Gospel to the world. Ellen G. White rightly observes that "the church is the appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world."² This fact has been true from the very earliest days of Christianity. Michael Green sums it up well when he writes:

It was a small group of eleven men whom Jesus commissioned to carry on his work, and bring the gospel to the whole world. They were not distinguished; they were not well educated; they had no influential backers. In their own nation they were nobodies and, in any case, their own nation was a mere second-class province on the eastern extremity of the Roman map.

¹Prov 12:28; Jer 21:8; Matt 7:13-14.

²Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 9.

If they had stopped to weigh up the probabilities of succeeding in their mission, even granted that Jesus was alive and that his Spirit went with them to equip them for their task, their hearts must surely have sunk, so heavily were the odds weighted against them. How could they possibly succeed? And yet they did.

¹Matthew 28:19.¹

Once this commission had been accepted there was an explosion of growth as individual Christians sensed their responsibility and set out to share what they themselves had experienced. The book of Acts records the outstanding progress of the church as it accepted the challenge of mission. From just a few believers in the upper room it is not long before they are charged with "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

Every footprint in the book of Acts is stained with blood. Christians in the first three centuries multiplied rapidly. Their motto in those early days seemed to be, "We tell it, they believe it, Christ does it." They seemed to say by their lives and their message: "We tell it"—that is our business; "They believe it"—that is their responsibility; "Christ² does it"—that is His part in the conversion of the individual.

Just as there was a real challenge for the early church to make the Gospel real to the society in which it existed, there is a need for the church of today to present the saving message of Jesus in such a way that it will be relevant to the community it seeks to minister to.

This is particularly true in the context of Australian society, since it presents unique characteristics that will affect the effectiveness of the mission of the church. There is a need to

¹Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), p. 13.

²J. M. Bader, Evangelism in a Changing America (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Press, 1957), p. 17.

understand clearly the particular nature of the Australian personality so that the most appropriate ways of reaching them with the Gospel can be devised.

Hans Mol summarises this personality well.

. . . The majority of Australians seem to call on the consolations of belief and the churches primarily at major points of change in their lives, such as birth, death and marriage. But since Australia is affluent, the social security system encompassing and life's satisfactions plentiful, a pragmatic form of hedonism is usually sufficient. That being the case, relativisations and the perspectives of Christianity on events and experiences are obscured by disuse. They will be dusted off once in a while, but the average non-church going Australian, who believes in God hopes secretly that there will be little necessity for getting Him out of the closet.

David Millikan adds to this understanding of the Australian personality. He says:

Our culture does not have the mechanisms which allow us to treat religion as an acceptable topic of social discourse. The reason, no doubt, has to do with an aspect of the Australian character which sees religion as a private and an understated matter. At the best of times Australians are not noted for the freedom with which they talk about themselves and their individual beliefs.²

Millikan goes on to point out that Australia sees itself as an egalitarian society and that although there is some uncertainty about the Australian personality, "the characteristic on which there is most agreement is that of mateship."³ For some, this idea of mateship has almost become a substitute for religion.

In spite of these national characteristics, there is a great opportunity for the church to successfully carry out its God-given

¹Hans Mol, The Faith of Australians (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), pp. 220-21.

²David Millikan, The Sunburnt Soul (Homebush West, New South Wales: Lancer Books, 1981), p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 18.

commission. In the words of Brian Hill, Professor of Education at Murdoch University, Western Australia:

It is slowly dawning on Australian Christians that all the substitute gospels have failed. More and more, our neighbours are sensing a spiritual vacuum and are sampling odd and way-out movements in an effort to put some meaning back into their lives.

Most of them don't think of trying Christianity because they look at our conventional church life and judge it to be one of the gods that failed.

What are needed at this hour are committed Christians who have a story to tell to the nations.

How then does the church, particularly the Seventh-day Adventist Church, confront this secular Australian society? This is a question that demands close attention and study. This project seeks to analyze the attitudes of the Seventh-day Adventist Church towards its commission to reach the world, and to determine whether those attitudes can be developed and strengthened so that a more effective witness can be maintained.

The content of this project is organized as follows. In chapter II, the concepts of mission held by the early church are examined. It is seen that once their concept of mission was expanded to include the Gentiles there was considerable growth. The Antioch church and the ministry of Barnabas are used as illustrations of this expanded vision.

Chapter III deals with the concepts of mission and the understanding of the role of the church that is held by both the leadership and the average member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North New South Wales Conference. These findings are used as the norm for comparison purposes.

¹Brian Hill, "Pilgrims in Lotus Land," On Being, May, 1985, p. 36.

Chapter IV considers the basic ministry design for the project, which is to determine if the attitudes and understanding of church members can be increased in both the short and the long term.

Chapter V outlines the ministry and the results that were achieved, while chapter VI sets out conclusions and recommendations for future ministry. It is the hope of this writer that the outreach of the church will be more effective as a result of this study.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTS OF MISSION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Introduction

Christ left His Church with a command and a promise. The command is expressed in Matt 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."¹ In accepting this command the early disciples were left with the daunting task of reaching the world with the gospel. They may well have become discouraged had it not been for the promise that the risen Jesus gave to them. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). G. W. Kirby points out:

If the first duty of God's redeemed people is to worship, the second is to witness (1 Pet 2:9). No church can evade its God-given responsibility as Christ's chosen instrument to bear His name and proclaim His message in the locality where it is found.²

¹All scripture quotations are from Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

²G. W. Kirby, "Church, The," The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975), 1:855-56 (hereafter cited as Zondervan Encyclopedia).

Immediately after Pentecost, when the promised power was received, there was probably little to distinguish the infant church from the rest of the Jewish people. It is true that it had a new joy and love, but the Christians still met in the temple (Acts 2:46), and observed many of the Jewish customs and regulations. The outworking of the commission to preach to the nations did not come easily. Initially, the early apostles only felt a burden for the Jewish people. In fact the "introduction of Gentiles into the church came as a bombshell."¹ It required a considerable struggle for them to realise that the message of Jesus was world-wide in its scope and was to be carried beyond the borders of Judaism. Their initial focus centered on carrying the story of Jesus to their own people. World mission was not the original intention of the disciples of Christ. It was only as they reached beyond their kinsmen that they became obedient to the command of Christ, and became really effective in their witness to the nations of the world.

The Jerusalem Church and its Mission

The story of mission starts in Jerusalem for it was in Jerusalem that the early Christian church first accepted seriously the challenge of presenting the message of the gospel to the world. Stephen Wilson rightly points out:

Jerusalem plays an important role. . . . It is one of the central bearings on which the double work swivels: it is the goal towards which Jesus' ministry moves and the base from which the Church's mission expands.²

¹David Watson, I Believe in the Church (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), p. 78.

²Stephen G. Wilson, The Gentiles and The Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 95.

Martin Hengel presents three reasons for the unique significance of Jerusalem and why it did become a base for the operation of outreach activities.

"1. Jerusalem was the place of the last supper, the passion and resurrection of Jesus, i.e. the place where he accomplished his saving work.

"2. According to widespread belief Jerusalem was the sacred centre of the world and the place where the Messiah would appear.
. . .

"3. The disciples returned to Jerusalem, there to preach the risen Messiah to all Israel. Jerusalem was not only the 'gateway' to eschatological salvation but at the same time the centre of all missionary efforts in connection with Judaism."¹

The missionary zeal of this young Christian community is unmistakable (Acts 2:46-47). They were spurred on by the command of the risen Lord, the power of the promised Holy Spirit, and the conviction that it was their sacred duty to proclaim to apostate Israel its last chance of repentance before the coming of the Son of Man. Their prayer was "and now, Lord, . . . grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30).

There can be no doubt that their ministry was effective, for the story in the early chapters of Acts indicates an explosion of growth. From the initial one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room (Acts 1:15), it is not long before we see three thousand on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41), then additions are made daily (Acts 2:47). A short time later, five thousand men (not to mention women and children) listen to Peter, accept Jesus as the Messiah, and

¹Martin Hengel, Between Jesus and Paul, (London: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 59.

join the disciples (Acts 4:4). Some idea of the impact of this early preaching can be seen in the way the temple authorities react, charging them not to speak any more in the name of Jesus "in order that it may spread no more among the people" (Acts 4:17). The charge of the high priest was: "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. . . ." (Acts 5:28). The disciples however were not to be stopped and soon there followed imprisonment, beatings, and persecution. The growth continued despite the opposition, as the later chapters of Acts testify.

It does seem odd however, that in view of the direct command of Jesus to preach the gospel to the nations¹ that the Gentile mission was so slow to get off the ground and was only reluctantly accepted by the early leaders. There was no systematic plan to present the gospel to the world in the early years of the Church. It appears that the Gentile mission was launched gradually on the initiative of private individuals without any official authorization. Any mission to the Gentiles was "regarded with anxiety at Jerusalem, where conservative Christians thought the Gentile converts ought to be treated like Jewish proselytes."² Their limited concept of mission led to a limited outreach.

¹Gr. ethnos. Karl Ludwig Schmidt points out that in Matt 28:19, ethnos is qualified by panta (all), and is here used in the sense of all nations, including Jews. It is also pointed out that there are one hundred passages where ethnos is used as a technical term for Gentiles as distinct from Jews and Christians. Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "ethnos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964-76), 2:369-70.

²Hans von Campenhausen and Henry Chadwick, Jerusalem and Rome, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 24.

Joachim Jeremias indicates that this reluctance may have stemmed from the words and example of Jesus himself when He directed His disciples to "Go nowhere among the Gentiles . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt 10:5-6).¹ He does however point out:

It is wrong to say that the primitive community at Jerusalem was fundamentally opposed to the admission of Gentiles. . . . Nevertheless it remains a striking fact that we have no support for the view that the early church embarked² upon the Gentile mission immediately after the resurrection.

It could well be that Jesus was endeavouring to get the disciples to see that there was a work that needed to be done among themselves before any real ministry to the Gentiles would be effective. There needed to be a strong home base from which the mission to the world could be launched. T. W. Manson expresses this well:

The real constructive work of the ministry had to be done elsewhere in building up within Israel a body of men and women who were set free from chauvinistic nationalism, from the ambition to impose Israelite ideals of faith and conduct on the rest of the world by force of arms; . . . I think that Jesus saw the immediate task as that of creating such a community within Israel, in the faith that it would transform the life of his own³ people, and that a transformed Israel would transform the world.

This was not the only reason for the reluctance to become involved with the Gentiles. The strong nationalistic feeling that was a part of the Jewish culture, led them to be isolated and introverted. William Barclay expresses this well. He says:

¹ Joachim Jeremias, Jesus' Promise to the Nations (London: SCM Press, 1958), pp. 19-25.

² Ibid. p. 25.

³ T. W. Manson, Only to the House of Israel? Jesus and the Non-Jews, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 23-24.

But the fact remained that Christianity was cradled in Judaism; and, humanly speaking, no message that was meant for all the world could ever have had a more unfortunate cradle. The Jews were involved in a double hatred--the world hated them and they hated the world.¹

However, in contrast to this position, Jeremias points out that the fact that Christianity was nurtured in Judaism was an advantage. He emphasises that "Jesus came upon the scene in the midst of what was par excellence the missionary age of Jewish history."² He goes on to state four reasons why this was so.

1. Missionary zeal was intense

Israel's dispersion among the Gentiles was no longer regarded as God's judgment, but came to be seen as a divinely-appointed opportunity to glorify him among the Gentiles.

2. In the Hellenistic world Jewish missionary zeal encountered a wave of deep longing

The world of antiquity was decadent and disillusioned, and saw Judaism as superior. It offered a form of divine worship towering far above all contemporary cults and systems of religion.

3. The Jewish mission made every possible effort to facilitate the passage of Gentiles from heathenism

A circle of "godfearers" was created, who were loosely connected with the synagogue, and of whom little of the ceremonial aspects of Judaism was required.

¹William Barclay, The Mind of St Paul (London: Collins, 1958), p. 9.

²Jeremias, p. 12.

4. The success of the mission was extraordinary

The success of later Christian mission depended to a large extent on the fact that it was able to build on the ground prepared by Jewish mission.¹

Yet another factor contributing to this general reluctance to become involved in Gentile mission is suggested by R. K. Harrison.

The threat of contamination by paganism in the Gr. period led the Jews to adopt a rigorous, exclusive attitude toward the non-Jewish peoples, so that by the² time of Christ the term "Gentile" had become one of scorn.

Since the earliest Christians were Jews, they could not have helped being influenced by these last two factors. Whatever the reason, the mission to the Gentiles did not come as a fully developed philosophy that was acted upon by the disciples immediately. How the program was to be carried out was not their first concern. They had their hands full, preaching the good news of Jesus and the resurrection to the Jews in the capital. Their vision however did gradually expand as they became involved in fulfilling the command of Jesus to make disciples of all nations.

Wilson gives an excellent summary statement of the situation in these very formative early years which is worthy of note.

Thus it appears that the earliest missionary work among Gentiles was haphazard; it was not organised or authorised and it was effected by unknown disciples. . . . these early Gentile missionaries seem to have gone about their task unaware of the principle behind the Cornelius narrative. There was no decisive theological step; rather, the Gentiles were accepted freely into the Church. They were not asked to become Jews before they could become Christians; it was taken for granted that this was not

¹These four points are found in Jeremias, pp. 12-16.

²R. K. Harrison, "Gentiles," Zondervan Encyclopedia, 2:696-67.

necessary. If the Gentiles accepted the gospel they were accepted into the Church, since there was no good reason for excluding them. Moreover, it is significant that the first steps out to the Gentiles came not as a result of conscious intention to fulfil¹ a command of Jesus, but as a result of persecution by the Jews.

There was in Jerusalem at this time a large number of Jews from the Diaspora. "Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). These Jews have traditionally been called "Hellenists", since they were able to speak the Greek language. Objection has been raised to this interpretation since Paul, who demonstrably spoke Greek, called himself a "Hebrew" (2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5). C. F. D. Moule suggests that a solution to this problem is that the "Hellenists" were Jews who spoke Greek alone, whereas the "Hebrews," while able to speak Greek, knew a Semitic language also.² These Hellenists were probably mainly distinguished from the Hebrews by the fact that they read the Scriptures and worshipped in their synagogues only in Greek. Jerusalem must have contained many of these synagogues. One of these, called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, is mentioned in Acts 6:9.

It appears that Christianity had a strong appeal to these Hellenists and they came into the church in large numbers. The first dispute in the church and the subsequent appointment of the "seven" involved the relationship between the Hellenists and the Hebrews (Acts 6:1-6).

¹Wilson, p. 152.

²C. F. D. Moule, "Once More, Who Were the Hellenists?," Expository Times 70 (1958-59):100-102. All emphasis in quotations is that of the original author, except where otherwise noted.

The aggressive preaching of the Hellenists, particularly that of Stephen, eventually led to persecution and the scattering of the church.¹ This persecution and scattering of the church as a whole, and more particularly the scattering of the Hellenists, became the vehicle which opened the door to an organized and serious attempt to mount a Gentile mission (Acts 8:1, 4). There were isolated attempts to reach the Gentiles before this time,² but it was not until this forced scattering took place that it realised that the gospel was intended to pass beyond the borders of Palestine. It was the arrival of the Hellenists in Antioch that proved the real turning point in their approach to world mission.

The Church at Antioch

Persecution in Palestine scattered the Christians to many parts of the empire. Acts 11:19 lists several destinations, among them Antioch. Antioch was the capital of the province of Syria. It "ranked with Rome and Alexandria as one of the three greatest cities of the Greco-Roman world."³

It was the centre for diplomatic relations with the vassal states of the East, and was, in fact, a meeting point for many nationalities, a place where barriers between Jew and Gentile were very slight, so numerous were the converts to Judaism in the

¹Acts 8:1, 11:19. Martin Hengel, Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity (London: SCM Press, 1979), pp. 71-80, has an excellent discussion of the Hellenists and their expulsion from Jerusalem. See also Wilson, ch. 5.

²The ministry of Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:5), and to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 9:26-39), as well as Peter's experience with Cornelius (Acts 10), were such isolated instances. They did, however, lay the foundation for an expanded mission to the Gentiles.

³G. Downey, "Antioch (Syrian)" The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:145 (hereafter cited as IDB).

city, and so high the status of the Jews there—they enjoyed full citizen rights. . . . Antioch saw the coming and going of all sorts of people from every quarter of the globe.¹

Josephus indicates that there was a large and influential Jewish community in Antioch.² It is to this community of Jews that the fugitives from Jerusalem, "men of Cyprus and Cyrene," began to preach (Acts 11:19, 20). With this cosmopolitan mix in the city and the close proximity of Jew and Gentile, it is not long before their mission was extended to the Greek community.³ This was a radical departure from the usual policy of mission up until that time, and indicates the importance of the city of Antioch in the development of the early church. It was here that "the gospel first began to be preached to people who had no connection with Judaism at all."⁴

Martin Hengel emphasises the importance of the city of Antioch in the developing consciousness of mission in the early church. He says,

Antioch was the first great city of the ancient world in which Christianity gained a footing. There are hardly any parallels in the sociology of religion to the astonishing fact that in the briefest period of time the Galilean Jesus movement, which to begin with was a purely rural phenomenon, became a predominantly urban community in Jerusalem and then took on a decidedly

¹Green, pp. 135–36.

²Josephus, Wars, 7.3.3.

³Most commentators point out that in Acts 11:20 some early manuscripts read "Hellenists" rather than "Greeks". While this is true, it is obvious that this word is being used in contrast to "Jews" in verse 19, and would hence require the translation "Greeks" (i.e. Gentiles). See for example Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. 365, n. 5.

⁴Green, pp. 134–35.

cosmopolitan flavour in Antioch. . . . Now a mission to non-Jews became an independant task, and no longer happened sporadically in particular isolated cases.

That this new approach to mission was successful cannot be doubted, for in relating this experience, Luke mentions three times the fact that a large number were added to the church (Acts 11:21, 24, 26). In fact it got so large that Barnabas had to find help, and went in search of Saul of Tarsus to assist him in his ministry.

It was here in Antioch that Christianity first gained a separate identity and stood out from Judaism as a separate sect. The fact that the disciples were first called "Christians" here (Acts 11:26), indicates the impact that the new mission to the Gentiles had achieved. It is significant that they did not adopt the name of their own volition. The record says that they were called Christians. Luke does not tell us by whom, but the strong inference is that this name was ascribed to them by those outside the Christian faith.²

This development was not met with overwhelming support by the Jerusalem church. They greeted the news with interest, but some suspicion.³ The report of the conversion of the Gentiles in Antioch and their fellowship with Jewish converts came in just after Peter's report of his vision of the unclean animals and his ministry to Cornelius and the subsequent conversion of his household

¹Hengel, Acts, pp. 99-100.

²Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 15-16.

³Floyd V. Filson, A New Testament History (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 206.

(Acts 11:1-18). This created a new situation which the church had not met before. In order to understand what was happening, they sent a one-man delegation in the person of Barnabas to investigate and to see whether this new development was legitimate. Barnabas observed the life of this new church at Antioch and became convinced that it was a genuine development of Christian mission. In fact it proved to be the turning point that opened the way for the command of Christ to preach to every nation to be fulfilled.

The Ministry of Barnabas

The choice of Barnabas to oversee the church in Antioch was an excellent one. No other person would have received better acceptance. He had credibility with both parties. He was a Hellenist himself, having come from Cyprus (Acts 4:36). In addition to that he was a Levite and was accepted as an apostle by the Jerusalem church.¹ By disposition, he was also eminently suited for the job. He is described as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Luke indicates that "Barnabas" was a name ascribed to him by the apostles (Acts 4:36), and was understood by Luke to mean "the son of encouragement." Since names give an indication of the character, Barnabas was evidently a very supportive individual who was well qualified to fulfil the role given him by the apostles in Jerusalem.²

¹Walter Schmithals, The Office of Apostle in the Early Church, (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 63-64.

²Some commentators point out that Barnabas can mean "Son of Prophecy." See for example, John M'Clintock and James Strong, "Barnabas," Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastic Literature (n.p.: Harper & Brothers, 1867-95; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1968-70), 1:668; R. P. C. Hanson,

Barnabas was one of the most important yet little-recognised figures of the early church. His very significant ministry is largely overshadowed by that of Paul and the other apostles. Barnabas was held in high esteem by the other apostles and it seems evident that in his relationship with Paul, at least in the early days of ministry in Antioch, and even later on their first missionary tour, that Barnabas was the leader.¹ He along with Paul was considered an apostle to the Gentiles.²

When Barnabas came to the newly formed Antioch church as the emissary from the brethren at Jerusalem, he approached his role in a significant way. It appears that there were some in Jerusalem who were not happy with the new activity in Antioch (as later developments mentioned in Gal 2:11-14 demonstrate). These could well have sought to influence his approach to the problem. Barnabas however, was not going to be a party to any pressure groups, but decided to make his own judgment on the situation.

Once he arrived, he did three things. These are mentioned in Acts 11:23.

The Acts in the Revised Standard Version (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 81; F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts, The New International Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956), p. 109, n. 43. M. J. Shroyer feels "that he probably acquired the name Barnabas because of his ability as a preacher." M. J. Shroyer, "Barnabas," IDB, 1:356. However, this is not the generally accepted meaning.

¹Evidence for this position is found in the fact that Barnabas was the sponsor of Saul to the Jerusalem apostles (Acts 9:26-30), that he went in search of Saul to Tarsus (Acts 11:25), and that his name is mentioned first in the famine visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30, 12:25) and at their ordination (Acts 13:2-3). See also, J. H. Davies, The Early Christian Church, History of Religion Series, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 283, n. 24.

²See appendix 3 for background information on Barnabas.

1. When he came he saw the grace of God

In other words he did not necessarily accept the report that came to Jerusalem, but assessed the situation for himself. He gained a first-hand knowledge of what was happening in Antioch, and made his own judgment of the legitimacy of the new developments taking place.

2. He was glad

Having assessed the situation independently, he became convinced that the Spirit of God was indeed working at Antioch, and that the new mission to the Gentiles was legitimate. This caused him great joy as he began to see the possibilities that this approach presented. He realised, perhaps for the first time, that the gospel message was indeed intended for all people.

3. He exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord

Having accepted the legitimacy of the new Gentile mission, he then joined them in ministry, supported their efforts, and encouraged them to be true to the commission that the Lord had given to the church.

This meant that the mission to the Gentiles was now carried forward in a more organised way. The results of accepting this new philosophy were very rewarding for both Barnabas and the Antioch church. Three times the book of Acts mentions that there were large numbers who were added to the Lord as a result of this particular outreach ministry. Acts 11:21 indicates that "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord." Acts 11:24 says, "and a large company was added to the Lord."

Finally Acts 11:26 tells us that "for a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians." Such was the impact of this new form of mission that the believers became recognised as a separate and distinct group in this pagan city.

Barnabas continued his ministry there for at least a year in the company of Saul whom he had brought from Tarsus. Their combined efforts were so successful that the Antioch church began to look beyond their own ministry area, and at the direction of the Holy Spirit sent off Barnabas and Saul as the first Christian missionaries (Acts 13:1-3).

Characteristics of the Antioch Church

It is rather instructive to notice the characteristics of the Antioch church that made it one of the early centres of Christianity, and a prominent base in the mission outreach of the early church. If these characteristics can be discovered they could be applied to the church of today and would help to increase its effectiveness.

1. There was a focus on worship

Acts 13:2 indicates that there were times in the life of the Antioch church that were given to special periods of prayer, fasting, and worship. It was on one of these occasions that the Holy Spirit communicated directly with the church regarding the ordination of Barnabas and Saul.

2. There was a focus on outreach

This church regarded evangelism as an essential part of their

program (Acts 11:20-26). They were so effective in penetrating the community that a new name was coined to describe them—"Christians."

3. There was a focus on nurture

The leaders in the Antioch church were concerned to build the spiritual strength of the members. There was an emphasis on teaching and encouragement (Acts 11:23; 15:35).

4. There was a focus on people

They were concerned not only with the spiritual needs of fellow believers, but with the physical and social needs as well. When they heard of the plight of their fellow Christians in Judea who were suffering as a result of the famine, they determined to send relief (Acts 11:27-30).

5. There was a focus on growth

In Antioch there was a concern for the expansion of the kingdom of God. They first preached here to the "Greeks" (Acts 11:20), Barnabas sought additional help in the person of Saul to aid with their ministry (Acts 11:25), and they were willing and able to send out missionaries to the far corners of the earth (Acts 13:1-3).

6. There was a focus on spiritual gifts

There were those in this church who had spiritual gifts, and these gifts were recognised by the church as a whole (Acts 11: 27-28; 13:1-3). Each had their appointed place to fill.

7. There was a focus on lay leadership

It is interesting to notice that Barnabas and Saul did not

have hands laid on them in ordination until after they had laboured in Antioch for a period exceeding a year. Their most effective ministry was done as laymen in the church. When they were eventually ordained, they left immediately on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).

8. They were prepared to sacrifice

This is evidenced by the fact that they were willing to send relief to their brethren in Judea, "every one according to his ability" (Acts 11:29). It is also quite possible that the Antioch church supported Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey. There is no evidence to give support to the idea that during this first journey they worked at their trade to support themselves as they did on subsequent journeys.

9. They saw the possibility of change

The strongest evidence for this fact is that it was in Antioch where the change to large scale mission to the Gentiles really took place (Acts 11:20). They were doing something that had never really been attempted before. This whole issue caused considerable controversy in the early church. It was such an outstanding change that it became the main agenda item for the first general church council mentioned in Acts 15.

10. They presented reports of their activities to the church

When Barnabas and Paul returned from their journey, they gathered the whole church together and reported how the Lord had blessed their work and further opened the door of faith to the

Gentiles (Acts 14:27-28). This must have proved a real encouragement to those who had remained behind in Antioch.

With these characteristics, which embody many of the principles that have been recognised as factors that produce growth in a local congregation¹ it is no wonder that the Antioch church made a significant impact on the community in which it existed.

Conclusion

It was the Antioch church and the ministry of Barnabas there that provided the turning point in the transition from an exclusively Jewish mission, to an effective outreach to the Gentiles. This did not come without a considerable struggle, both at the time and later. In fact, the issue of the relationship between Jew and Gentile was to haunt the church for many years. It took a man of the stature of Barnabas, "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24), and a situation like that encountered in the cosmopolitan Antioch, to assure that Gentile mission was taken from sporadic, isolated instances to a recognised policy of the church. It was only when this transition had been made that the early church was in a position to fulfil the command of Jesus to take the Gospel to the whole world.

The Antioch church and the ministry of Barnabas provide an example of what can happen when the concept of mission is enlarged. What was true in the early days of the church is just as valid today. With an expanded concept of the mission of the church and a sound knowledge of the principles that produce growth, the experience of the church in Antioch could be repeated.

¹See chap. III for an outline of these principles.

CHAPTER III

BASIC ATTITUDES TO THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

Introduction

The command and the promise given by Christ to the early church (Matt 28:18-20) have as strong an application today as they did in early times. It is God's will that the church should grow, and that His lost children should be found.¹ If this is the case, and scripture would certainly support it, God's church in the end-time has the challenge of presenting to the world the message of Jesus and His soon coming with as much vigour, earnestness, and enthusiasm as did the early church. In fact, the proclamation of the gospel to all the world is a pre-condition to the coming of Jesus. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church accepts this challenge as the motivating force behind all its outreach activities. It has accepted this commission of Christ as part of its statement of fundamental beliefs and has incorporated it, particularly in Article

¹This is one of the key factors of the understanding of the modern Church Growth Movement which provides a basis for all other "Church Growth" theory and practise. See Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 24-26.

Eleven, which deals with "The Church," Article Twelve, "The Remnant and its Mission," and Article Sixteen, "Spiritual Gifts and Ministries."¹

Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr. express the Adventist conviction well.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that their organization is not just another church with a different day of worship than the majority of the Christian churches, but a special movement God raised up during the last years of earth's history to prepare people everywhere for the coming of Jesus and citizenship in the new and perfect world.

Our unique mission calls for the proclamation of the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 5:9) in the special setting of the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14. But it requires more than mere proclamation. We are to lead people out of the world and the churches that have fallen into error (Rev. 18:1-4), and into God's remnant church (chap. 12:17). Then we are to baptize and make them into disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). If the church is faithful to its commission, both individual congregations and the church at large will increase in size as people hear and heed the summons to join this heaven-bound movement. They will also grow in spiritual dimensions as members more and more come to reflect the likeness of Jesus (1 John 3:2; Eph. 4:15, 16).²

In a recent article on Adventist church growth Donald McGavran, who is widely regarded as the founder of the modern Church Growth Movement, is asked the question, "Why is it that the Church Growth Movement has stirred such an interest among Adventists?" His answer is interesting and instructive, particularly as it comes from someone who is not an Adventist.

I suppose it's because the Adventist Church is an obedient church. And as the members read the scriptures they say to themselves, "We cannot be obedient Christians without being interested in church growth. We cannot be obedient Christians

¹The statement of "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists" is printed in the Seventh-day Adventist Year Book: 1984 (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald, 1984) pp. 9-11.

²Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., Adventures in Church Growth (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald, 1983), p. 17.

without finding the lost. We cannot be obedient Christians without leading them to accept Jesus Christ, be baptised, and continue as members of the body." That's probably the reason.¹

Hence we see that obedience to the command of the risen Christ becomes the motivating factor that focuses all ministry. The church exists not only for its own sake but for the sake of the community in which it exists. Melvin L. Hodges rightly points out that:

According to the Bible the purpose of the Church in the world is twofold. It is to be at one and the same time the "city set upon a hill"—the gathering together of the faithful, and the "salt of the earth"—the scattering of the faithful throughout the world. It is a "tower" of strength and refuge and a disciplined army going out to battle with a numerically superior enemy (Luke 14:28-31).²

The church is the agent by which God presents His saving message to those who are in ignorance of His love and His plan for the salvation of the world. This fact needs to be understood by the membership at large if meaningful and effective ministry is to take place. If it fails to realize that it is a group of people who are under direct orders to "disciple" the world for Jesus, the church will become merely a religious club, and make no real impact on the world.

Factors that Affect Mission

Of recent years the factors that affect the mission and the growth of the church have been well documented. There has been a great amount of printed material that has examined virtually every

¹Donald A. McGavran, "McGavran on Adventist Church Growth," Ministry, May 1985, p. 19.

²Melvin L. Hodges, "Developing Basic Units of Indigenous Churches," in Church Growth and Christian Mission, ed. Donald A. McGavran (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1979), p. 117.

aspect of the life of the church that may either help or hinder its growth. In fact one could readily say that "Church Growth" has become a science, with established principles and procedures.¹

It is not the purpose of the present author to give a detailed outline of the Church Growth Movement and its principles, as these are well documented and readily available.² We should however note several of the basic principles.

A Church Growth principle is a universal truth which when properly interpreted and applied, contributes significantly to the growth of churches and denominations. It is a truth of God which leads his church to spread his Good News, plant church after church, and increase his body.³

A convenient summary of some of the major principles of "Church Growth" is given by Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn.⁴ They stress ten factors that they feel are important.

¹Peter Wagner gives a brief outline of the history of the Movement and points out that "Church Growth" is a young science with tremendous possibilities for the future. C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1976), pp. 10-21. Delos Miles presents a much fuller treatment in which he outlines the history, terminology, literature, etc. of the Church Growth Movement. Delos Miles, Church Growth--A Mighty River (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1981).

²A list of some standard works would include, McGavran, Understanding Church Growth; Donald A. McGavran and Winfred C. Arn, How to Grow a Church (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1973); Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, Ten Steps for Church Growth (New York: Harper & Row, 1977); C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow; Dudley and Cummings, Adventures in Church Growth; Eddie Gibbs, I Believe in Church Growth (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), George E. Knowles, How to Help Your Church Grow, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1981), Ray C. Stedman, Body Life (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1972).

³McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, p. 15.

⁴Ibid., chaps. 1-10.

1. Discover church growth principles¹

This implies a recognition that it is possible for churches to grow, provided they use appropriate methods. It is also a recognition that it is in the will of God and part of His plan that the church should grow and that His lost children should be found. It is adopting a philosophy that any church not concerned with growth and discipleship is really disobeying God and is doing what is not pleasing to Him. This principle seeks to discover those principles, methods, and procedures that are successful and to use them effectively in the extension of God's kingdom.

2. Respect Biblical principles²

Churches that grow accept the Bible as the final authority. They will be faithful to the plain meaning of the word of God, and have a sound theological base for all teaching and practise. McGavran states, "The open Bible should be made available as an essential part of redemption. . . . this involves teaching Christians to read the Bible as a religious duty, . . ."³ He goes on to say, "The Bible-obeying, Spirit-filled life cannot be stressed too much."⁴ Growing churches have a high view of the Church as the Body of Christ and a necessary part of God's plan for the salvation and discipling of all nations.

¹ Ibid., pp. 15-22.

² Ibid., pp. 24-33.

³ McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, p. 302.

⁴ Ibid., p. 303.

3. Yield to God's unswerving purpose¹

Mission is not an optional part of the program, it is commanded of God.² Thus it must absorb as much of the church's time, energy, and resources as possible. It is God's intention to open the way of salvation for all people so that they can be reconciled to God, freed from the power of sin and death, and become a responsible part of the Church. There must be a focus on harvest theology rather than mere search theology. Search theology teaches that "the church is to pay no attention to the response; its duty is complete in proclamation."³ Harvest theology on the other hand, is concerned with the response. It says that there should be more than proclamation, there should be a persuading of people to become disciples of Jesus Christ. "God commands an ardent searching for the lost in order to find them."⁴

4. Give priority to effective evangelism⁵

The church exists not for its own sake but to serve the world. This priority of evangelism means that the church will proclaim Jesus as God and Saviour, and persuade people to become His disciples and responsible members of His church. Evangelism is more

¹McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 35-49.

²See Matt 28:19-20; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; Rom 1:1-6; 16:25-27; Gal 1:16.

³McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, p. 30.

⁴Ibid., p. 38.

⁵McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 51-60.

than "decisions for Christ."¹ It is not completed until those who have made the decisions are incorporated into the church, and have themselves become active in discipling others. The church is always one generation from extinction and must be constantly reproducing itself.

5. Rightly discern the body²

Abundant and accurate information about the church itself must be discovered. The church always grows in a specific congregation that has its own particular character, history, membership, problems, and personality. It is our business as discerning Christians to know everything possible about the body. It must be described accurately and scientifically. Its growth history, present condition, and potential must be clearly understood. If this is not clearly understood there will be no effective mission, and therefore no growth.

6. Rightly discern the community³

The church does not exist in a vacuum, but in a particular community. Each community is unique and the special characteristics that make it so need to be clearly understood. "Not only is church growth vitally affected by the attitudes of society to the church; the rate of growth is also often closely dependant upon the structure

¹See Wagner, pp. 135-46; McGavran and Arn, How to Grow A Church, pp. 80-83.

²McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 61-72.

³Ibid., pp. 74-79.

of the society in question."¹ The church needs to understand the ministry area that it seeks to reach so that plans and programs can be developed that will be effective and elicit a response when presented to the particular people in any given area. Who are these people? What are their interests? What is their heritage and culture? Where do they work? What are their needs? How can the church reach them with the saving message of Jesus Christ?

7. Find new groups and ways to disciple²

The church has often been content with the ways of the past. Wilfred Hillock makes the comment that

God, however, does not guarantee that just because we love Him we will automatically choose the best methods. Consequently, to meet church goals, then, its leaders need to study how best to get results through people. We need to understand the principles involved and put them into practice. It is our duty³ to bring to the church all the expertise possible and available.

There is a need to find new ways to reach the community for Jesus, ways that will meet the needs of a changing world. There is a need of developing bold new plans and experimenting so that groups who have not previously been receptive may hear the message of Jesus

¹Eugene A. Nida, "Culture and Church Growth," in Church Growth and Christian Mission, p. 94. This whole article is worthy of study. Nida also points out that the "attitudes of the church itself towards the structure of society are often more important in Church Growth than is the actual structure itself." Ibid., p. 96.

²McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 80-91.

³Wilfred M. Hillock, Involved (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1977), p. 12.

in a way that they can understand.¹ A changing world demands the constant evaluation of existing methods and the devising of new methods if it is to maintain its commitment to the command of Jesus.

8. Reproduce through planned parenthood²

Churches grow by extension, the deliberate planting of new churches in areas where they do not now exist. This needs careful planning and nurture, both of the parent church and the new congregation, but is an effective method of building up the body of Christ.

9. Structure for growth³

If it is to fulfil its divine mission a church needs to deliberately plan for growth. All activities should be directed to this end. The conviction of God's will for His church should permeate the congregation. Needs and opportunities should be identified, goals set, lay people involved and trained, and effective strategies developed to reach the goals set.⁴ The resources of the church, time, talent, and treasure should be invested in the mission of the church.

¹Peter Wagner reminds us that "the sixth sign of a healthy, growing church is that it is using an evangelistic method that works." Wagner, p. 135.

²McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 92-100.

³Ibid., 102-115.

⁴An excellent discussion on the process of defining church goals and objectives is to be found in Hillock, pp.49-60. The planning process is outlined in Marlene Wilson, How to Mobilize Church Volunteers (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), pp. 45-66.

10. Risk for growth¹

McGavran states: "Church growth seldom comes without bold plans for it."² He goes on to say: "The church does not stand in the sunset of Christian mission to the world. Rather, the missionary movement stands at mid-morning. The era of greatest advance lies ahead."³ There is need of a great deal of faith if the future is to be faced with confidence. Faith is venturing out to do what God wants done, even if nobody believes that it can be done. The fulfillment of the mission of the church does not just happen. There must be this element of faith and a reliance on God to see that the job can be done. If the step of faith is taken, all the resources of omnipotence will accompany it.

These then are some of the main principles of successful mission as identified by the Church Growth Movement.⁴ However, there is one other factor that should be mentioned as it has come to be recognised as very important. Dudley and Cummings have pointed out that those who join the church, and they are referring to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, most often have friends or relatives

¹ McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, pp. 117-125.

² McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, p. 437.

³ Ibid., pp. 456-57.

⁴ Peter Wagner identifies other principles of growth that are worthy of notice: (1) The pastor, (2) The people of the Church, (3) Church size, (4) Structure and functions, (5) Homogeneous unit, (6) Methods, (7) Priorities. Wagner, pp. 32-33 gives a convenient summary.

who are church members.¹ This fact is extremely important since it means that recent converts often have the greatest soul-winning potential, because they have a far larger network of uncommitted friends and relatives than those who have been members of the church for a longer period of time. This fact should be recognised in planning outreach activities, and assigning church responsibilities. It also means that there should be a fostering of relationships with people in the community, so that they can join the member's circle of friends. If this is done there will be a greater potential for effective witness as the church reaches out to its circle of influence.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Mission

One of the reasons for engaging in this study was to discover the attitudes of Seventh-day Adventist church members to the church and its mission to the community. Having discovered the basic attitudes one could then evaluate the potential that there is to fulfill the command of Jesus to to disciple the nations.

To achieve this, a survey consisting of twenty-five questions was developed. Church members were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a stated proposition, and to what extent they either agreed or disagreed with it. These questions sought to explore responses to the various principles mentioned above.²

¹Dudley and Cummings, pp. 112-13, 134. McGavran also stresses the importance of this fact. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, pp. 395-411.

²See appendix 1 for a copy of the survey used.

This instrument was administered initially to two groups of people, one representing the leadership structure of the local church and the other, the average church member. The leadership group was the Lay Advisory Council of the North New South Wales Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Each church in the conference elects one member to serve on this council as its representative. Agenda items are sent by the conference to the church boards for consideration, and the delegates bring their church's decision to the council, and speak as the representative of their church. The delegates who are chosen are usually people who are leaders in their local churches and are members of the church board. Since this is the case, the response of this group would represent the attitudes of local church leadership. The number of people who responded to the survey from this group was thirty-five.

The survey was also given to the membership of four churches in the North New South Wales Conference during the church service time on a Sabbath morning. The churches involved were Charlestown, Erina, Hillview, and Woy Woy. Since this was during the regular worship service, responses were considered from all who attended, hence this response would represent the attitudes of the average members in these four churches, and by extension, members in other churches throughout the conference. There were 204 responses represented in this group.¹

In both cases only responses from adults were considered.

¹These groups of respondents will be referred to below as "Lay Advisory" for the leadership group, and "Church Member" for the average member group.

For the purposes of this study, an adult is defined as a person who is twenty years old and above.¹

General Observations

From an analysis of the responses it would appear that within the Adventist church there is a reasonable understanding of the work of the church and its mission to the world. There is, however, an ambivalence in some areas that should be noted. This ambivalence is particularly noted with regard to an understanding of the work of the Conference; the relationship of the church to society and the culture of the community; the relative ease of winning a friend or stranger to Jesus Christ; the relationship between the growth of the church in numbers and the concept of remnancy; the importance of doctrine to a person joining the church; and priorities in the work of the pastor.

Most felt that they were not particularly well-equipped to engage in ministry for the church and the community, yet they felt that more of the resources of the church should be directed towards evangelism. The majority felt that they were using their spiritual gift, at least to some extent, although there were a large number who were undecided.

One pleasing feature that showed up in these responses is that the large majority had an assurance of salvation. This is pleasing because it provides a strong base for mission. Michael Green makes this very perceptive comment.

One of the most striking features in evangelism in the early days was the people who engaged in it. . . . Men will not believe

¹Responses from children and youth were also collected. These responses would also make an interesting study but are outside the scope of the present investigation.

that Christians have good news to share until they find that bishops and bakers, university professors and housewives, bus drivers and street corner preachers are all keen to pass it on, however different their methods may be. And men will continue to believe that The Church is an introverted society composed of 'respectable' people and bent on its own preservation until they see in Church groupings and individual Christians the caring, the joy, the fellowship, the self-sacrifice and the openness which marked the early Church at its best.

This statement indicates that the joy of a relationship with the living Christ must be seen in the experience before there can be effective witness. There is a need of work to be done for those who do not have this assurance so that they can be led to real and meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

The question that proved the most difficult for the Church Member group (as indicated by the largest non-response), was the question regarding goals and plans for the future. This would not prove so difficult for the Lay Advisory since they belonged to the church board which is the decision-making body of the church. It could well mean that even if the church had set its goals these may not have been communicated to the average church member, hence they would be unaware of what was planned, and the goals would not be "owned" by them.

Comparisons Between Leadership and Average Member

In comparing the Lay Advisory and the Church Member groups it is interesting to note that these two groups paralleled each other fairly closely. The Lay Advisory group did, however, manifest a better understanding of the factors involved in effective mission than did the Church Member group in all but three areas. This is to

¹Green, pp. 332-33.

be expected as they would be more involved in the planning and implementing the outreach program of the church.

The questions where their responses were lower were in relation to friendship with non-Adventists. The Church Member group felt that it was more important to have many non-Adventist friends, and that friends were easier to win than strangers. The Lay Advisory felt much more comfortable winning strangers.

The Lay Advisory did not think that the church focused as much on worship as did the Church Member group, but most felt that it was a significant focus.

Results of the Church Survey¹

1. Church members should have many non-Adventist friends

This question is concerned with the known fact that the most receptive people are those in our own web of influence.² The majority felt that it was important to have many friends. In both the Lay Advisory and the Church Member group, 80 percent responded with five or above. This indicates that they realised that witness would be limited if friends were few.

¹The results of this survey are tabulated in detail in appendix 2.

²In 1979 George Hunter wrote: "A strategic . . . church will continually work to locate and reach out to kinsmen, and especially to the friends of active Christians and new converts. The church will also encourage its members to make new friends in the community continually. People are more receptive when they are approached by authentic Christians from their own social network." Quoted in McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, p. 396. Lyle Schaller also supports this position. The results of his survey show that 60 percent to 90 percent were brought to the church by some friend or relative. Ibid., p. 225.

2. The purpose of the Conference is to assign work for the local church to do

The response to this question indicates that there is widespread misunderstanding about the function of the conference. The average church member particularly found it difficult. The responses are almost equally spread through the possible seven categories. While 54 percent of the Lay Advisory scored one or two, indicating that they felt the work of the Conference was more than just the assignment of work, the number drops to 36 percent for the Church Member group.

3. The average church member should "live the life" and leave ministry to the pastor

There was 66 percent of the Lay Advisory and 52 percent of the Church Member group who disagreed strongly with this statement. Most felt that the average church member should do more than "live the life." The witness of lip is important as well as the witness of the life. Green observes that "Christianity is enshrined in the life; but it is proclaimed by the lips."¹

4. The attitudes and culture of society have no bearing on the Church and its mission

The Lay Advisory was sharply divided on this question. A quarter felt that society had no bearing on the mission of the church, while a half felt that it did. A 6 percent non-response is also to be noted. The Church Member group was also divided, but not to the same extent.

¹Green, p. 234.

5. I would be happy to tell anyone that I was a Seventh-day Adventist

This question seeks to determine pride of membership. Members will not share their faith if there is no sense of pride in belonging. The results indicate that most were proud to be a part of the church, with 94 percent of the Lay Advisory and 81 percent of the Church Member group scoring a six or seven. It is interesting that some, even of the leaders, were not proud of the church.

6. I understand clearly the particular mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church

It is obvious that most felt they had clearly in mind the particular mission of the Adventist church. There were 88 percent of the Lay Advisory and 81 percent of the Church Member group who strongly agreed with the statement.

7. Most people who leave the church do so because they no longer believe the doctrines

The Lay Advisory appeared to be clear that most people who leave the church do so for other than doctrinal reasons.¹ There were 71 percent who strongly disagreed with the statement scoring one or two. The Church Member group was not so sure. In this group 23 percent agreed with the statement; 13 percent did so strongly. This indicates that about a quarter felt that doctrine was the main reason why people leave the church.

¹Dudley and Cummings have found that apostasy shows a significant relationship to five variables: (1) leadership style, (2) new-member involvement, (3) atmosphere, (4) devotions, and (5) standards. Dudley and Cummings, pp. 136-137. They also point out that lack of fellowship was the strongest factor influencing personal decisions to leave, *ibid.*, p. 147.

8. Worship has a central focus in our local church

Most who responded to this question felt that worship was a central feature of their local church program. In both the Lay Advisory and the Church Member group there was agreement with this statement. In fact, in both cases 83 percent scored five, six, and seven. However the Church Member group agreed more strongly than the Lay Advisory with 52 percent scoring seven. This compares with 34 percent of the Lay Advisory with the same score.

9. If I were to die tonight I know that I would have a place in God's kingdom

This question seeks to ascertain the extent to which members have an assurance of salvation. As mentioned above it is pleasing to see that approximately three quarters of both the Lay Advisory and the Church Member group agreed with this statement, indicating that they do have an assurance of salvation. The real cause for concern is the 20 percent who either do not know or have no assurance that they are right with God. This could be a fruitful area for real ministry.

10. I believe that the church should be more active in soul winning work

There is no doubt that there is a belief that the church should be more active in soul winning work. All the Lay Advisory scored six and seven, while 92 percent of the Church Member group scored five, six, or seven. There were some however in the Church Member group who felt that the church should not be as active. There were 7 percent of the Church Member group who scored four or under.

11. The church exists to save the world

Almost three quarters of both groups agreed with this statement, indicating that the church should have a concern for the world. A number were undecided and some felt that the church exists for different purposes (14 percent of the Lay Advisory disagreed strongly with the statement).

12. I could clearly explain to someone the "Three Angels Messages"

The responses to this question indicate that most members felt that they could explain to another person the "Three Angels Messages," maybe not as well as they would have liked, but at least with some measure of clarity. This is an encouraging result as the "Three Angels Messages" provide the motivation for Adventist mission. More of the Church Member group than the Lay Advisory felt that they could not explain these messages with clarity, but the numbers who disagreed with the statement are not large (6 percent for the Lay Advisory, and 9 percent for the Church Member group).

13. It is easier to win a stranger for Jesus than a friend

The responses to this question were spread right across the the spectrum of possible responses. This indicates a great deal of confusion regarding the type of people who are most easily won for Jesus and who join the church. For the Lay Advisory, 20 percent said that strangers were easier to win while 11 percent said that friends were. The other responses were spread fairly evenly between the two strongest responses. The tendency for the Lay Advisory was to say that strangers were easier to win. On the other hand the Church Member group tended to feel the other way—that friends were easier

to win. As far as the actual responses were concerned 21 percent of the Church Member group agreed, while 24 percent disagreed with the statement. As with the Lay Advisory, the remaining responses were fairly evenly distributed. There is obviously a lot of education to be done in this area, since, as mentioned above, the majority of those who join the church have friends or relatives who are members. This confusion could also result in the planning of programs that are not really appropriate or effective since it is the leadership group which has an understanding that is contrary to known Church Growth principles. It may also explain why there is sometimes frustration between the average church member and the leaders when it comes to the planning of outreach programs.

14. Because we consider ourselves the Remnant Church we will always be small in numbers

This question also revealed a considerable confusion. While in both groups about a third would disagree strongly with the statement, in the case of the Lay Advisory over a half would tend to equate remnancy with smallness (i.e. a score of five, six, or seven). The Church Member group is not so strong in its feeling but there is still an obvious ambivalence. The Scriptures tell us that God wants every one everywhere to be reached with His saving message (Rev 14:6). There is nothing particularly spiritual with being small in numbers. God wants His church to grow both in quantity as well as quality.

15. I have discovered and am using my spiritual gift

Both groups had a significant number who were undecided on this question. In both cases 17 percent scored four. Over half of

both groups felt that they could agree at least in some measure with this statement, indicating a knowledge and use of their particular gift. More of the Church Member group (13 percent) than the Lay Advisory (9) felt that they had no knowledge of their gift. It is possible that they may not have known what is meant by spiritual gifts. A question that explored their definition of spiritual gifts would have strengthened the survey.

16. A major portion of our church budget should be spent in evangelism and outreach

It is fairly clear that the majority felt that the church should invest its resources in evangelism. The Lay Advisory felt more strongly about this than did the Church Member group. The degree of that investment varied, and there were some who were undecided (11 percent for the Lay Advisory, and 12 percent for the Church Member group).

17. I could tell someone how to become a Christian

The Lay Advisory felt that they could tell someone how to become a Christian, with 94 percent scoring five and over on this question. The Church Member group also had a strong positive response with 77 percent scoring 5 or over. There were more of the Church Member group undecided (11 percent compared with 3 percent) and 10 percent felt that they could not instruct someone how to become a Christian.

18. Our church has set its goals and has a definite plan for the future

Three quarters of the Lay Advisory responded positively to this question. While 11 percent did not know and 9 percent disagreed

strongly. The response of the Church Member group was similar, although not as strong. There was a 6 percent non-response from the Church Member group indicating that some had difficulty with this question. One would expect that those in leadership, being members of the church board, would be more aware of any planning. This fact is evident in the results.

19. Only those who are in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be saved

The responses show quite clear disagreement with this statement, indicating that they feel that there are God's people in other churches as well as the Seventh-day Adventist church. There were 91 percent of the Lay Advisory and 89 percent of the Church Member group who scored one, however there were a few who felt that salvation belongs to the Seventh-day Adventist church alone, 3 percent in both cases.

20. When a person joins the church, the most important thing is that he understands the doctrines

The responses to this question showed confusion. A third of the Church Member group disagreed and a quarter agreed. The rest were scattered equally through the scale. This indicates that they really did not know what was the most important thing, but that there was probably more than just doctrine involved. The Lay Advisory had a similar response, but more disagreed (40 percent).

21. I feel well-equipped to engage in ministry for the church and community

While over half those who responded felt that they had discovered and were using their spiritual gift, few really felt well-

equipped to engage in ministry. Approximately half of both groups responded in the undecided categories (three, four, and five). The Church Member group felt less well-equipped than the Lay Advisory. The clear impression from this response is that there is need for training in ministry areas so that there can be more of a feeling of confidence as members use their spiritual gifts for ministry in the church and the community. There also needs to be: (1) precise instruction on the discovery and use of spiritual gifts; (2) a clear understanding of what is meant by "ministry;" (3) a removal of guilt that may be felt; and (4) the development of a Church Growth Conscience.¹

22. Evangelism is the work of the minister, not the average church member

This question seeks to explore the extent to which members feel a commitment to lay evangelistic ministry. It is clear from the responses that they feel that lay people should be involved in evangelism, and that evangelism is not the work of the minister alone. In looking at the responses we find that 66 percent of the Lay Advisory scored one and 61 percent of the Church Member group scored either one or two, indicating a strong disagreement with the statement. The other responses were spread through the scale. It is possible that the term "evangelism" may not have been understood clearly and that they perceived it as conducting lay, public campaigns. A more precise definition of "Evangelism" in its widest terms may have significantly altered this response.

¹McGavran and Arn define Church Growth Conscience as "the conviction that God's will for the Body of Christ is to grow." McGavran and Arn, Ten Steps, p. 127.

23. Seventh-day Adventists should belong to a number of organizations outside the church

There was 23 percent of the Lay Advisory who could not decide on this statement, while 26 percent agreed strongly with it. The response is similiar in the Church Member group, where 27 percent agreed with it. Belonging to an outside organization would enlarge the circle of friends, hence the same attitudes to friendship outside the church that is noted above is evident here.

24. It is not necessary to know much about the community in which we live to have an effective outreach program

This is a similiar question to number four, and the same trends noted there are evident here. It is interesting that the same percentage (51 percent) of the Lay Advisory disagreed strongly with the statement as they did in question four. There was 58 percent of the Church Member group who disagreed strongly with this statement. This showed a stronger trend than was evident in question four. It would appear that some feel that even though the attitudes and culture of society may have only a limited impact upon the church, yet it is necessary to study the community to develop an effective outreach program. About 14 percent of both groups felt that a knowledge of the community is not necessary to an effective outreach program.

25. The minister should spend the major portion of his time in pastoral care for church members

This question seeks to discover some of the attitudes to the priorities in the work of the minister, and produced some of the most divided responses of the survey. It appears that there is little

real understanding as to where the minister should put his priorities. There is not a clear pattern in this response, but the Lay Advisory tended to disagree with the statement while on the other hand the Church Member group tended to agree with it. Perhaps the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the average church member senses a need for more pastoral care and would hope that the minister would place his priorities there, while the leadership of the church senses more a need of evangelism and would tend to place the minister's priority on that aspect of his work.

Conclusion

As one analyses the results of the survey, one cannot help but reach the conclusion that the attitudes to the church and its mission both by leadership and average church member, are basically healthy. While this is the case, the results show that there is room for considerable development, if higher levels of understanding are to be reached. It would be hoped that the development of this understanding would result in much greater effectiveness in outreach activities.

The particular areas that demand attention are as follows:

1. The relationship of members to non-Adventist friends and outside organizations
2. An understanding of the role of the Conference with regard to ministry areas
3. A deepened understanding of why people join or leave the church
4. Gospel preaching to increase church members' assurance of salvation
5. An understanding of the Biblical concept of remnancy
6. The discovery of spiritual gifts and appropriate training for ministry

7. More communication and involvement in the process of planning and goal setting
8. Study of the ministry area of the church
9. More understanding of the work of the minister, and the priorities for his ministry

One would expect that the fostering of these areas would produce a deeper understanding of God's will for His church, and see a growth and development in the mission of the church to "make disciples of all men" (Matt 28:19).

CHAPTER IV

MINISTRY DESIGN

Basic Concerns

As was concluded in the previous chapter, there is a definite need for a continuing program of education and instruction so that a greater understanding of the purpose for the existence of the church and its mission to the community can be developed. The present writer's concern was to discover whether the type of instruction that is at present being given to churches, particularly that available from the conference Lay Activities director, is effective. Training programs are regularly offered to the local churches. There is considerable time, effort, and finance being expended in the hope that greater awareness can be developed, yet there is little real evaluation of the effectiveness of this type of ministry.

The heart of this project centres around endeavouring to discover if concepts and attitudes in the local church can really be developed and changed by the typical ministry of the conference Lay Activities director.

In a large conference the visits of departmental directors to individual local churches are usually rather infrequent. This is due to the fact that Sabbath is most often the time when these training programs take place, and there are usually more churches to work with than there are Sabbaths in the year. It is therefore of critical importance that that time be spent wisely and effectively.

A ministry program was therefore set up by the writer to see if attitudes to the church and its mission in the local church can really be changed and developed in the short period of time that would be available to the conference Lay Activities Director.

Background Matters

A typical Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North New South Wales conference would be selected for this ministry project. The church would be one that felt a need for help with its outreach activities, and did not feel that the conference was merely imposing another program upon it. The minister would be consulted and alerted to the plans and procedures to take place, and his co-operation sought. He would be alerted to the details of the day's activities, but as far as the church was concerned, they would expect a regular departmental visit from the conference Lay Activities director. Since it is the usual practice on such occasions to have some sort of training program for the church, it would be usual for them to expect a Sabbath morning service and an afternoon instruction period that focussed on the church and its mission. The whole program would be conducted on Sabbath morning, afternoon and evening.

Prior to the Sabbath when this ministry was to take place, the information and figures necessary to discover and document the growth history of the church would be collected and analysed, so that their growth history and present condition could be presented to the members as part of the instruction period. This would help them to understand what had happened in their church during the previous decade, and what the situation was at present.

Sabbath Visit to Church

Once a church had been selected, it would be important to understand the particular attitudes it holds regarding mission. It would also be important to discover how well these attitudes match the general understanding of mission and the church's responsibility to the community. To gather this information, the survey discussed in chapter III would be administered to the church prior to any instruction being given. The results of this survey would provide the starting point for understanding their particular views and attitudes. They would also provide the basis for discovering if there had been any real development in their understanding as a result of instruction presented during the course of the day. The survey results from the selected church would be compared with the Church Member group responses to the survey discussed in chapter III. This comparison would show if they are ahead or behind in their general understanding, and how far they deviate from that norm.

Following the taking of this initial survey, the instruction periods could begin. These would start with the morning sermon, followed by at least three hours of instruction. The material presented would seek to develop an understanding of the mission of the church, and give an outline of the known factors that contribute to its growth. It would challenge them to reconsider what their present attitudes are, and perhaps help them to set new directions and goals for the future, thus fulfilling the Lord's command to go and make disciples of all nations.

Following the completion of the instruction, the instrument would be administered again. The data collected, should give an

indication whether there has been any movement in understanding as a result of the direct instruction that had been received during the day.

It is a fact of life that things that we hear are soon forgotten, so to test whether the shift in understanding, if any, is permanent, a return visit would be arranged three months after the original day of instruction. This visit would be for the sole purpose of administering the survey for a third time. One would need to make sure that only those who had participated in the original instruction would respond on this occasion. By comparing this third survey with the first and second ones, it should be possible to evaluate the lasting effect of the instruction, the permanence of any attitudinal changes, and the effectiveness of this type of visitation ministry.

Recommendations

Once these comparisons and evaluations had been made, recommendations could then be suggested that would hopefully lead to a much more effective ministry. Then, if necessary, new methods could be devised that would produce the greater understanding of the church and its mission that is required if the church is really to be obedient to the will of God and His desire that the church should grow and that His lost children should be found.

CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTATION OF MINISTRY

Selection of the Church

The church that was chosen for the implementation of this project was the Muswellbrook Seventh-day Adventist Church. Muswellbrook is a town of approximately 13,200 people¹ situated in the Upper Hunter area about 150 km. north-west of the city of Newcastle. It is a city that is situated in the heart of the coal mining and power-generating industries. It also happens to be quite a centre for the fertile, agricultural areas of the Upper Hunter. It gives the impression of being a prosperous, go-ahead town, whose citizens enjoy a better-than-average standard of living.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Muswellbrook

The Muswellbrook Seventh-day Adventist Church is situated within a reasonable distance from the conference headquarters in Newcastle, hence would have reasonable access to the facilities of the conference. Conference personnel would not find it difficult to visit this church since it is only one and a half hours driving distance away.

¹Figures taken from the 1981 census.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Muswellbrook has existed since 1964. It was established with twenty foundation members as a result of the door to door work of Pastor Noel Smith. In 1971 a modern, comfortable church building was erected just off the main highway on the southern side of the town. Later a hall was added to the rear of the church building. While the complex is small, and there is not much room on the block, it is nevertheless adequate for their needs.¹ Most functions of the church program can be carried on easily in their own facilities. Some areas of possible need could be the provision of more Sabbath School rooms, and an extension of their welfare storage and facilities.

The church operated a small one-teacher primary school in this hall for two years, but this eventually had to close as the students moved on to high school and there were not enough younger children available to keep it open. Classes were last held in 1978.

The minister's residence is next door to the church, and the present minister, Daniel Koziol, has his study in the vestry of the church. Daniel Koziol is a young, energetic minister who was a graduate of Avondale College in 1983. He is married with two small children. The church members have responded very positively to his particular style of ministry and he is well-liked and respected. He has been actively involved in running outreach programs such as Revelation Seminars throughout the year. Muswellbrook is his second pastorate and he also cares for the Singleton church, a distance of 50 km. to the south. He has a particular interest in youth ministry

¹Any future development will have to be done on a different site since there would not be room on this block for any further buildings.

and music. This is particularly appropriate in Muswellbrook since there is a larger than average number of youth in the church.¹

Growth History of the Muswellbrook Church

What the Figures Say

Attention is now turned to the matter of the growth history of the Muswellbrook church. The period that is under study is the decade 1975-84. An understanding of what has happened in this period will help to show what is the present condition of the church and its potential for growth and development.

At the end of 1984 the membership stood at eighty-four. This shows an increase of thirty-four, from fifty at the end of 1974. As the membership graph for these years is studied it is seen that the most significant growth took place in 1977 and 1978.² The other years of the decade have been rather static. In some years (1974, 1976, and 1983), the membership actually declined. When these figures are transferred into percentage terms they show that the church had a decade growth rate of 68 percent.

Growth in the local church comes from three areas: (1) biological growth, or church youth, (2) convert growth, and (3)

¹There are 44 percent of the members who are under thirty years old. This figure does not include unbaptised children, and is based on the number who are at present living in Muswellbrook (the membership is eighty-four, but nine have moved without transferring their membership, and four attend Singleton, hence the resident membership is seventy-one).

²The graphs that illustrate the growth history of the Muswellbrook church for the last decade are to be found in appendix 4.

transfer growth.¹ When considering the actual numbers in each of these three categories in Muswellbrook, it can be seen that during the decade under study, there were seventeen church youth who were baptised, thirty-two converts from the community, and thirty-seven people who transferred their membership from other churches. This makes a total of eighty-six who joined the church during the decade.

However, this picture should be balanced by noting the losses that occurred during the decade. There was one death, nine apostasies, and forty-nine who transferred out to other churches. This means that there was a biological growth of seventeen, a net convert growth of twenty-three, and a net transfer growth of minus twelve. Taking the death into account, this makes a total net growth of twenty-seven.

When we compare the contribution made by each of the three factors we find that church youth contributed to the growth rate by 63 percent, convert growth by 85 percent, transfers by -44 percent (i.e. reduced the growth rate by 44 percent), and the death by -4 percent.²

According to figures supplied by the local minister the membership can be divided into: (1) forty-nine active members, (2) twenty-two inactive members, (3) nine members who have moved without transferring their membership to their new churches, and (4) four members who attend the Singleton church.

¹ McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, pp. 98-99.

² These figures are expressed as percentages of the total net growth of twenty-seven.

Observations from the Figures

Growth rate

The decadal growth rate of 68 percent is well above the average growth rate for the church in Australia and New Zealand.¹ While this is a pleasing result, an examination of the yearly growth rate shows that this high figure is not consistently spread across the decade. No clear pattern of consistent yearly growth has emerged. In fact, it is very spasmodic. Two years (1976 and 1983) show negative growth, and there is a zero growth rate from 1979-81. The growth rate reached a peak in 1977 with 31.5 percent, and if it were not for this year of high growth and a 16 percent growth in 1975, the growth rate figures would be low indeed. In seeking to find a reason for the sudden burst of growth in 1977 it was discovered that there was a large scale evangelistic program conducted in the town that year, which mobilized the church into activity and produced many convert and youth baptisms. The effects of this program were felt the following year also when there was almost an equal number of convert baptisms and a large number of transfers in. This does not show up in the growth rate figures since there were also a large number of apostasies and transfers out for that year.

¹In the Trans-Tasman Union Conference, there was a 9.03 percent increase in membership in the five years, 1980-84. This is a yearly growth rate of 1.81 percent. Trans-Tasman Union Conference, Quinquennial Session Reports 1980-1984, (Hamilton, New Zealand: 25-28 August, 1985), p. 6. The yearly growth rate for Muswellbrook is 6.8 percent.

These figures indicate that there was no long term plan for consistent growth and development in existence during the decade. The church went from year to year with short term plans that were only really successful in 1977 and 1978 when they were challenged to greater activity by the presence of an evangelist in their midst. It would almost appear that from 1979-81 they were resting from the busy activity of the previous two years as there was little growth activity, and a zero growth rate.

Transfers

It is significant that the net effect of transfers in Muswellbrook has been negative. More people have transferred out than have transferred in. This has had the effect of reducing the net growth rate by 44 percent. There have been several of the young people move away to college, and it is possible that there has been a drift to the city for greater employment opportunities.

If transfers are not taken into account Muswellbrook would have had a projected membership of ninety-two. This means that the contribution to the growth rate of the church at large has been greater than the 68 percent recorded in Muswellbrook itself. Other churches have benefited from their work. This may not have helped Muswellbrook church to grow but it has made a significant contribution to the actual "Kingdom Growth"¹ of the church as a whole.

¹ Kingdom growth relates to the actual number of people who are persuaded to give their lives to Christ and join the church, it is not concerned with transfers of existing Christians who are already a part of the Body of Christ at large.

Biological growth

It is estimated that the church should grow by approximately 25 percent per decade as a result of the baptisms of its own young people.¹ With a 29 percent biological growth rate, Muswellbrook is well ahead of what would be expected. The larger percentage of total membership in the youth category has already been noted above. It is possible that the church is still reaping the benefits of having operated a church school. Undoubtedly many of those who joined the church as youth would have been pupils in the school.

Convert growth

Conversion growth is the cutting edge of the church's mission. It is that growth "in which those outside the church come to rest their faith intelligently on Jesus Christ and are baptised and 'added to the Lord' in His Church."² It is pleasing that in the Muswellbrook church conversion growth has contributed to the net growth by 85 percent. This would indicate that the church has reached significantly into the community in the past years to minister to people, and persuade them to give their lives to Jesus Christ and join the church. The fact that should raise some concern is that the majority of that effective ministry was done in only two years of the decade. There is need for careful planning so that a consistent witness can be maintained.

¹See Dudley and Cummings, Adventures in Church Growth, p. 18; also McGavran and Arn, How to Grow a Church, p. 58.

²McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, pp. 98-99.

Inactive members

The figures reveal another very disturbing element, and highlight an area of ministry that could be productive. This is indicated in the number of resident members who are regarded as inactive. The figures indicate a number of twenty-two out of a possible seventy-one who are inactive. This represents a figure of 31 percent of the resident membership, and would surely be cause for some concern and highlight an area of special ministry that could be planned. Eddie Gibbs points out that "restoration growth . . . is a significant category in areas which have witnessed serious church decline. These are people who have been restored to membership after a lapse of some years."¹ A work for these inactive members may not increase the total church membership, but it will certainly increase the number who attend as responsible members, and who could be involved in ministry to others.

Implementation of Ministry

The Sabbath that was chosen for the visit to Muswellbrook was March 30, 1985. Prior to the day, arrangements had been made with the local minister to visit his church and conduct the program as outlined in chapter IV. The details of the growth history of the church had been collected and analysed as presented above. The program for the day was as follows:

- 9.30 A.M.-10.45 A.M. Sabbath School
- 11.00 A.M.-12.00 M. Divine Service
- 4.00 P.M.-6.00 P.M. First Instruction Period

¹Gibbs, p. 171.

6.30 P.M.-7.30 P.M. Combined Basket Tea

7.30 P.M.-9.30 P.M. Second Instruction Period and Church
Business Meeting

Sabbath School was conducted by the Sabbath School officers of the Muswellbrook church. Once Sabbath School was completed the main instruction part of the day began. After the singing of the second hymn, immediately before the sermon was presented, the survey sheet was distributed to those present. The members were asked to fill it in as soon as they had received it, and when they had completed it they were to hand it to the deacons who were ready to collect it. All who were present that morning were encouraged to complete the survey sheet, including the youth and children. However only responses from adults (persons over twenty years old) were considered for the purposes of this project. The survey sheets were all collected before the sermon was presented.

Following the completion of the survey a sermon entitled "A Church on the Move" was presented. This sermon dealt with the characteristics of a growing, dynamic church, and used the church at Antioch as an example of such a church.¹ After the church service was over the people returned to their homes for lunch.

At four o'clock in the afternoon they returned for the first instruction period. This was to be a seminar style presentation using an overhead projector and blackboard to illustrate the material presented. The following areas were covered in the course of the afternoon.²

¹See appendix 8 for a resume of this sermon.

²For a summary of the material presented during the afternoon and evening, see appendix 9.

1. The four imperatives of the Gospel Commission
2. The concepts of search versus harvest theology
3. The four reasons for the existence of the church and how to incorporate them into a philosophy of ministry
4. Images of the church in Scripture--the fortress versus the salt
5. The development of the concept of mission in the Adventist Church
6. The various classes of church leadership

A series of overhead transparencies was shown that illustrate various attitudes to the church and its mission. These led to a discussion time regarding the most effective concepts of mission, and sought to broaden their understanding.¹

A delightful evening meal was then shared by all, and following that the church members assembled for the evening session. This session featured the growth history of the church, and looked at the various aspects of their past history and present condition. The graphs were shown on the overhead projector. The strengths and weaknesses noted above were highlighted, and the implications for their future growth were discussed. This led them to look at some of their goals and objectives for the future, and analyse the possibilities for future outreach activities. The Family Friendship Circle² was introduced at this point and they were encouraged to think of particular people to whom they could minister.

A very brief business meeting followed in which several items of local church business were decided. As the final part of the day's program the members were asked if they would fill in the survey

¹Copies of the transparencies presented are contained in appendix 5. The hand-out material is contained in appendix 6.

²For a copy of the Family Friendship Circle see appendix 7.

sheet for the second time. It was pointed out that this was necessary to evaluate the instruction period and to see if there had been any shift in their understanding. The members were happy to do this and the sheets were filled in and handed back immediately.

The final part of this ministry project was the return visit three months later. This visit took place on June 22, 1985. The survey was conducted just prior to the sermon, and collected as soon as it was completed. It was emphasised that only those who had participated in the previous survey should complete it again, as responses were wanted only from those who had been through the earlier instruction.

Analysis of Survey Results

First Survey

The purpose of conducting this survey was to discover how closely the Muswellbrook church held the attitudes of the average church member as outlined in chapter III of this project report. This was the reason why the survey was administered prior to the giving of any instruction. It is important as a starting point for evaluating their responses to see if they are indeed a typical Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The number of adults who responded to this first survey was thirty-three. Since the active membership of this church is forty-nine (including the youth), this represents a response of 67 percent of the active membership.

General observations

As one examines the response of this survey and compares it with the response of the Church Member group¹ it seems obvious that there is basic agreement between the two.² In some cases the responses indicate better understanding and in some cases less. Variations in the comparative size of the samples (204 for the Church Member group and 33 for Muswellbrook) may account for these differences. Comment will be made only regarding those responses where there is a significant difference.

Detailed comment

There appears to be much more uncertainty regarding the function of the conference (survey item 2) in Muswellbrook than in the Church Member group (33 percent responded with a four to this question). The tendency revealed here is to agree with the statement indicating that they felt that the purpose of the conference was to assign work for them to do. The Church Member group tended to disagree with this statement.

There is more a tendency to feel that ministry is to be left to the pastor and that the average member should "live the life," than is felt by the Church Member group (survey item 3). However, more of Muswellbrook felt a pride in their church than did the Church Member group (survey item 5). In Muswellbrook 79 percent said they would be happy to tell anyone that they were a Seventh-day Adventist, while in the Church Member group the figure was 67 percent.

¹For a definition of Church Member group see p. 35 above.

²See appendix 2 for results of this survey.

Muswellbrook also indicated a better understanding of the particular mission of the Adventist Church than did the Church Member group (survey item 6). However, when it came to explaining the "Three Angels Messages" (survey item 12), Muswellbrook was unsure (30 percent scored four). The Church Member group felt that they could explain these messages.

The issue of the relative ease of winning friends or strangers (survey item 13), saw a response right across the spectrum, and about a quarter indicated that they did not know (42 percent said strangers were easier, 18 percent said friends were, and 24 percent were undecided). This response was different from the Church Member group who tended to feel that friends were easier to win.

The ambivalence regarding the equating of remnancy with smallness was also reflected in Muswellbrook (survey item 14).

The response regarding spiritual gifts (survey item 15) indicates that more in the Muswellbrook church felt that they had discovered their spiritual gift than in the Church Member group, but like the latter they felt poorly equipped to engage in ministry for the church and the community.

Muswellbrook church felt clearer about its goals and plans for the future (survey item 18) than did the Church Member group, with 72 percent scoring five, six, or seven. This compares with 61 percent of the Church Member group scoring five, six, or seven. Muswellbrook was also quite clear that more than just Seventh-day Adventists would be saved (survey item 19) with 97 percent scoring one, as compared with 89 percent of the Church Member group.

A similar ambivalence was noted with regard to the importance

of doctrine for those joining the church (survey item 20) as was held by the Church Member group, but there were more who were undecided (15 percent as compared with 10 percent for the Church Member group).

Muswellbrook tended to think that evangelism was the work of the minister, not the average church member (survey item 22).

Again the confusion regarding the priority work of the minister was evident (survey item 25). There was a much larger response in the uncertain area (60 percent scored three, four, and five) than was evident in the Church Member group's response (42 percent). This indicates that the Muswellbrook church is really not sure what the priority of the minister should be, and could not decide between evangelism and pastoral care.

Conclusion

The Muswellbrook Church is a typical Seventh-day Adventist Church in its attitudes to the church and its mission. However, it does not have clearly in mind some of the main factors that lead to church growth. It is clear on the mission of the church, yet feels poorly equipped to present that message to the community. It is unsure of the work of the minister and the role of the conference, and it feels that the mission of the church is largely the responsibility of the minister not the average church member. It feels a basic pride in belonging to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, yet there is a large scope for strong ministry that will develop the assurance of salvation in the members (only half have a strong assurance, indicated by a score of seven).

Second Survey

The second survey was taken for the purpose of determining any change in attitude and understanding during the course of the day. The number responding to this survey was only eighteen, or 37 percent of the active membership of the church. Two cautions regarding the results of this survey should be noted: (1) the small number of the sample means that the percentages can be altered quite significantly by only one or two individuals; and (2) it could well be that only those who had an interest in the mission of the church and some measure of understanding returned for the afternoon and stayed for the whole period of instruction. With these two cautions in mind an analysis of the responses is interesting.

Can thinking and attitudes be changed?

There appears to have been quite definite, in some cases dramatic, movement in the development of understanding in eighteen of the twenty-five areas that the survey covered. These responses indicate more of an awareness of the factors that contribute to the effective mission of the church.

The areas that showed a lessened or confused understanding related to non-Adventist friends, spiritual gifts, instructing a person how to become a Christian, goals and plans of the church, outside organisations, community awareness, and the priorities of the minister.¹

This response would indicate that in the majority of cases the ministry of the day had achieved what was intended. It would be

¹Survey items 1, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, respectively.

virtually impossible to cover every area that was indicated on the survey in a one-day training session. To gain improved understanding on eighteen areas should certainly be regarded as a success. It is interesting also that the areas that show a lessened response mostly relate to the issues of relationships with the people of the community, and this could be a fruitful area for continuing emphasis. It has traditionally been an area that has proved difficult for Adventists. How to be in the world but not of the world, is a question that needs much careful attention.

Probably the most significant area of improvement was related to the role of the lay person in ministry. Both items that dealt with this issue saw significant improvement. The "one" response in survey item three increased from 27 percent to 72 percent indicating that members felt that they should do more than just "live the life." In survey item twenty-two the "one" response increased from 36 percent to 56 percent, indicating that they felt that evangelism was the work of the average member as well as the minister.

Another interesting improvement was the increase from 3 percent to 22 percent in the strong positive response to survey item twelve. It would appear that at the end of the day many more could explain the "Three Angels Messages." This was not particularly the subject of instruction, but could well be a reflection of the type of people who stayed through the whole day as indicated above.

There was also a swing to the belief that it is easier to win a friend for Jesus than a stranger. The strongest response in this survey item (13) has moved from 18 percent to 28 percent. In survey item fourteen there is less of a tendency to equate remnancy with

smallness. The strongest response has moved from 30 percent to 67 percent in this item.

Conclusion

It is possible to change attitudes in a short period of time, however one should not expect too much from one day's instruction. It appears that the issues that touch relationships with others are the most difficult for people to grasp.

Third Survey

This survey, designed to test the permanence of any change in understanding, and administered three months after the first two, was probably the hardest to evaluate, as no really clear picture emerged. The number of people who participated in this survey was nineteen, or 39 percent of the active membership. Again it should be recognised that this is a small sample and that perhaps the conclusions drawn should be regarded as tentative.

Survey responses

The one thing that can be said regarding this survey in comparison with the previous two is that it shows a great deal of confused thinking. The thing that stands out most of all is the large number of responses that have scored four. Eleven items could be considered to have a large percentage of uncertain responses. Eight questions have a score of 25 percent or more on four, some are as high as 42 percent. There are twelve items that have a response that show less awareness of the factors that contribute to effective mission than the first survey taken (1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, and 22), and nine that show a definite increase in awareness

(3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 18, and 20). The responses given to the remaining items (9, 19, 23, and 25), are either the same or are ambiguous.

Some comment should be made regarding those areas where there appears to have been some permanent contribution made to the understanding of the participants. There appears to be an improvement in awareness of the need to understand the community in which they live. The responses to both the items that dealt with this issue show an increased awareness. In item four the "one" response has increased from 27 percent to 42 percent and the "seven" response has decreased from 27 percent to 11 percent. Item twenty-four also shows an increase in the "one" response from 52 percent to 58 percent. These responses indicate that the participants do feel that the attitudes and culture of society around them have a bearing on the church, and that they should have a knowledge of the community around them in order to be effective.

The responses to items seven and twenty which deal with the relative importance of doctrine to those either leaving or joining the church, indicate that the participants now feel more strongly that there are other issues involved.

It is also interesting to see that the Muswellbrook church members feel more strongly that there is more to ministry than just "living the life." The response to item three indicates that they sense a responsibility themselves for the mission of the church. They also believe more strongly that the church exists to save the world, that worship is a central focus in their local church, and that the church should be more active in soul winning work.

They feel quite definite about the goals and the plans of the church, with 84 percent scoring six or seven, yet are unsure of their personal contribution to the fulfilling of those goals (there was a 42 percent response on "four" in the item regarding spiritual gifts). There is a definite feeling of not being well-equipped for ministry, and few could clearly explain the "Three Angels Messages" (a 42 percent response on "four" was evident in item twelve). The response to item nine which deals with the assurance of salvation shows a 21 percent response on "four" indicating that there is uncertainty regarding this important area. They are also not sure where the pastor should place his priorities (there was a 32 percent response on "four" in item twenty-five), but tend to feel that it should be in pastoral care for the church members.

Conclusion

There are some areas of understanding where a permanent increase in understanding has developed. These include:

1. The importance of a knowledge of the community and the culture of the society in which the ministry area of the church exists
2. An awareness that there are other factors than just doctrine that influence a person's decision either to join or leave the church
3. A conviction that the church should be more active in its ministry to the community, and that the church does not exist for its own sake, but to serve the world
4. An awareness that there is more to a Christian's witness than just "living the life;" there must be positive, active service
5. A consciousness that worship should always have a central place in the program of the church
6. A new awareness of the goals of the local church and the need for careful planning to achieve those goals

There are many other areas where the passage of time has resulted in confusion, as the members have sought to assimilate the new material and concepts with their existing understanding and have not been able to do so. The results of this third survey indicate the need for continuing education and instruction by the local minister to support the work of the conference Lay Activities Director, so that the results of his work will have more lasting significance.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has historically identified with Christ's commission to communicate the gospel effectively to every "nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Rev 14:6). The gospel, preached in the context of the "Three Angels Messages" is the charter for the mission of the church.

The challenge that is presented to the church by the acceptance of this charter is vast in its scope, and demands the entire dedication of every member if it is to be achieved. There have been times in the past when the church has succeeded in fulfilling its mission, and other times when it has fallen short of the mark.

Now, as never before, the church is in a position when the presentation of the gospel to all the world can become a reality. This will only be true however, if there is an expanded view of the responsibility that every Christian has to share in the task. There is a need also to become more keenly aware of the various factors that contribute to the growth of the church and sharpen the focus of mission so that resources, both material and personal can be used in the most effective and productive way.

Peter Wagner, in commenting on the doctrinal distinctiveness of the Adventist Church, makes this enlightning statement:

Now, Seventh-day Adventists have a total message that implies higher commitment than the average denomination. Studies show that there is a positive relationship between commitment and the growth of the church. So my suggestion to the Adventists is not to compromise any of the doctrines but to investigate the possibilities of the focus so that you don't load the whole package of Seventh-day Adventist ethics and life-style into an initial presentation of the Gospel, but you present the Gospel to people as you have perceived their felt needs. Then once they trust you and see that you are going to meet their needs, step by step, you bring them into the full life-style of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So while you don't compromise the message, you do adjust its focus.

This is a very perceptive comment in view of the results of this present study, since it indicates that the mission of the church will only be successful if the focus of mission is directed in the right way. This study shows that there is a basically healthy understanding of factors that influence the growth of the church, yet there is still a great need to deepen understanding and attitudes so that the focus of its mission can be directed into the most effective areas.

It has been demonstrated that it is possible to bring greater awareness of the mission of the church and those factors that contribute to its success in a very short period of time. However, if that initial instruction is not constantly reviewed and enlarged, it is soon forgotten and often results in a greater confusion than was held prior to the instruction. This is probably the result of people trying to assimilate their new ideas with their long held pre-suppositions. Even though this is the case, there is some information that does become a permanent part of their thinking.

¹Peter Wagner, "A Church Growth View of Adventists," British Union Messenger, 17 August, 1984, p. 3.

It can be seen that this type of short term instruction has only a limited success if it is not followed up with continued instruction, either by the local minister or conference personnel. In fact it can often have a detrimental effect.

Recomendations

These facts lead to the implications of this study for future ministry. The following recommendations are presented as a result of this study:

1. There is a need for careful instruction regarding the mission of the church; this needs to be a co-operative effort between the local minister and the outside expert
2. Any instruction given by visiting specialists should be regarded as only a beginning which lays a foundation for continuing instruction either by local personnel or others
3. Since few felt well-equipped for ministry, there should be detailed and appropriate training given to those who are expected to be involved in the church's outreach program
4. The doctrine of spiritual gifts needs to be emphasized so that people can be led to discover their particular gift and be led into appropriate and satisfying ministry
5. Since those who join the church often have friends or relatives who are members, study should be given to discover ways that members can enlarge their circle of influence and make friends in the community
6. Since effective mission will only grow out of a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ, there is a need for careful work to lead every member to have an assurance of salvation
7. The average member needs to have more input into the planning, goal-setting process of the church so that he can be aware of, and "own" the plans and goals that are made
8. The work of the minister needs to be explained and understood by the average member, as does also the role of the conference in ministry areas
9. Study needs to be given to the reasons why people leave or join the church

10. Effective ministry will not take place unless there is a sound knowledge of the ministry area of the church, hence it is important to know as much as possible about the community as possible

The implication for the conference Lay Activities director is that his ministry is only effective as it is built upon by the local church. It must provide a starting place from which an effective philosophy of ministry can be developed over a period of time. The role of the local minister in this continuing process of education is critical.

Before any such visits are planned there should be a program of instruction worked out that can be presented subsequent to the visit, and if possible one or more return visits to consolidate the instruction should be planned. This program should be worked out by the Lay Activities director and the local minister in consultation with the church where the proposed visit is to take place. This will ensure that the material is relevant to the needs of the church at the time.

When the early church changed its focus of mission from a purely Jewish outreach to include the Gentiles, it really began to grow. Likewise today there will only be substantial growth as the command of Christ to "go make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19), is taken seriously. This may mean many changes in the present understanding and methods used. At times there may be considerable pain as the church seeks to adjust to the times, and to use ways that really work. However, accompanying the command is a promise: "I am with you always" (Matt 28:20). This promise can become a reality in the experience of the church as it seeks to know and do God's will.

APPENDIX 1
CHURCH SURVEY

ATTITUDES TO THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

INSTRUCTIONS - Please rate each statement below as you understand it. Use the scale of 1 to 7 to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement. '1' means disagree '7' means agree. Circle your response and then transfer that number to the box at right.

*** ** > ** ***

	DISAGREE	AGREE	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
1. Church Members should have many non-Adventist friends	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
2. The purpose of the Conference is to assign work for the local Church to do	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
3. The average Church Member should 'live the life' and leave ministry to the pastor	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
4. The attitudes and culture of society have no bearing on the Church and its mission	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
5. I would be happy to tell anyone that I was a Seventh-day Adventist	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
6. I understand clearly the particular mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
7. Most people who leave the Church do so because they no longer believe the doctrines	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
8. Worship has a central focus in our local Church	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
9. If I were to die tonight I know I would have a place in God's Kingdom	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
10. I believe that the Church should be much more active in soul winning work	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
11. The Church exists to save the world	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
12. I could clearly explain to some one the "Three Angels Messages"	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
13. It is easier to win a stranger for Jesus than a friend	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
14. Because we consider ourselves the Remnant Church, we will always be small in numbers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
15. I have discovered and am using my Spiritual Gift	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
16. A major portion of our Church budget should be spent in evangelism and outreach	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
17. I could tell someone how to become a Christian	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
18. Our Church has set its goals and has a definite plan for the future	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐
19. Only those who are in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be saved	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	☐

.2.

	DISAGREE	AGREE						
	←-----→							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20. When a person joins the Church, the most important thing is that they understand the doctrines								☐
21. I feel well equipped to engage in ministry for the Church and community								☐
22. Evangelism is the work of the minister not the average Church Member								☐
23. Seventh-day Adventists should belong to a number of organisations outside the Church								☐
24. It is not necessary to know much about the community in which we live to have an effective outreach programme								☐
25. The minister should spend the major portion of his time in pastoral care for Church Members								☐

AGE - YOUTH (under 20)

☐

ADULT

☐

Number of years an Adventist - under 5 years

☐

5 - 10 years

☐

10 - 20 years

☐

over 20 years

☐

OTHER COMMENTS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX 2
RESULTS OF CHURCH SURVEY

RESULTS OF CHURCH SURVEY

KEY

LA ADV	Lay Advisory Group
CH MEM	Church Member Group
MU AM	Muswellbrook Church in the morning
MU PM	Muswellbrook Church at the end of the day
MU 3M	Muswellbrook Church three months later
NR	No Response

NUMBER RESPONDING

LA ADV	35
CH MEM	204
MU AM	33
MU PM	18
MU 3M	19

Note: all figures are expressed as percentages of the total number responding.

1. Church members should have many non-Adventist friends.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	—	—	9	11	17	6	57	
CH MEM	1	1	3	11	12	11	61	
MU AM	—	3	6	9	9	3	70	
MU PM	—	—	—	17	11	11	61	
MU 3M	—	—	5	32	—	5	58	

2. The purpose of the Conference is to assign work for the local church to do.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	40	14	3	14	9	3	17	
CH MEM	25	11	13	17	12	4	16	2
MU AM	3	6	6	33	15	21	12	3
MU PM	—	28	11	22	5	11	17	
MU 3M	16	—	—	42	16	5	21	

3. The average church member should 'live the life' and leave ministry to the pastor.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	66	9	11	9	3	—	3	
CH MEM	52	13	9	6	5	6	8	1
MU AM	27	12	9	15	18	9	9	
MU PM	72	17	—	—	—	—	11	
MU 3M	37	16	5	32	11	—	—	

4. The attitudes and culture of society have no bearing on the church and its mission.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	51	3	6	3	3	6	23	6
CH MEM	42	11	10	8	7	3	14	4
MU AM	27	9	12	9	3	12	27	
MU PM	39	11	11	6	—	6	28	
MU 3M	42	16	11	11	5	5	11	

5. I would be happy to tell anyone that I was a Seventh-day Adventist.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	3	---	---	---	3	3	91	
CH MEM	1	1	2	4	8	14	67	2
MU AM	---	---	---	6	3	12	79	
MU PM	---	---	---	11	6	---	83	
MU 3M	---	---	---	11	11	16	63	

6. I understand clearly the particular mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	---	---	---	3	9	11	77	
CH MEM	3	1	3	4	7	18	63	1
MU AM	3	---	---	3	12	12	70	
MU PM	---	---	---	6	17	17	61	
MU 3M	---	5	5	5	11	26	47	

7. Most people who leave the church do so because they no longer believe the doctrines.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	51	20	14	9	3	---	3	
CH MEM	41	14	9	12	6	4	13	1
MU AM	49	12	9	15	9	3	3	
MU PM	61	6	11	6	6	---	11	
MU 3M	53	16	5	16	5	---	5	

8. Worship has a central focus in our local church.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	--	3	6	9	26	23	34	
CH MEM	2	1	4	8	12	19	52	3
MU AM	6	--	3	9	9	27	42	3
MU PM	--	--	11	6	6	6	72	
MU 3M	11	--	--	5	16	21	47	

9. If I were to die tonight I know that I would have a place in God's kingdom.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	3	3	3	9	6	11	66	
CH MEM	3	2	2	9	9	14	58	3
MU AM	3	--	--	15	9	15	52	6
MU PM	--	--	--	6	22	11	56	5
MU 3M	5	--	--	21	16	--	58	

10. I believe that the church should be much more active in soul-winning work.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	--	--	--	--	--	9	91	
CH MEM	3	--	1	3	9	13	70	1
MU AM	6	--	--	3	12	27	52	
MU PM	--	--	--	--	--	22	78	
MU 3M	--	--	5	5	11	21	58	

11. The church exists to save the world.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	14	--	3	6	3	14	60	
CH MEM	8	2	2	8	9	11	57	3
MU AM	12	6	--	9	--	9	55	9
MU PM	6	6	6	17	—	11	50	6
MU 3M	--	--	5		5	5	84	

12. I could clearly explain to some one the "Three Angels Messages."

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	6	--	6	6	20	29	34	
CH MEM	9	4	9	13	23	17	23	2
MU AM	18	3	9	30	15	21	3	
MU PM	6	11	6	28	17	11	22	
MU 3M	16	--	--	42	16	21	5	

13. It is easier to win a stranger for Jesus than a friend.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	11	17	6	17	14	14	20	
CH MEM	24	10	7	13	11	12	21	2
MU AM	18	9	3	24	9	21	21	
MU PM	28	--	--	17	22	11	22	
MU 3M	16	--	5	16	16	16	32	

14. Because we consider ourselves the Remnant Church, we will always be small in numbers.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	37	6	3	3	23	9	20	
CH MEM	32	12	4	10	10	10	18	3
MU AM	30	9	18	9	12	6	15	
MU PM	67	6	—	6	6	—	17	
MU 3M	11	26	16	16	16	—	16	

15. I have discovered and am using my spiritual gift.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	9	9	3	17	20	17	26	
CH MEM	13	4	9	17	22	14	17	4
MU AM	—	6	—	21	30	18	9	
MU PM	11	11	11	6	17	33	11	
MU 3M	5	—	16	42	11	16	11	

16. A major portion of our church budget should be spent in evangelism and outreach.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	—	—	—	11	6	20	63	
CH MEM	3	3	4	12	18	17	43	1
MU AM	—	6	—	3	21	21	49	
MU PM	—	—	—	17	17	28	39	
MU 3M	—	—	5	16	16	16	47	

17. I could tell some one how to become a Christian.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	3	—	—	3	17	11	66	
CH MEM	5	1	4	11	15	21	41	3
MU AM	9	—	3	12	9	21	46	
MU PM	11	6	—	17	6	22	39	
MU 3M	—	5	16	20	21	21	26	

18. Our church has set its goals and has a definite plan for the future.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	9	3	3	11	17	17	40	
CH MEM	8	3	8	13	15	11	35	6
MU AM	9	—	—	18	21	15	36	
MU PM	28	—	11	22	—	17	22	
MU 3M	5	—	5	—	5	42	42	

19. Only those who are in the Seventh-day Adventist church will be saved.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	91	3	3	—	—	—	3	
CH MEM	89	2	4	2	—	—	3	1
MU AM	97	—	—	3	—	—	—	
MU PM	95	6	—	—	—	—	—	
MU 3M	95	5	—	—	—	—	—	

20. When a person joins the church, the most important thing is that they understand the doctrines.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	40	—	14	14	11	3	14	3
CH MEM	32	10	10	10	6	9	23	
MU AM	27	3	12	15	6	12	24	
MU PM	28	17	11	11	6	11	17	
MU 3M	32	5	5	32	—	11	16	

21. I feel well equipped to engage in ministry for the church and community.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	14	—	17	14	26	11	14	3
CH MEM	21	10	11	19	18	8	8	4
MU AM	21	12	12	21	12	15	6	
MU PM	17	11	11	22	16	6	17	
MU 3M	26	11	16	11	21	11	—	

22. Evangelism is the work of the minister, not the average church member.

	DISAGREE						AGREE	
	1 =====	2 =====	3 =====	4 =====	5 =====	6 =====	7 =====	NR =====
LA ADV	66	9	9	3	6	3	3	
CH MEM	49	12	11	7	6	6	9	
MU AM	36	15	18	18	—	9	3	
MU PM	56	11	11	6	11	6	—	
MU 3M	32	5	11	26	11	16	—	

23. Seventh-day Adventists should belong to a number of organizations outside the Church.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	6	11	11	23	17	3	26	3
CH MEM	11	5	7	18	16	15	27	2
MU AM	6	6	6	27	15	15	24	
MU PM	6	—	22	28	—	6	39	
MU 3M	5	16	5	21	26	26	—	

24. It is not necessary to know much about the community in which we live to have an effective outreach program.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	51	14	3	9	—	3	11	3
CH MEM	58	10	8	6	2	4	10	2
MU AM	52	21	9	3	3	3	9	
MU PM	39	6	6	11	17	6	17	
MU 3M	58	16	—	11	5	5	5	

25. The minister should spend the major portion of his time in pastoral care for church members.

	DISAGREE							AGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NR
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
LA ADV	23	9	9	11	26	11	14	3
CH MEM	13	8	11	16	15	11	26	
MU AM	6	—	18	24	18	24	9	
MU PM	11	6	11	22	28	6	11	
MU 3M	—	—	5	32	16	32	16	

APPENDIX 3

BACKGROUND TO THE APOSTLE BARNABAS

BACKGROUND TO THE APOSTLE BARNABAS

The Scriptures give us little detail of the origins of Barnabas, except to say that he was a Levite and a Cypriot, and was living in Jerusalem when introduced into the Biblical narrative. His name was originally Joseph (Acts 4:36), and the name Barnabas was one given to him by the other disciples of Jesus. This name which means "the son of encouragement" was undoubtedly given to him as a description of his character, and indicates that he was a very supportive, warm, and encouraging individual.

Barnabas also had family connections in Jerusalem and owned a portion of land himself (although this land may not have been in Jerusalem). It was in the home of his aunt Mary, that one of the house churches in Jerusalem was established (Acts 12:12).¹

Traditional sources however, do give some significant information, and help to explain his subsequent career. Barnabas was obviously one of the very early converts to Christianity. "There is a tradition that he became a believer after witnessing the miracle wrought by the Lord at the pool of Bethesda."² Eusebius indicates that he became one of the seventy disciples (Luke 10:1).³

¹According to Col 4:10, Barnabas and John Mark were cousins. Acts 12:12 tells us that John Mark's mother was Mary. Hence Mary would be an aunt of Barnabas.

²M'Clintock and Strong, 11:346.

³Eusebius, History, 1.12; 2.1.

When Saul first came to Jerusalem after his conversion, it was Barnabas who became his sponsor, introducing him to the apostles, and guaranteeing his sincerity (Acts 9:27).

This fact lends some support to an ancient tradition (Theodor. Lector, Hist. Eccl. ii, 557, ed. Vales.) that they [Saul and Barnabas] had studied together in the school of Gamaliel; that Barnabas had often attempted to bring his companion over to the Christian faith, but hitherto in vain; that, meeting with him at this time in Jerusalem, not aware of what had occurred at Damascus, he once more renewed his efforts, when Paul threw himself weeping at his feet, informed him of "the heavenly vision," and of the happy transformation of the persecutor and blasphemer into the obedient and zealous disciple (Acts xxvi, 16).

After his dispute with Paul (Acts 14: 36-41), Barnabas disappears from Luke's record, and is only mentioned occasionally in the epistles. From 1 Cor 9: 5-6, it would appear that he was unmarried and supported himself by some form of manual occupation.

John J. Gunther² argues with some force, that Barnabas and John Mark carried on the latter part of their ministry in North Africa, and were key figures in the development of the influential church in Alexandria. This, he says, gives the reason for the fact that Paul had no intention of taking the gospel to Alexandria, since it was the territory of Barnabas (himself an apostle to the Gentiles). It is obvious that the Christian church went to North Africa at an early date. Men from Cyrene are mentioned in Acts 11: 20, and Alexandria was also the home of Apollos. Acts 18: 24-28 indicates that Apollos had some knowledge of the Christian message

¹M'Clintock and Strong, 1:668.

²John J. Gunther, "The Association of Mark and Barnabas with Egyptian Christianity (Part 1)," The Evangelical Quarterly 54 (1982):219-32.

before he arrived in Ephesus and was instructed more fully, later becoming an effective preacher.

In Acts, Luke tells of the progress of the gospel that he knew best, much is left unsaid. F. F. Bruce remarks,

The remarkably small place given to Alexandrian Christianity in the NT is due in the main to the fact that Paul concentrated on the road from Jerusalem to Rome, and that Luke is concerned to relate the progress of the gospel along this road.¹

It is believed that Barnabas was stoned to death by the Jews of Salamis in Cyprus about A.D. 64.²

¹Bruce, p. 382, n. 55.

²M'Clintock and Strong, 1:669; 11:346.

APPENDIX 4

GRAPHS OF THE GROWTH HISTORY OF MUSWELLBROOK CHURCH

CHURCH ANALYSIS

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980

YEARLY ANALYSIS

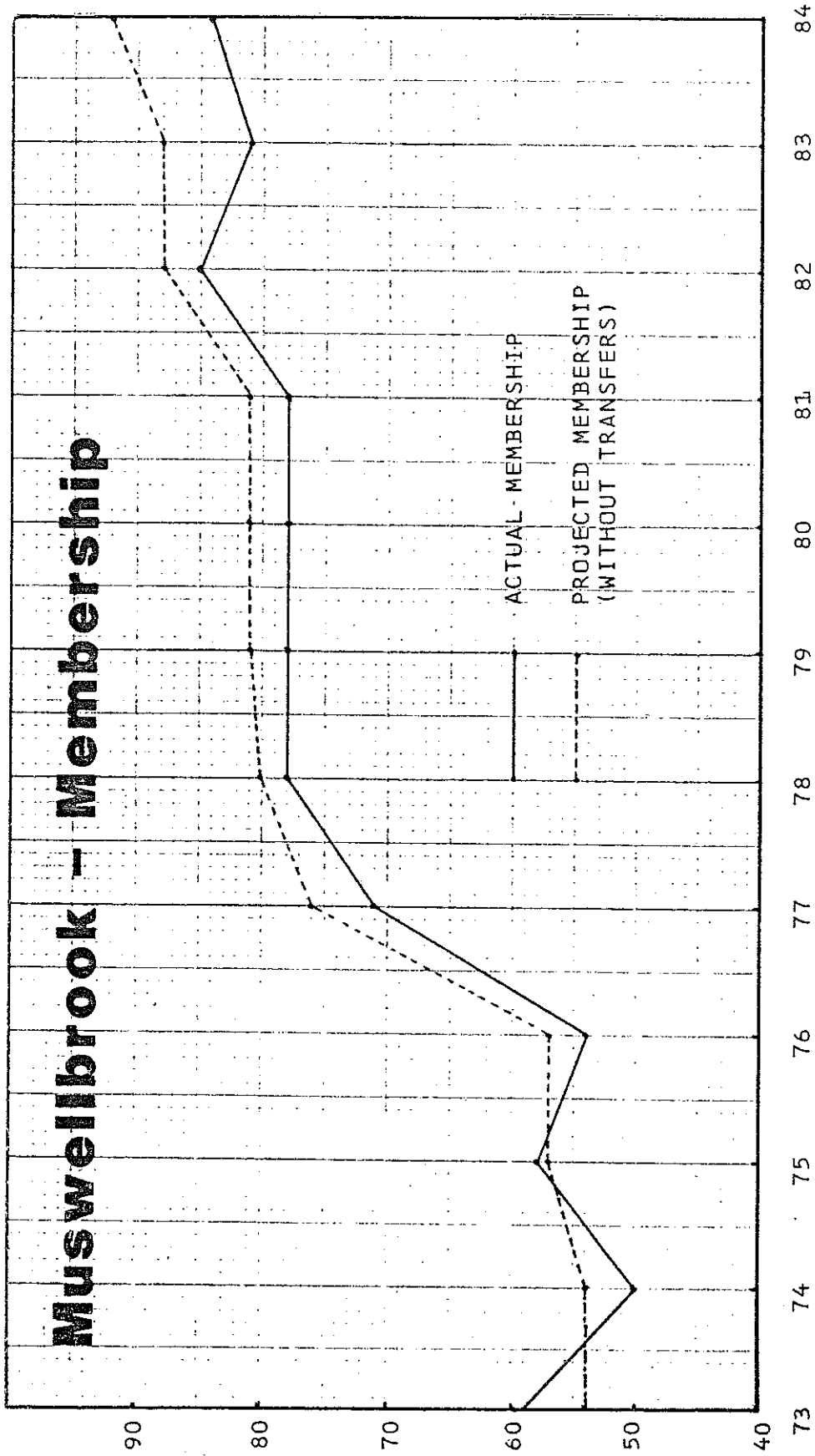
72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	
	6		3		19	14	1			8		4	Converts (all baptisms/ profession)
	1				8	2				5		2	Church Youth Baptism
	7	1	3	1	3	13	3	2		5	3	4	Transfers In
	2	10	8	5	4	9	4	2		3	10	4	Transfers Out
						1							Deaths
						8							Apostacy
						1							Missing

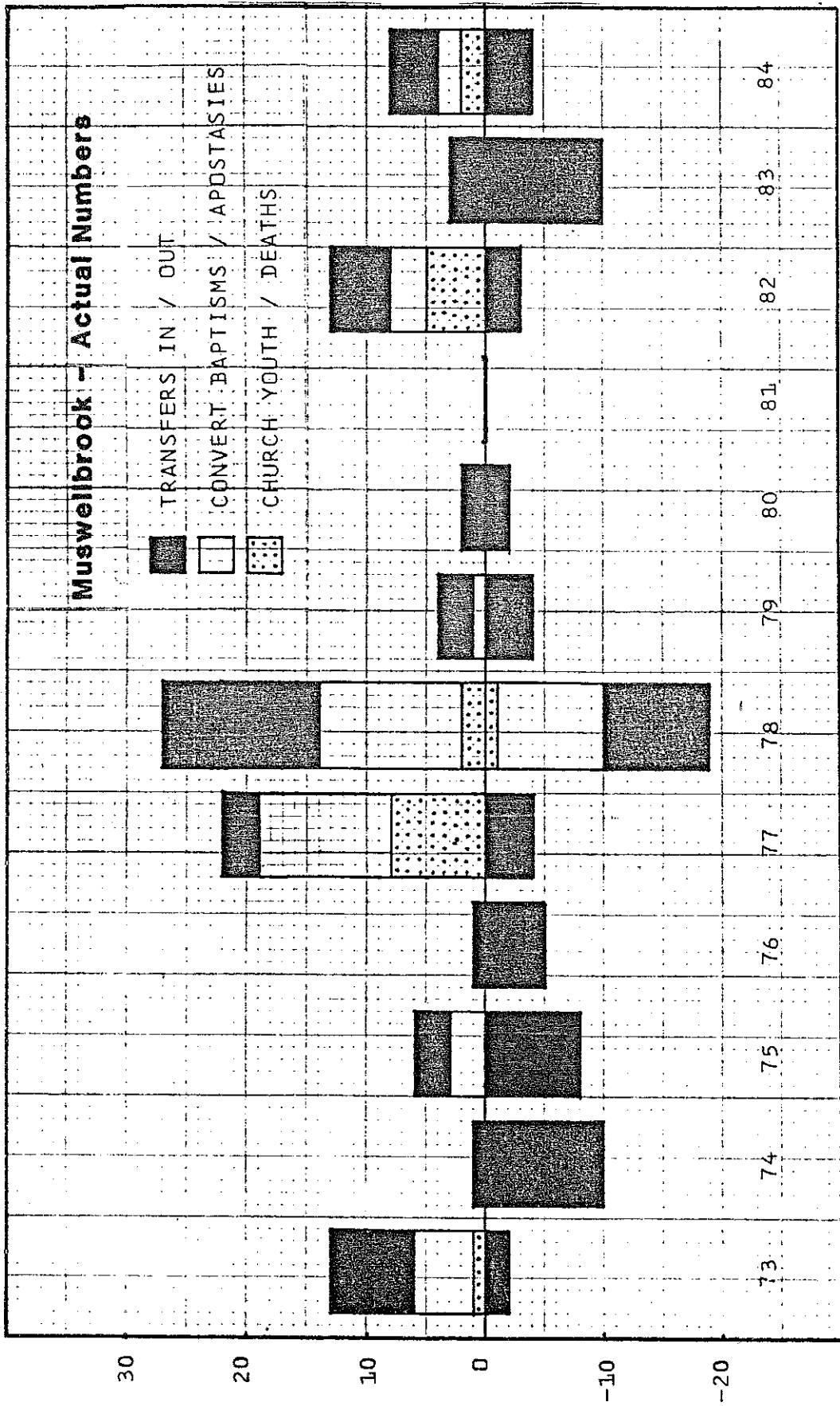
MEMBERSHIP

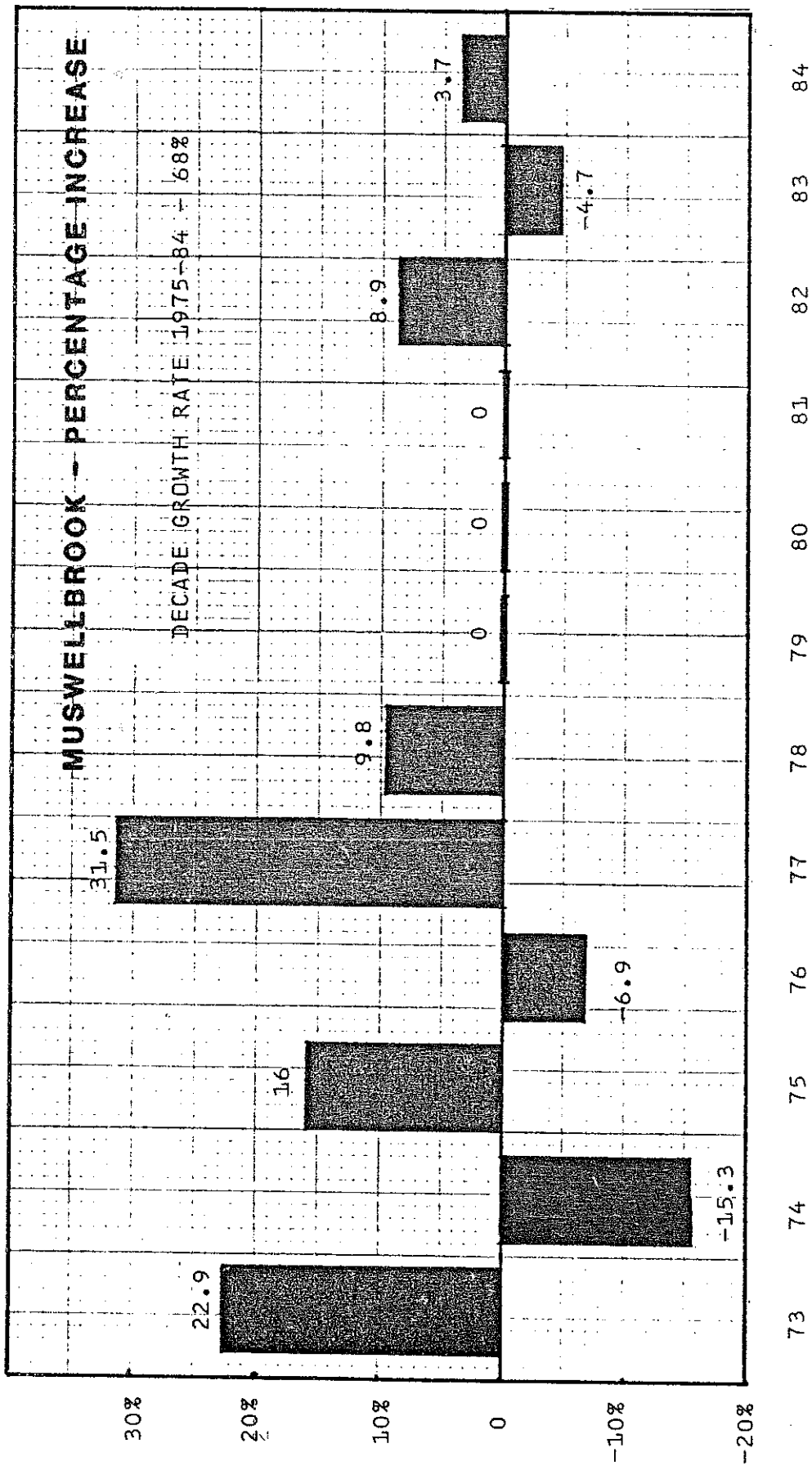
73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84
59	50	58	54	71	78	78	78	78	85	81	84

ANALYSIS

Attend Singleton	4
Moved not Transferred	9
In-active Members	22
Active Members	49

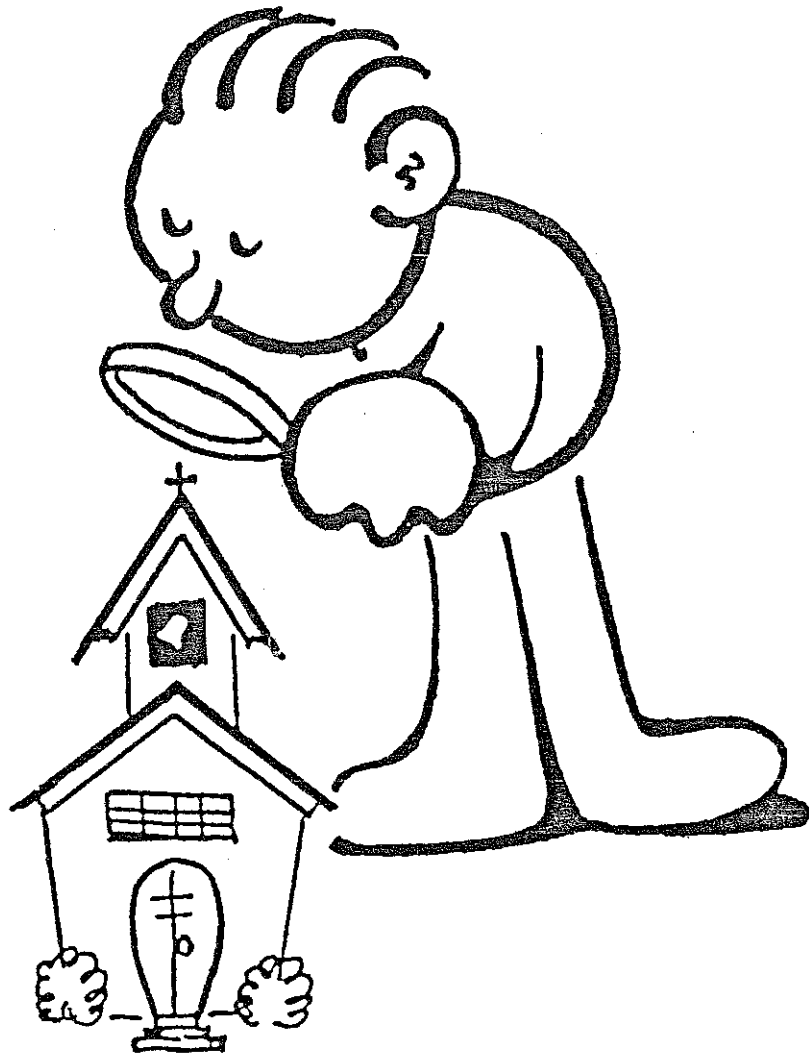




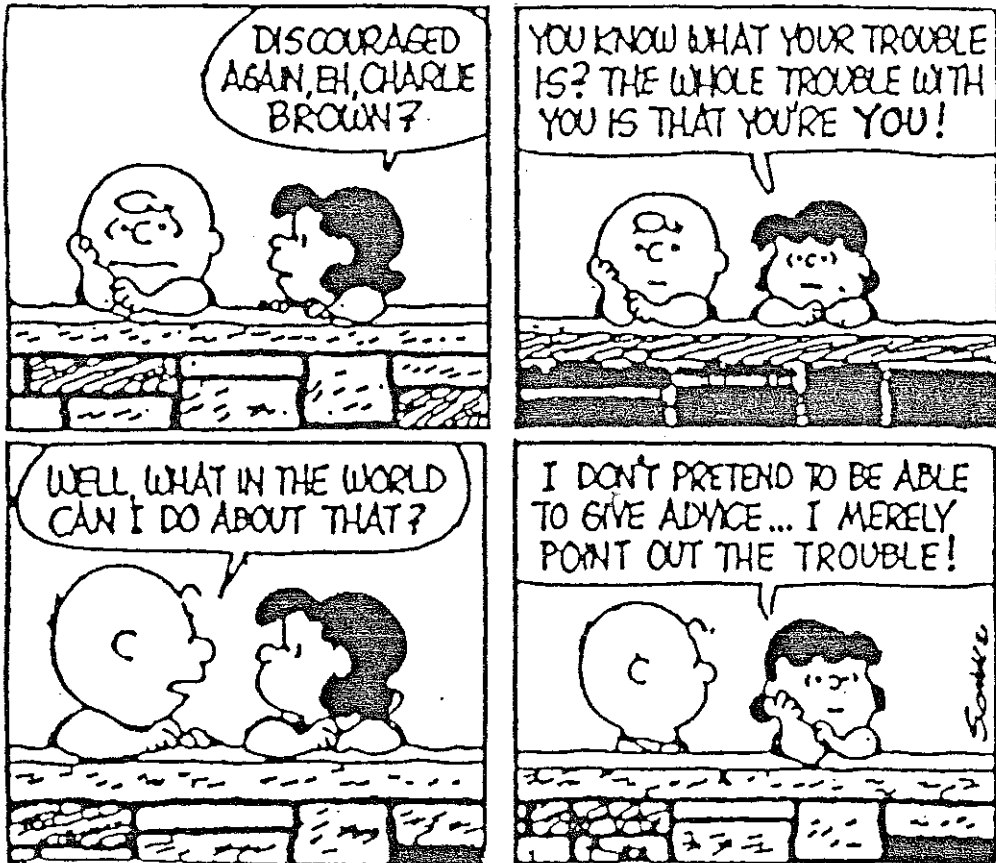


APPENDIX 5

OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCIES USED IN THE INSTRUCTION PERIOD



DISCOURAGED AGAIN?





ARE YOU SERIOUS
ABOUT THE
GREAT
COMMISSION?

GREAT COMMISSION GOAL

A CHURCH OF COMMITTED CHRISTIANS IN EVERY COMMUNITY,
IN EVERY CITY AND IN EVERY COUNTRY-SIDE THROUGH OUT
AUSTRALIA. (WORLD)

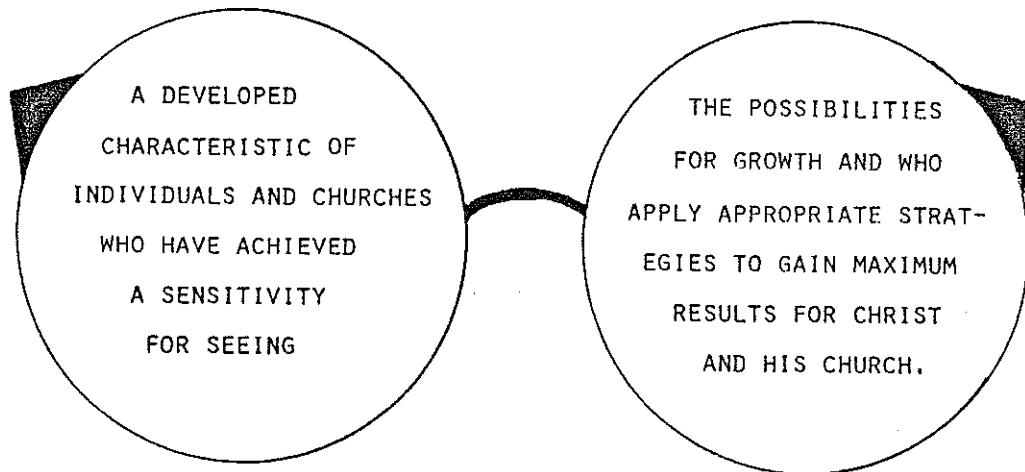
SO EVERY ONE CAN HEAR AND SEE DEMONSTRATED THE GOSPEL
FROM HIS OWN INTIMATES IN HIS OWN TONGUE,

AND HAS A REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A DISCIPLE
OF JESUS CHRIST.

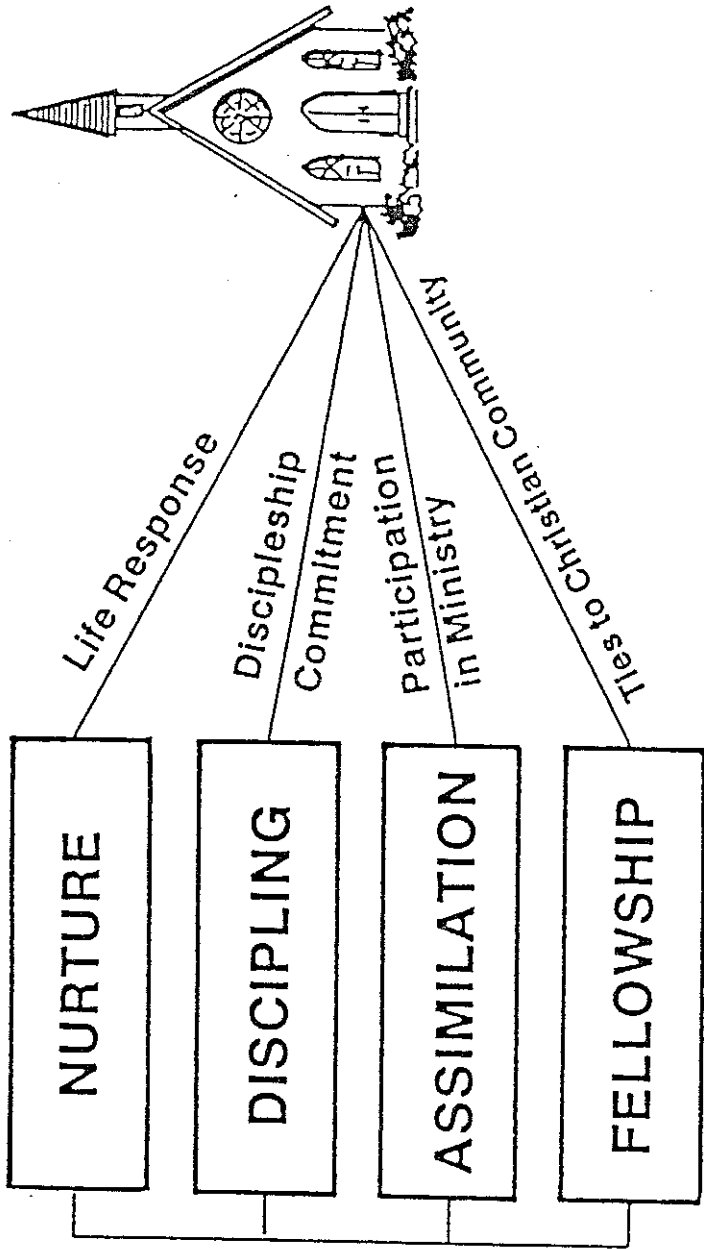
CHURCH GROWTH CONSCIENCE

THE CONVICTION PERMEATING THE BODY OF CHRIST THAT GOD'S
WILL IS FOR CHURCH GROWTH.

CHURCH GROWTH EYES

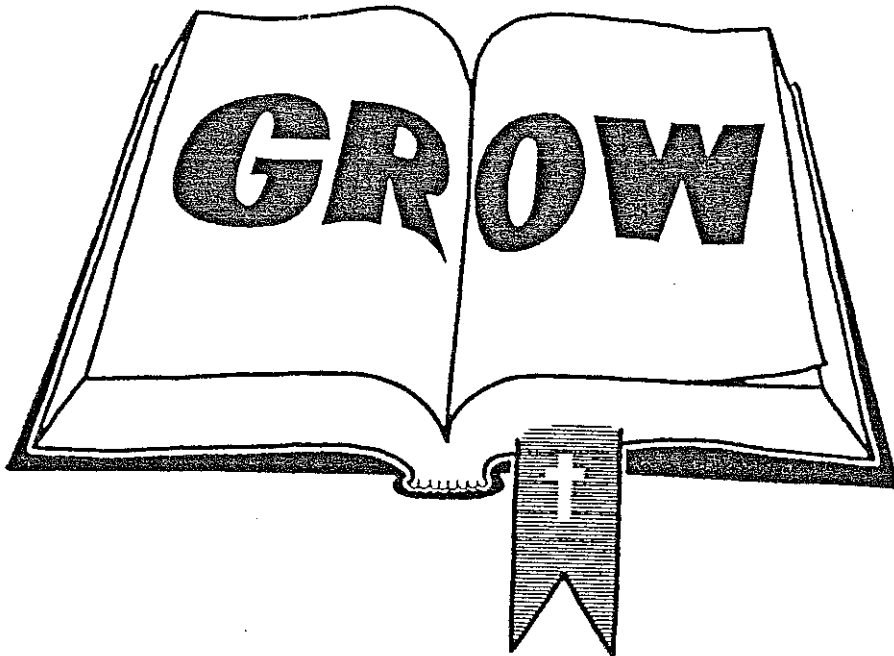


The Gospel Commission Calls for a Discipling Ministry
See Matthew 28:19, NIV



DEVELOPING THE BONDS AND TIES OF LASTING FELLOWSHIP
IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Bible says



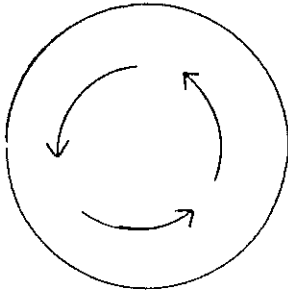
CHURCH GROWTH

"ALL THAT IS INVOLVED IN BRINGING
MEN AND WOMEN WHO DO NOT HAVE
A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS
CHRIST INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM
AND INTO RESPONSIBLE CHURCH MEMBER-
SHIP."

PETER WAGNER

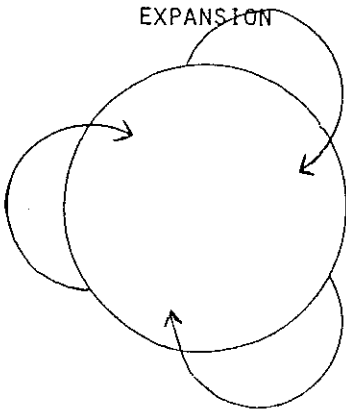
TYPES OF CHURCH GROWTH

INTERNAL



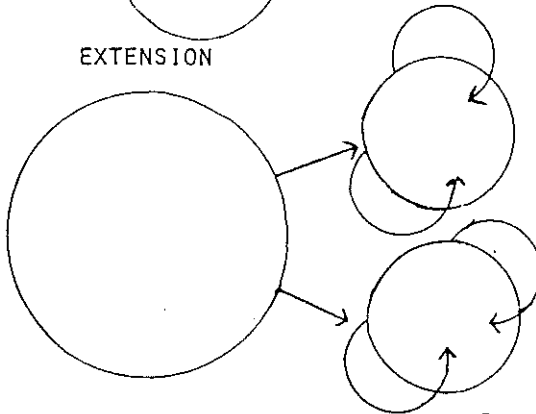
GROWTH OF INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE MEMBERSHIP IN THEIR CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH GOD.

EXPANSION



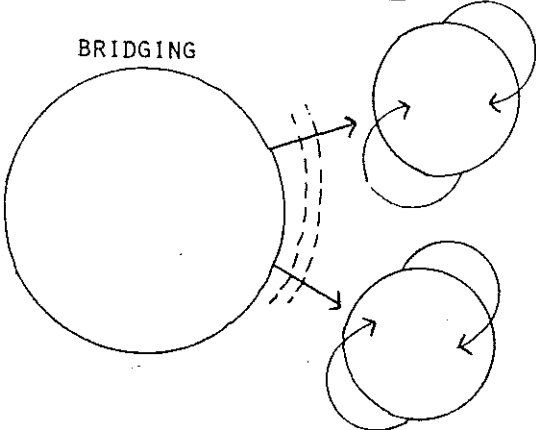
GROWTH OF CHURCH BY THE EVANGELIZATION OF NON CHRISTIANS WITHIN THE MINISTRY AREA OF THE CHURCH.

EXTENSION

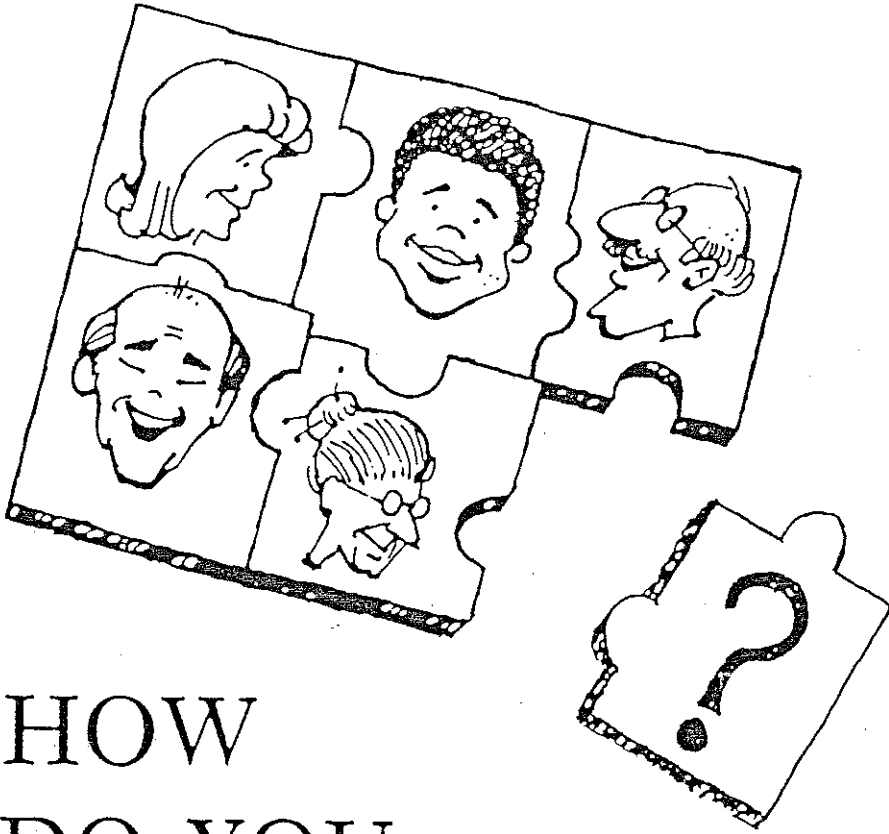


GROWTH OF THE CHURCH BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DAUGHTER CHURCHES WITHIN THE SAME GENERAL HOMOGENEOUS GROUP AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA.

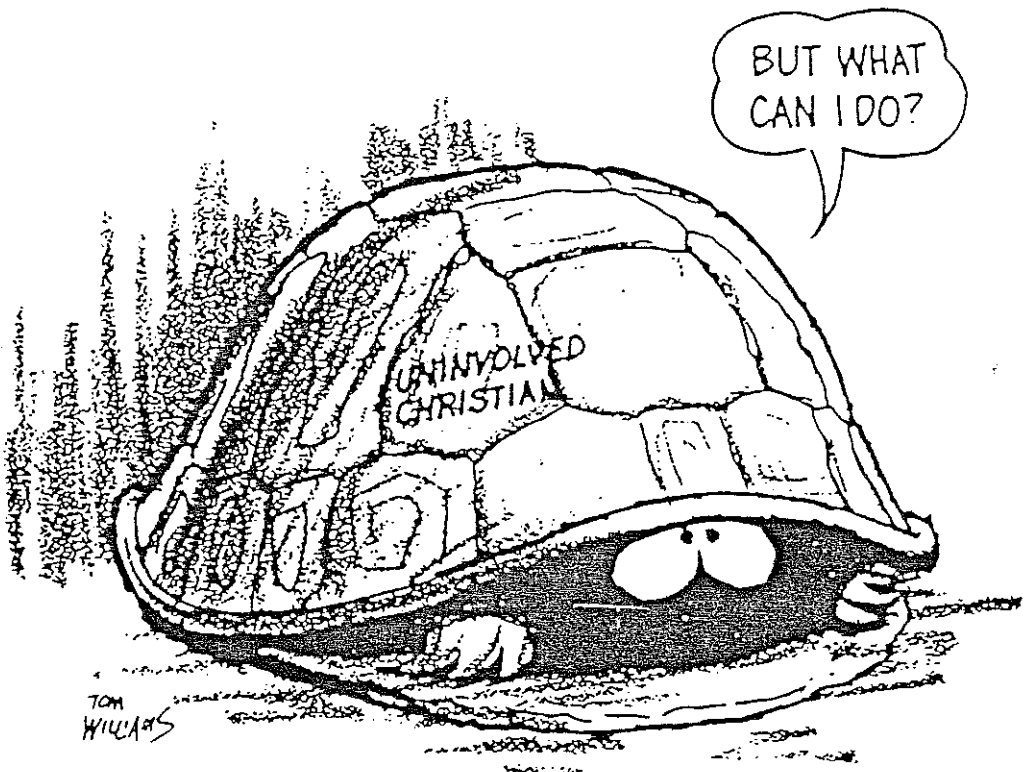
BRIDGING

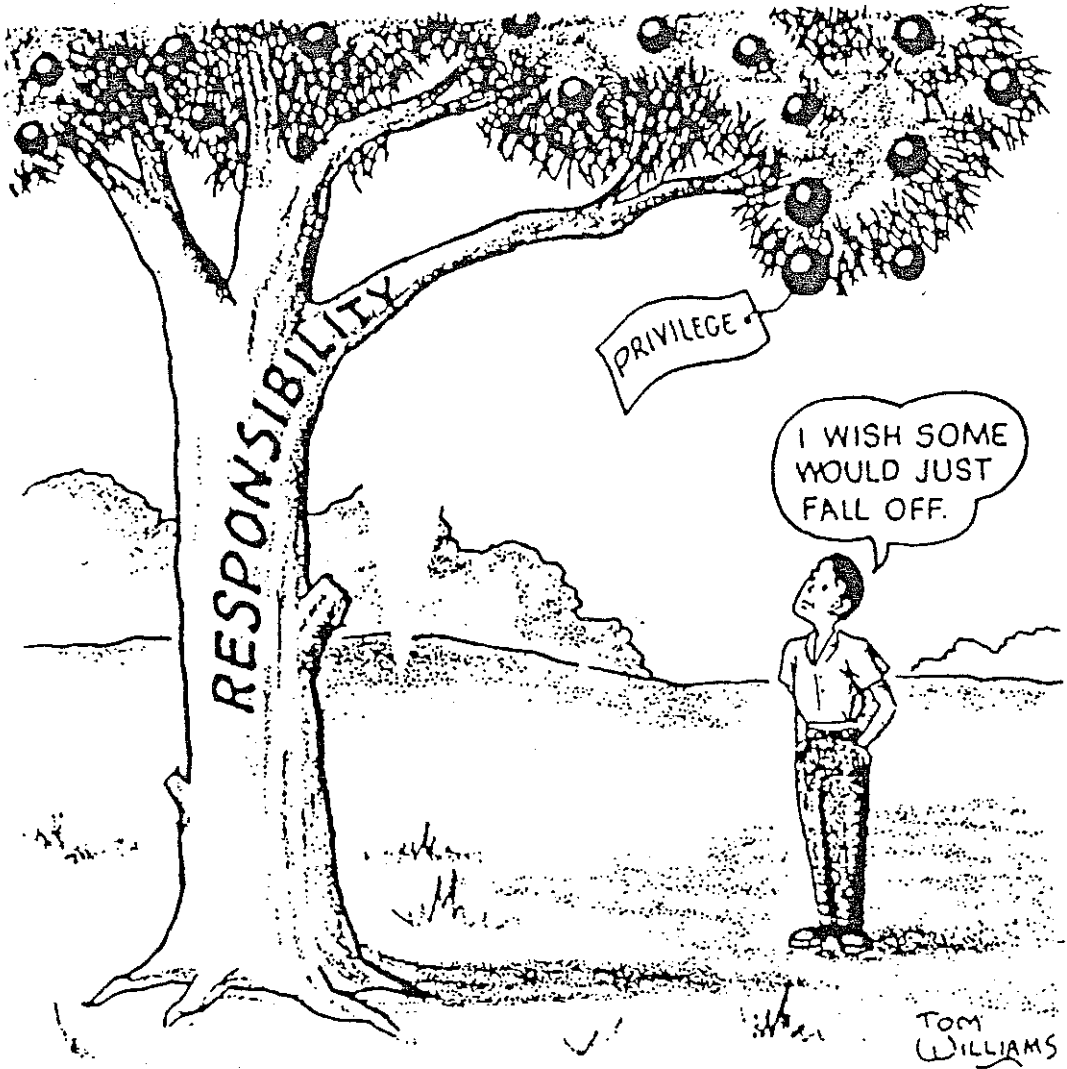


GROWTH OF THE CHURCH BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHURCHES IN SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS.



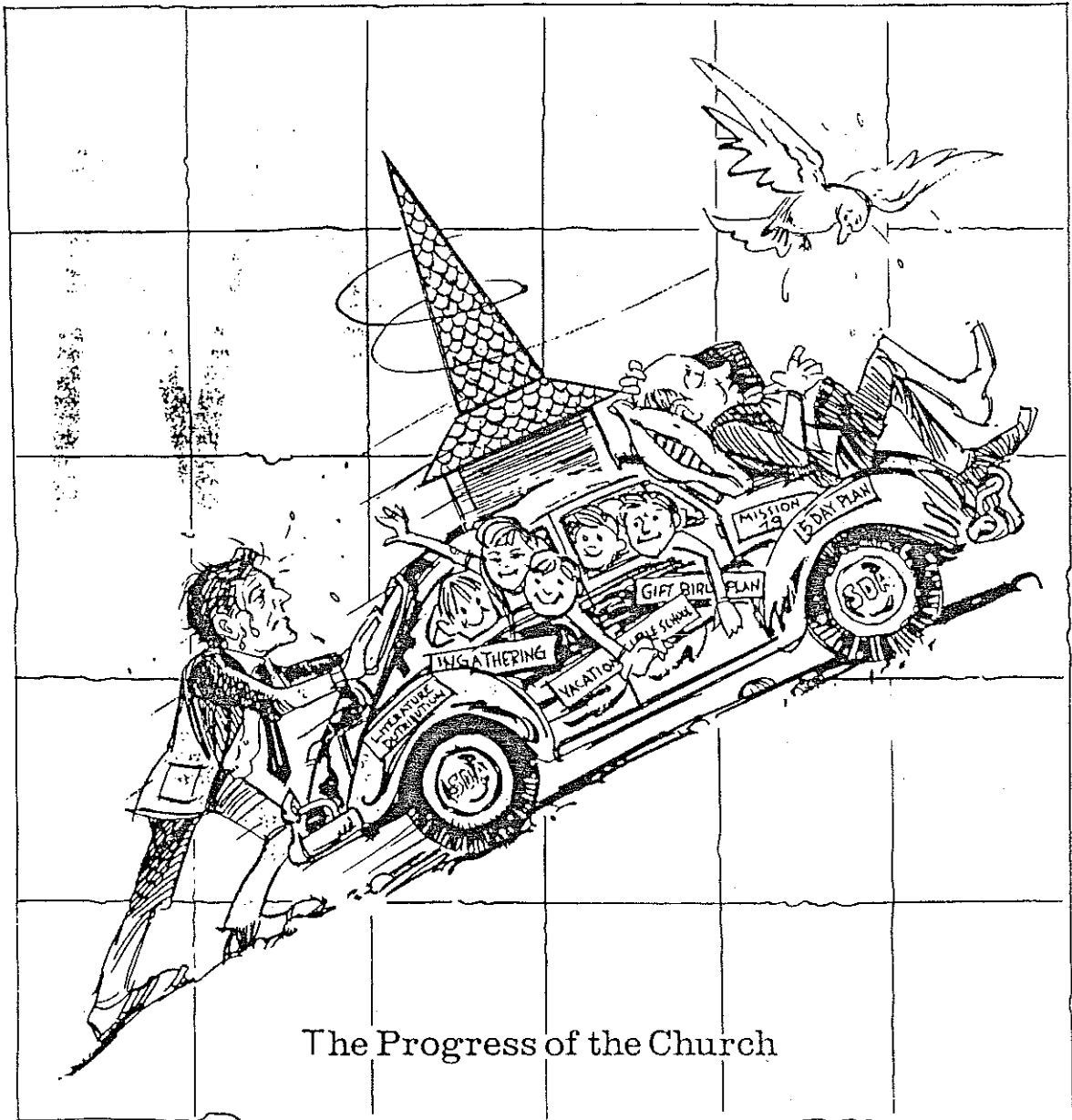
HOW
DO YOU
FIT IN
WITH OTHERS?





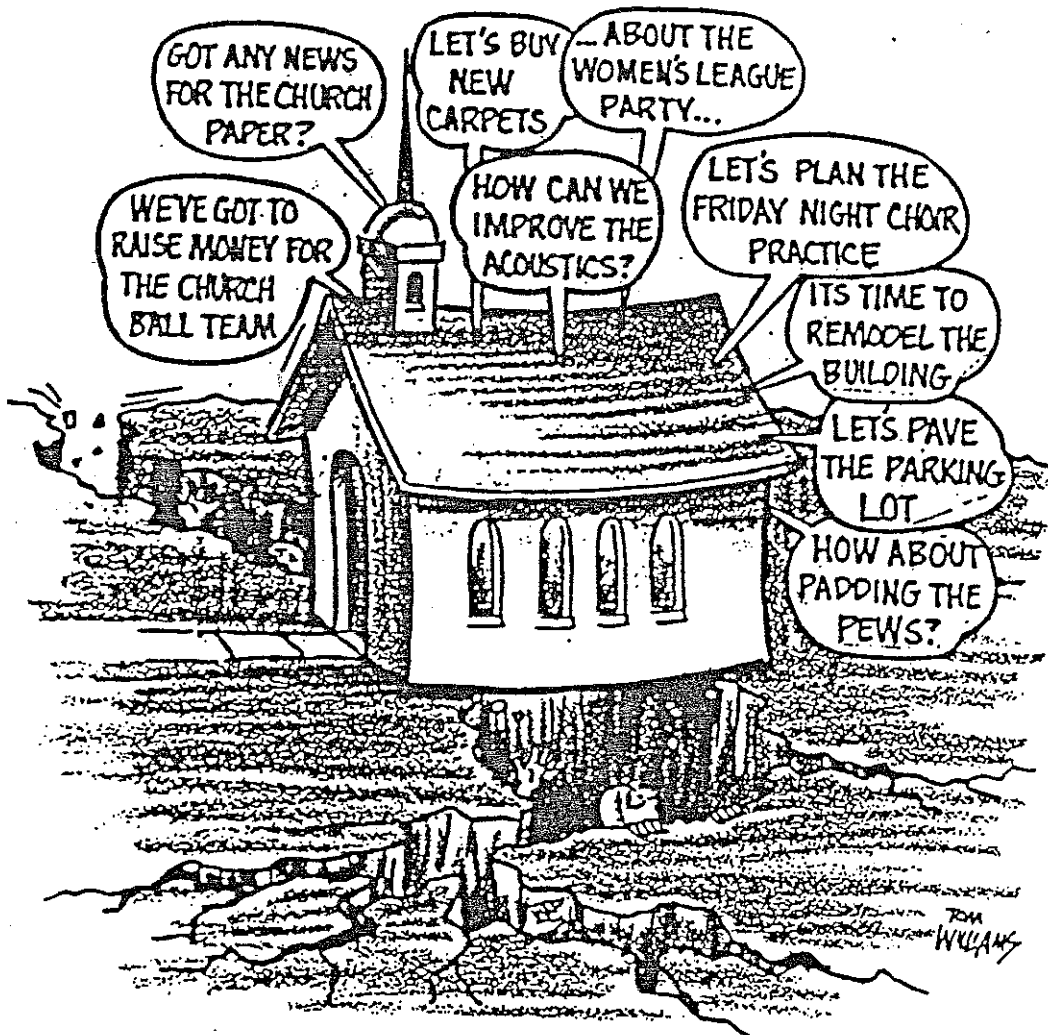




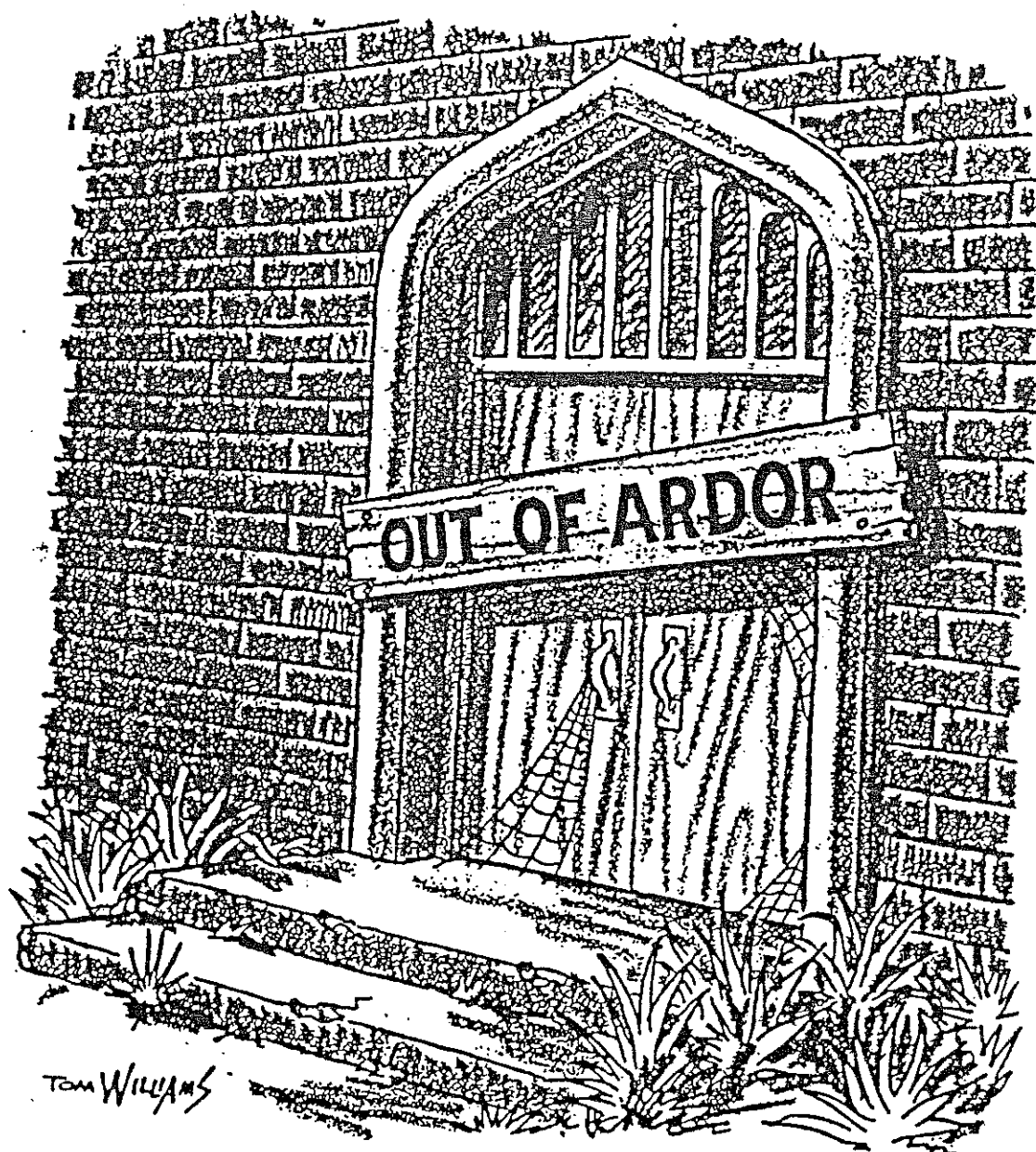








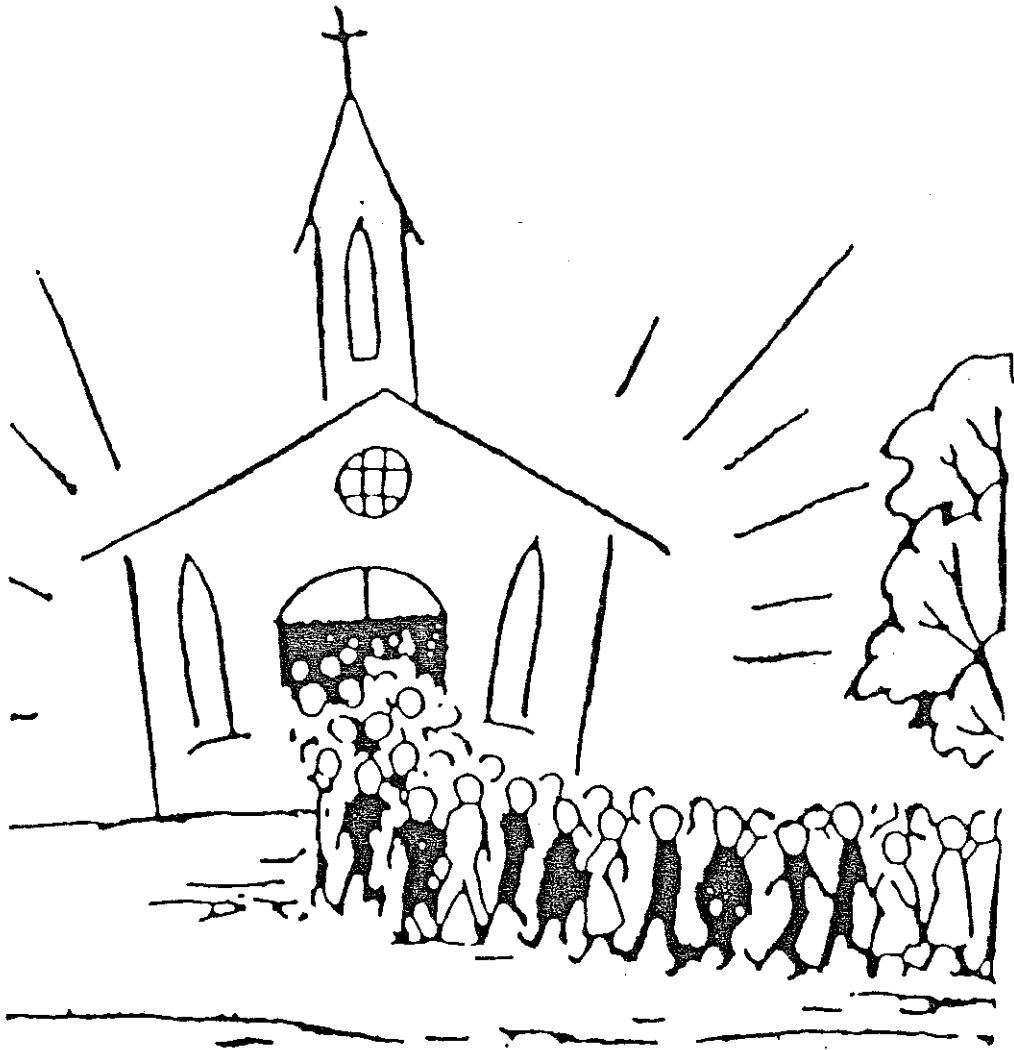


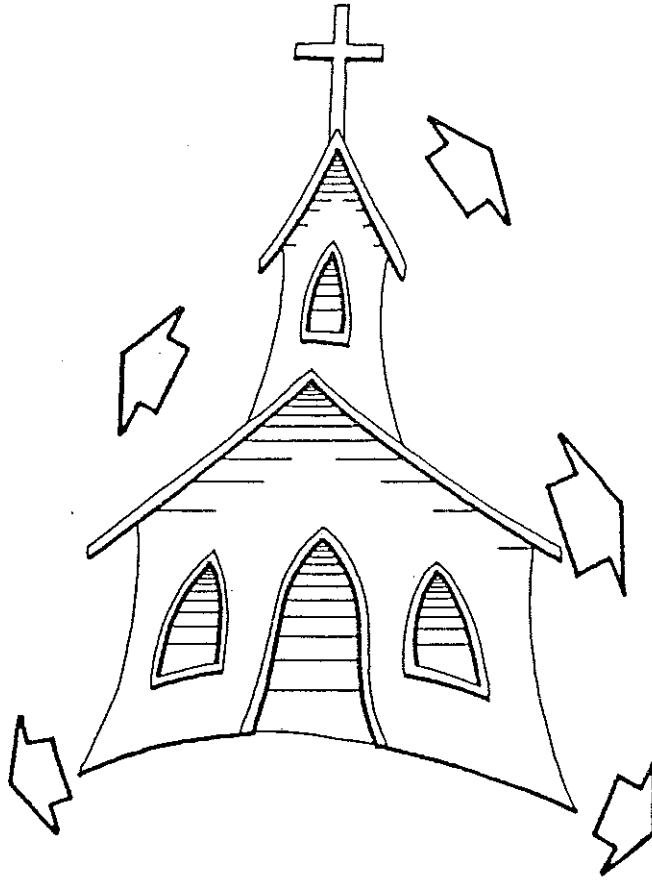




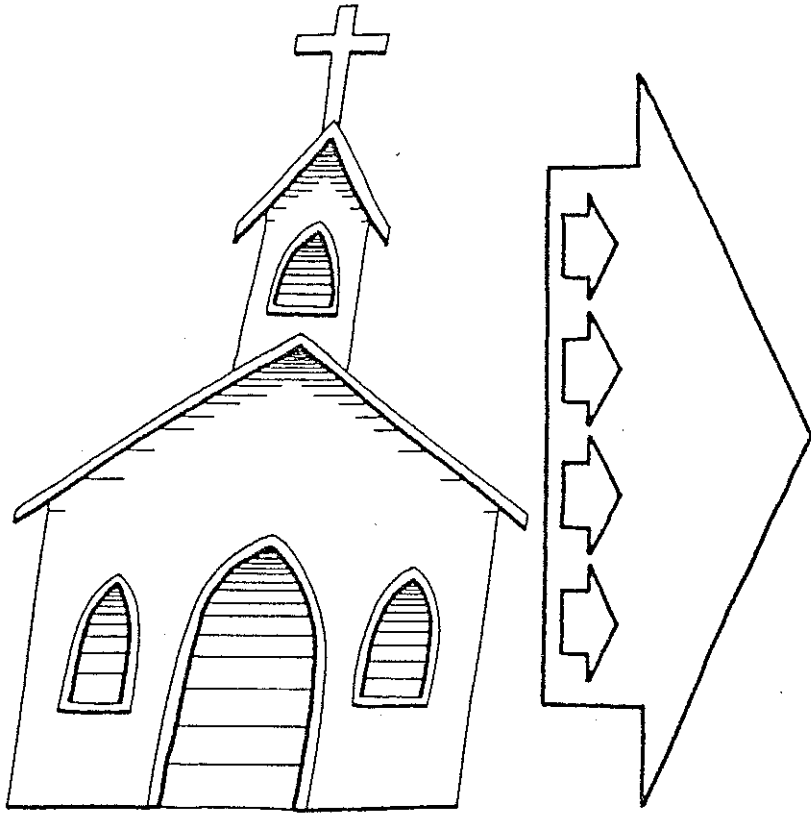
WELCOME!





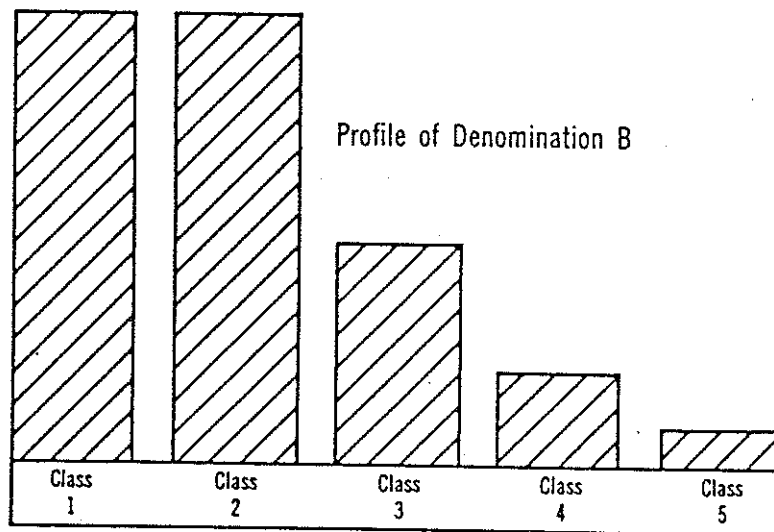
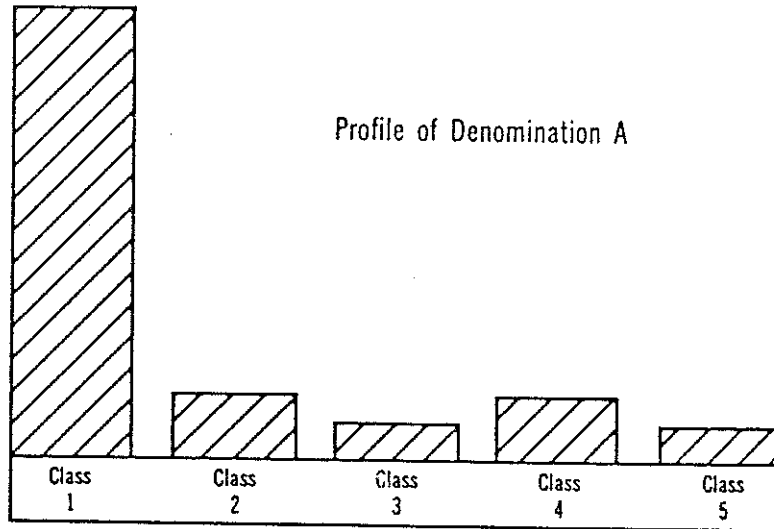


"These individualistic efforts pull the church in many different directions, making overall progress difficult, if not impossible."



**"When energies ... are
harnessed by unifying goals
...the church moves forward."**

Classes of Leaders

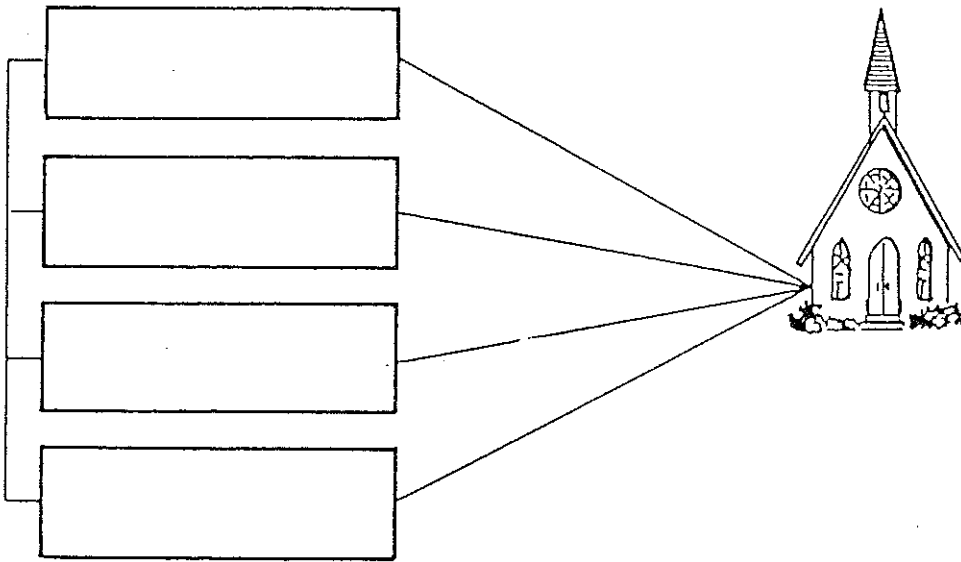


APPENDIX 6

HANDOUT MATERIAL FOR THE INSTRUCTION PERIOD

REASONS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH

The Gospel Commission Calls for a _____
See Matthew 28:19, NIV



DEVELOPING THE _____ AND _____ OF _____
IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONCEPTSa. Correct:

- _____

- _____

b. Inadequate

- _____

- _____

- _____

c. "Presence Evangelism"

- Ethne -

A.G. Daniels (1926) " If we had the right _____

_____ millions would soon be converted and

Christ would come."

Reply: " _____ "

2. THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF "CHURCH"

a. _____ images in the N.T.

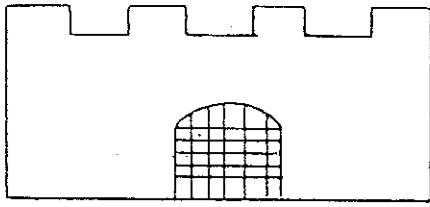
b. _____

- "His own _____ which He holds in a sin-

stricken, revolted world." - T.M. 16. A.A.11. M.M.89.

=

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS-2



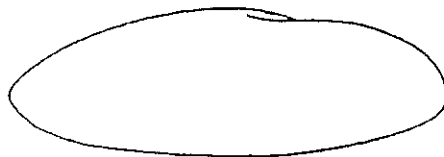
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____
- h. _____
- i. _____
- j. _____

CONCEPT OF MISSION: _____

AIM OF _____: _____

c. JESUS' IMAGES _____

= CHURCH IN THE _____



THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS-3

CHURCH IN THE WORLD

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

- d. _____

c.f. D.A. Ch.I _____

3. BLENDING THE CONCEPTS

a. C S. 117-9

b. Bring _____ and _____ together.

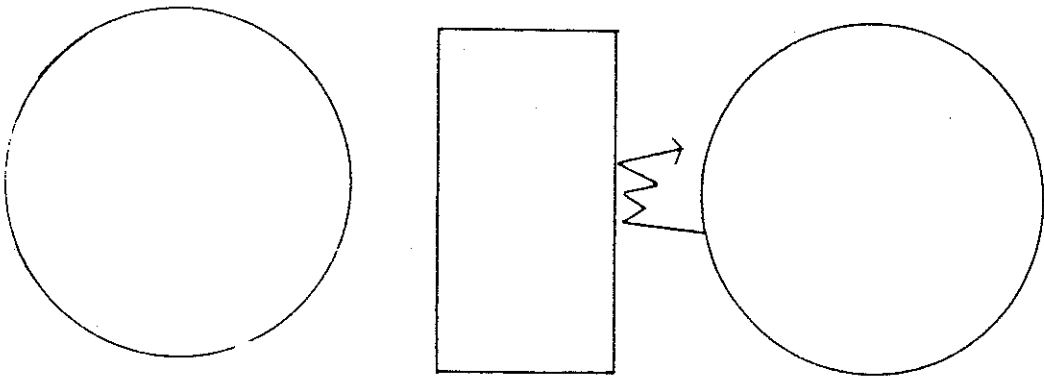
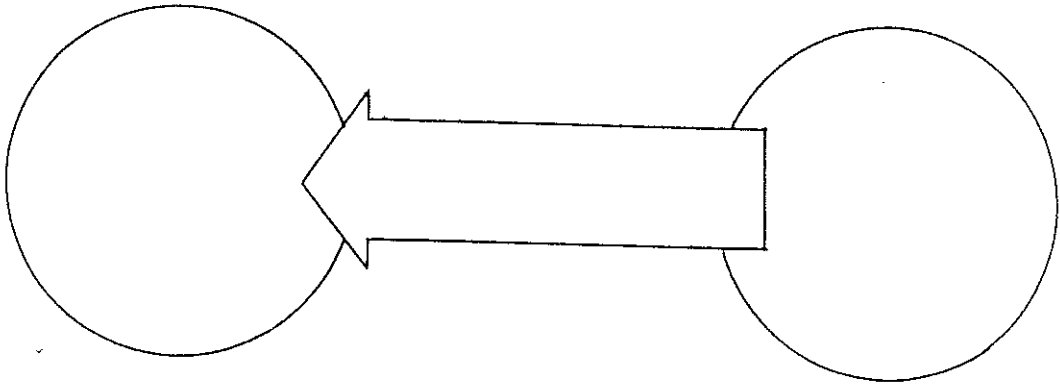
- _____ = _____

- _____ = _____

c. _____ maintains _____

_____ maintains _____

THE CHURCH AND CULTURE



CULTURE:-

1.

2.

3.

4.

CHRIST IN RELATION TO CULTURE

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

MAN IS ENTRUSTED WITH A CULTURAL MANDATE

1.

2.

3.

4.

LIFE EVENTS WHICH OPEN PEOPLE TO GOD

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

GIBBS: ENGLAND STUDY PUB. 1981

FIVE CLASSES OF CHURCH
WORKERS

<u>CLASS 1. WORKERS</u>
<u>CLASS 2. WORKERS</u>
<u>CLASS 3. WORKERS</u>
<u>CLASS 4. WORKERS</u>
<u>CLASS 5. WORKERS</u>

CHURCH GOALS

A CHURCH MANDATE - is how the members see their commission from God. See if you can catch God's plan for your church by completing the following sentence:-

OUR CHURCH EXISTS FOR/TO _____

GOAL SETTING

If you study the Bible you will find that Christ has certain specific goals for His church.

We need local church goals if we are to achieve anything as a church organization. Each church has particular talents and members, and can usually agree upon certain things that they would like to see accomplished by and in the local church.

Please list some things you would like to see this church accomplish in the next twelve months:-

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

OTHER IDEAS which may not be expressed in goal form.

APPENDIX 7
FAMILY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

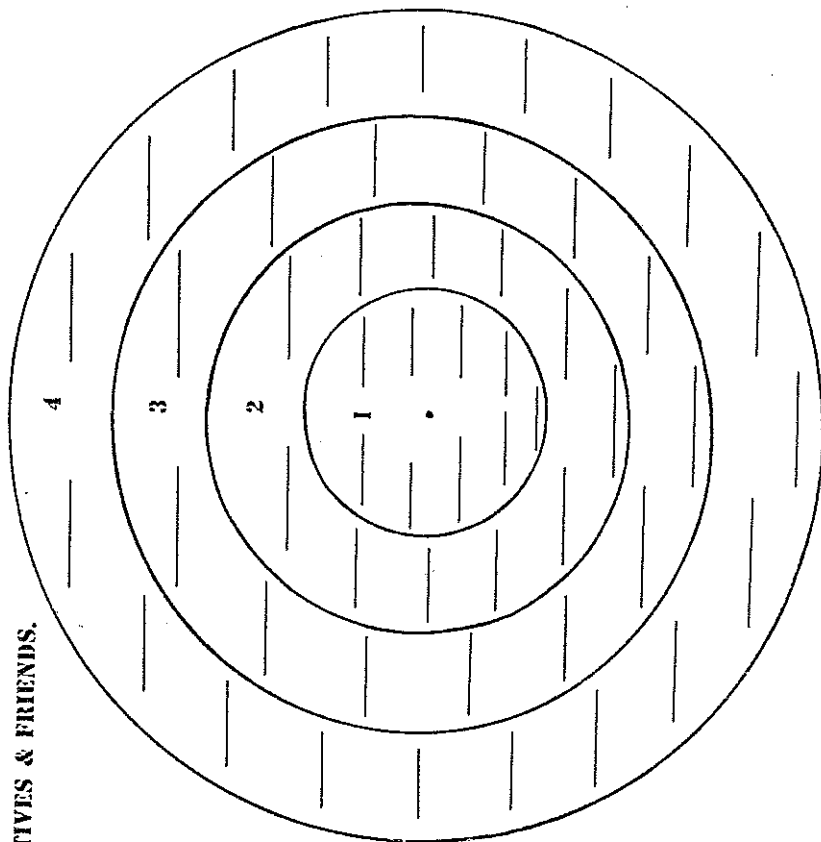
FAMILY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

TO FIND CONTACTS FOR CHRIST AMONG OUR FAMILIES, RELATIVES & FRIENDS.

WHAT TO DO -

1. Fill in the four circles with names as follows.
 - Circle 1 - Members of your immediate family.
 - Circle 2 - Close relatives.
 - Circle 3 - Friends and neighbours best known to you.
 - Circle 4 - Workmates, business contacts, sport friends, etc.
- Do not restrict names to those from your area only.
2. Tick each person who is already a baptised member.
3. Mark with a cross those you consider as possible "winables".
4. List them in order of priority.
5. Work out a plan of contact for each and action it.
6. Give out-of-town names to the Pastor for forwarding.
7. Send local names to the Mission Interest Co-ordinator.
8. Begin an active prayer programme.
9. Review your Circle regularly. Add new contacts.

CONTACT PRIORITIES

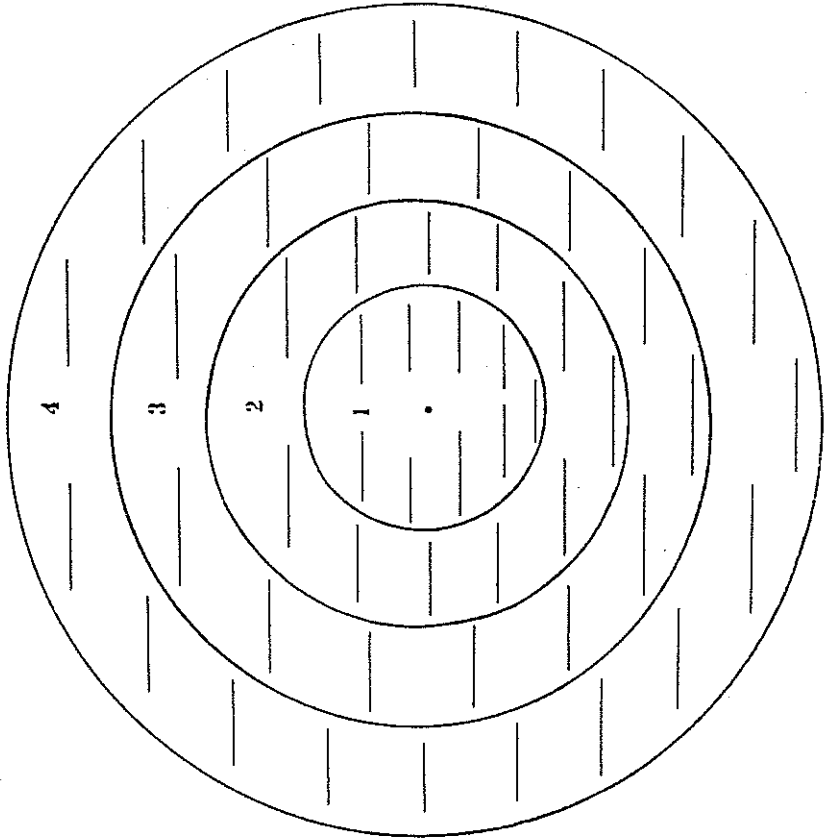


MAKE THIS FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE YOUR MISSION FIELD

Family Friendship Circle Contact	Family Friendship Circle Contact
Name	Name
Address	Address
Referred by	Referred by
Relationship	Relationship
(Detach and hand to the Pastor)	(Detach and hand to the Pastor)

"Go... to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." Mark 5:19.

FAMILY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE



APPENDIX 8

RESUME OF SABBATH SERMON--"A CHURCH ON THE MOVE"

A CHURCH ON THE MOVE

Sermon Presented at Muswellbrook, Sabbath, March 30, 1985.

Recently the title of a book captured my attention. It was called "The Church faces the Isms." That word "Isms," is an interesting word. We don't like "Isms." We don't like our church to be counted among the "Isms." There is something about that word that conjures up the image of danger to the church and its members. Even though we don't like the word very much, there are many dangerous "Isms" that we need to be aware of, and on guard against. We could think of several. There is atheism, agnosticism, pantheism, antinomianism, legalism, communism, and even criticism. The list is almost endless and the church needs to confront them all.

However, the most dangerous "Ism" to challenge the church is none of these. The greatest threat to the church in these last days is "somnambulism," or in other words sleepwalking. It is the threat of fatigue and weariness, the spiritual fatigue that is brought on by the long journey, the sustained battle, the seemingly endless delay. The Lord has promised to come but where is He? The greatest danger is not heresy, but somnambulism.

Ellen White writes, "The ministers are asleep; the lay members are asleep; and a world is perishing in sin." (8T, 37). She also comments, "sleeping preachers preaching to a sleeping people!" (2T, 337). The scriptures remind us that "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept (Matt 25:5).

H.M.S. Richards tells the story of a retired minister who moved out west to spend his last days in a little cottage in the foothills of the mountains. In the town there was a little chapel and each Sabbath he, along with ten other saints would gather together for the worship services. They would have Sabbath School and then he would preach to them. But this dear old brother was afflicted with somnambulism. He would take his text and begin to preach, and as he went on his voice would get lower and lower, and as his voice got lower the heads of the other saints got lower and lower until finally he was fast asleep and so were they. A passer by looking in exclaimed, "My, what a sight. The preacher's asleep, the members are asleep, what kind of church is this?"

The scriptures tell us "while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept" (Matt 25:5). There is a text in the scripture to challenge this condition. It is found in Romans 13:11-12. "Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake up from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand."

This morning I want to talk about a church on the move. A church that is alive and awake to the possibilities of what it could be, a church that is full of the love of God, cares for its members,

and reaches out into the community. In other words, a church that is really going places.

It is possible to regard the church in many different ways. Some would regard it as a crutch, others a place to get married or buried in. Still others may think of it as a place to entertain children and old ladies. Sadly some regard it as a money maker, or an exploiter. All of these however are far wide of the mark.

The church is more than just an organisation, it is a living vibrant organism. It is more than bricks and mortar, it consists of a group of people who have been called out by a loving God and have banded together in a common purpose. The church exists for four basic reasons; (1) worship, to provide an environment where members can reach out to a loving God and realize that they are dependant on Him, (2) nurture, to build up, teach and care for its members, (3) ministry, to reach out and win those who don't know Jesus, and (4) fellowship, to provide a caring community where relationships with others can be fostered.

The New Testament church was such a church. It exploded onto the scene of action and demonstrated tremendous growth under the power of the Holy Spirit. Notice the explosive series of conversions as we trace them through the book of Acts.

1:5 - 120 in the upper room
 2:41 - 3000 converted on the day of Pentecost
 2:47 - conversions daily
 4:4 - 5000 men (not to mention the women and children)
 5:14 - believers were added to the church
 6:7 - increased rapidly (multiplied)
 6:7 - large number of priest were obedient to the faith
 9:35 - all Lydda and Sharon believed
 11:21, 24 - large numbers joined the church in Antioch
 16:5 - the church was strengthened and grew in numbers daily
 21:20 - you know how many myriads (tens of thousands) believed

What were the reasons for this growth.

1. It was God's purpose. People were coming to feel about salvation the same way that God feels about it.
2. The Expectation of the Jews. Many were expecting the Messiah and saw Him in Jesus Christ.
3. The Resurrection. Many knew that Jesus was alive, they had seen Him and talked with Him. They therefore knew that His claims were true.
4. The Common people. Spreading the news of the risen saviour became the work of the ordinary person. Each of the three thousand must have had many relatives and friends. They shared with their uncles, aunts, cousins, grandchildren, parents, workmates, and other acquaintances.

5. The Church was essential. They were united in house churches and fellowship groups as well as meeting together in the temple for worship.

One of the first churches outside Jerusalem to really get on the move was the Antioch Church. Antioch was located at the top of the fertile crescent, in the north of Syria. It was a city with a population of about half a million, and was a favourite summer resort because of its favourable climate. It was famous for the grove of Daphne, with its trees, fountains, theatres, baths, and temples. The gods Appollo and Artemis were worshipped there and it had a reputation for luxury, extravagance, and immorality.

As far as the Christian church was concerned, it was started by unknown fugitives from the persecution in Jerusalem. It can be regarded as a city of "firsts." It was there that the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles in an organised way, the disciples were first called, Christians there, the first famine relief offering was collected there, and Antioch was the first church to send out missionaries.

Antioch was one of the greatest missionary churches in the New Testament era and provides an example of a church on the move. What then are the characteristics that made it what it was.

1. There was a focus on worship

Acts 13:2 indicates that there were times in the life of the Antioch church that were given to special periods of prayer, fasting, and worship. It was on one of these occasions that the Holy Spirit communicated directly with the church regarding the ordination of Barnabas and Saul.

2. There was a focus on outreach

This church regarded evangelism as an essential part of their program (Acts 11:20-26). They were so effective in penetrating the community that a new name was coined to describe them—"Christians."

3. There was a focus on nurture

The leaders in the Antioch church were concerned to build the spiritual strength of the members. There was an emphasis on teaching and encouragement (Acts 11:23; 15:35).

4. There was a focus on people

They were concerned not only with the spiritual needs of fellow believers, but with the physical and social needs as well. When they heard of the plight of their fellow Christians in Judea who were suffering as a result of the famine, they determined to send relief (Acts 11:27-30).

5. There was a focus on growth

In Antioch there was a concern for the expansion of the kingdom of God. They first preached here to the "Greeks" (Acts 11:20), Barnabas sought additional help in the person of Saul to aid with their ministry (Acts 11:25), and they were willing and able to send out missionaries to the far corners of the earth (Acts 13:1-3).

6. There was a focus on spiritual gifts

There were those in this church who had spiritual gifts, and these gifts were recognised by the church as a whole (Acts 11: 27-28; 13:1-3). Each had their appointed place to fill.

7. There was a focus on lay leadership

It is interesting to notice that Barnabas and Saul did not have hands laid on them in ordination until after they had laboured in Antioch for a period exceeding a year. Their most effective ministry was done as laymen in the church. When they were eventually ordained, they left immediately on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).

8. They were prepared to sacrifice

This fact is evidenced by the fact that they were willing to send relief to their brethren in Judea, "every one according to his ability" (Acts 11 29). It is also quite possible that the Antioch church supported Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey. There is no evidence to give support to the idea that during this first journey they worked at their trade to support themselves as they did on subsequent journeys.

9. They saw the possibility of change

The strongest evidence for this fact is that it was in Antioch where the change to large scale mission to the Gentiles really took place (Acts 11:20). They were doing something that had never really been attempted before. This whole issue caused considerable controversy in the early church. It was such an outstanding change that it became the main agenda item for the first general church council mentioned in Acts 15.

10. They presented reports of their activities to the church

When Barnabas and Paul returned from their journey, they gathered the whole church together and reported how the Lord had

blessed their work and further opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27-28). This must have proved a real encouragement to those who had remained behind in Antioch.

These then are the characteristics of a "church on the move." With these characteristics it is no wonder that the Antioch church made a significant impact on the community in which it existed.

What about our church today? How closely do we match these characteristics? If we are going to make any impact on the community and recover from the somnambulism that afflicts us so often we should endeavour to copy the example of the Antioch church. Then we too may have a church on the move here in Muswellbrook.

Let us remember the words of Paul, "it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Rom 13:11).

APPENDIX 9

SUMMARY OF MATERIAL PRESENTED DURING INSTRUCTION PERIOD

SUMMARY OF MATERIAL PRESENTED DURING THE INSTRUCTION PERIOD

FOUR IMPERATIVES OF THE GOSPEL COMMISSION

The Gospel Commission is found in Matt 28:19-20. This commission presents the church with four commands that must be fulfilled if it is to be really successful.

1. Go!

This means that there is a need to be active in the search for souls. There must be a witnessing ministry that reaches out to the lost. The witness of life must be complemented by the witness of lip.

2. Make disciples!

The Gospel Commission calls for a discipling ministry. A disciple is one who follows in order to learn. The church's job is not complete until there are those who are choosing to become followers of Jesus and who are ordering their lives the way that God would have them do.

3. Baptise!

The Gospel Commission also requires that all who become followers of Jesus become responsible members of His body, the church. The method of entry into the church is by baptism.

4. Teach!

This aspect involves the care and the nurture of those who join the church. There is a teaching ministry that is necessary so that members will be aware of the things that Jesus has commanded and be able to learn how to follow Him.

SEARCH AND HARVEST THEOLOGY

Jesus came into the world to not only seek the lost, but to save them. He therefore is concerned that the Gospel not only be proclaimed, but that men and women be persuaded to accept Him and join the church. It is God's will that the church grow and His lost children be found. Any outreach program that is conducted should be concerned with the ultimate aim of seeing people make decisions for Jesus and His church. The search is not the end in itself, it is the beginning of the process that will lead ultimately to reproduction.

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

An adequate philosophy of ministry is necessary if the church is to be effective in its witness. The church exists for four basic reasons, (1) fellowship, (2) nurture, (3) worship, and (4) mission. An effective philosophy of ministry will start with the fellowship needs of individuals. It will provide a warmth, acceptance, and a feeling of belonging. Once people have been accepted into the group and there is a strong relationship of trust, it is possible to present propositional truth. It is then time to share the Word of God in a meaningful appropriate way, to teach, nurture, and lead them to grow in faith and trust. We never win strangers to the church, we make the strangers our friends, and then we win our friends.

Once people come to know God as He really is, they will be led to worship Him in joy and gratitude for all that He has done. When they have a strong, meaningful relationship with Jesus, mission will be the natural result as there will be a desire to share their personal experience. The new Christian will be led into responsible membership and will be reproducing himself. It has been said that the Christian church is always one generation from extinction. Every person must be led to believe for themselves.

IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

There are many images of the church in the Scriptures, it has been estimated that there are 106 in the New Testament. An understanding of the images of the church is important if we are to be effective in our ministry to the world.

One important image is the "fortress." This image sees the church as isolated and separate from the evil world. It is an institution set apart from the world, and there is a hostility that goes both ways. The key thought is; "come out and be ye separate." Its concept of mission is to rescue people from the evil world, to make a theological raid and take trophies back to the fortress for perfecting. The aim of the fortress is to build the institution and to protect the people.

Jesus used other images of the church such as, salt, yeast, and light. These must be mixed with the substance to be effective and represent the church in the world, aware that God is also at work in the world as well as in the church. The concept of mission represented by the salt is a distribution of Christians everywhere so that their presence is felt wherever they are, and thus the world comes to know Jesus by associating with them.

Jesus made the statement that Christians should be in the world but not of the world, thus indicating a blending of the two concepts. We need to have both in the right balance. The fortress maintains our identity, while the salt maintains communication and witness with the world.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF MISSION

IN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

The development of the concept of mission in the Adventist church did not come as a fully developed philosophy, but was some considerable time in development. It was similar to the early church as it was some time before their concept of mission had expanded to encompass the whole world. The early church at first did not see the need to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

Just after the great disappointment in 1844, the early Adventists felt that their mission was only to approach those who had been in the Millerite Movement, hence the term "shut door." By the end of the 1840's they did realize that the gospel was for the world, but they interpreted the world to mean North America, since there were representatives from almost every nation resident there. By the 1870's they realised that the world meant more than just North America, but they felt that their message was to go to the Christian world. In 1874, they sent the first overseas missionary, John Andrews, to Europe. Other nations such as Australia and New Zealand (1885) followed later. Soon after, it was realised that the message of the Advent was intended for the whole of the inhabited world, and today the Adventist church has a presence in almost every nation on the face of the earth.

TYPES OF CHURCH GROWTH

1. Internal

The growth of individuals within the membership in their Christian relationship with one another and with God.

2. Expansion

The growth of the church by evangelization of non-Christians within the ministry area of the church.

3. Extension

The growth of the church by the establishment of daughter churches within the same general homogeneous group and geographical area.

4. Bridging

The growth of the church by the establishment of churches in significantly different cultural and geographical areas.

LIFE EVENTS WHICH OPEN PEOPLE TO GOD

In 1981, Gibbs pointed out six factors that are important. I have added a seventh.

1. Birth of a baby
2. Adolescents faced with choosing a career and making a living
3. Facing the personal adjustments that come with marriage
4. Threat of serious illness and the prospect of death
5. Threat of unemployment
6. Prospect of retirement
7. New residents

CLASSES OF CHURCH WORKERS

- Class 1. Members who primarily serve existing Christians
- Class 2. Members who primarily serve and evangelise non-Christians in their ministry area in an effort to bring them into the church
- Class 3. Volunteer or partially paid leaders who serve the church in an evangelistic context
- Class 4. Full-time, paid, professional staff
- Class 5. Denominational or inter-denominational leaders

It has been demonstrated that churches that focus on, and have a large proportion of class 2 workers are the churches that grow.

CHRIST AND CULTURE

The church needs to pay attention to the culture of the society in which it exists. The church that is culturally related will communicate with the world, however there will be great barriers for the church that is culturally unrelated. Culture has been defined as an integrated system of (1) beliefs, (2) values, (3) customs, and (4) institutions which bind a society together and give it a sense of dignity, identity, security, and continuity.

There are a number of positions taken with regard to the relationship of Christ and culture.

1. Christ against culture
2. Christ of culture
3. Christ above culture
4. Christ and culture in paradox
5. Christ, the transformer of culture
6. Christ is above, but working through culture

Number six is probably the most acceptable position since God chooses the culture within which humans live as the arena for His interaction with people. It is interesting that the supreme revelation of God was made to mankind in a cultural context. Jesus became a part of the culture of His day in order that man might more fully understand what God was like. The Scriptures have also come to us in a cultural context. God's relation to culture involves judgment in some areas and affirmation in others.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Bader, J. M. Evangelism in a Changing America. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Press, 1957.
- Barclay, William. The Mind of St Paul. London: Collins, 1958.
- Bishop, Eric F. Apostles of Palestine. London: Lutterworth Press, 1958.
- Bruce, F. F. Commentary on the Book of Acts. The New International Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956.
- _____. Men and Movements in the Primitive Church. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979.
- Campanhausen, Hans von, and Chadwick, Henry. Jerusalem and Rome. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Davies, J. H. The Early Christian Church. History of Religion Series. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.
- Downey, G. "Antioch (Syrian)." Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by G. A. Buttrick. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1962. 1:145-48.
- Dudley, Roger L. and Cummings, Des, Jr. Adventures in Church Growth. Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald, 1983.
- Filson, Floyd V. A New Testament History. London: SCM Press, 1964.
- Gibbs, Eddie. I Believe in Church Growth. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981.
- Glasser, Arthur F., and McGavran Donald A. Contemporary Theologies of Mission. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983.
- Green, Michael. Evangelism in the Early Church. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970.
- Haenchen, Ernst. The Acts of the Apostles. Translated by Basil Blackwell. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971.

- Hamlin, E. J. "Nations." Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by G. A. Buttrick. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962. 3:516-23.
- Hanson, R. P. C. The Acts in the Revised Standard Version. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Harrison, R. K. "Gentiles." The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. Edited by M. C. Tenney. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975. 2:696-97.
- Hengel, Martin. Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity. London: SCM Press, 1979.
- _____. Between Jesus and Paul. London: SCM Press, 1983.
- Hillock, Wilfred M. Involved. Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1977.
- Hodges, Melvin L. "Developing Basic Units of Indigenous Churches." In Church Growth and Christian Mission, pp. 111-130. Edited by Donald A. McGavran. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1979.
- Jackson, F. J. Foakes, and Lake, Kirsopp. The Beginnings of Christianity. Vol. 1: The Acts of the Apostles. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979.
- Jeremias, Joachim. Jesus' Promise to the Nations. London: SCM Press, 1973.
- Kirby, G. W. "Church." The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. Edited by M. C. Tenney. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975. 1:845-57.
- Knowles, George E. How to Help Your Church Grow. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1981.
- M'Clintock, John, and Strong, James. "Barnabas." Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature. n.p.: Harper & Brothers, 1867-95; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1968-70. 1:668-70; 11:346-47.
- McGavran, Donald A. Understanding Church Growth. rev. ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1980.
- McGavran, Donald A. and Arn, Winfield C. How to Grow a Church. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1973.
- _____. Ten Steps for Church Growth. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

- McGiffert, Arthur C. A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age. 5th ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951.
- Manson, T. W. Only to the House of Israel? Jesus and the Non-Jews. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.
- Meeks, Wayne A. The First Urban Christians. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Meeks, Wayne A., and Wilken, Robert L. Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978.
- Miles, Delos. Church Growth a Mighty River. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1981.
- Millikan, David. The Sunburnt Soul. Homebush West, New South Wales: Lancer Books, 1981.
- Mol, Hans. The Faith of Australians. Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985.
- Nida, Eugene A. "Culture and Church Growth." In Church Growth and Christian Mission, pp. 87-108. Edited by Donald A. McGavran. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1979.
- Peters, George W. A Theology of Church Growth. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981.
- Schmidt, Karl Ludwig. "ethnos." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by Gerhard Kittel. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964-76. 2:346-72.
- Schmithals, Walter. The Office of Apostle in the Early Church. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1969.
- Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook: 1984. Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald, 1984.
- Schaller, Lyle E. Effective Church Planning. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1979.
- _____. Hey, That's Our Church. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1975.
- Shroyer, M. J. "Barnabas." Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by G. A. Buttrick. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1962. 1:356-57.
- Stedman, Ray C. Body Life. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1972.
- "The Early Christian Church." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. Edited by F. D. Nichol. Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-57. 6:17-70.

- Wagner, C. Peter. Your Church Can Grow. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1976.
- Watson, David. I Believe in the Church. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982.
- White, Ellen G. The Acts of the Apostles. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911.
- Wilson, Marlene. How to Mobilize Church Volunteers. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983.
- Wilson, Stephen G. The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts. Cambridge: University Press, 1973.

Articles

- Gunther, John J. "The Association of Mark and Barnabas with Egyptian Christianity (Part 1)." The Evangelical Quarterly 54 (1982):219-32.
- Hill, Brian. "Pilgrims in Lotus Land." On Being, May, 1985, pp. 30-36
- McGavran, Donald A. "McGavran on Adventist Church Growth." Ministry, May 1985, pp. 16-19.
- Moule C. F. D. "Once More, Who Were the Hellenists?" Expository Times 70 (1958-59):100-102.
- Wagner, C. Peter. "A Church Growth View of Adventists." British Union Messenger, August 17, 1984, pp. 2-3.